Stress and Job satisfaction among Irish Primary School Teachers: The Role of Personality

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between personality types, job stress and job satisfaction among a sample of Irish primary school teachers. This study was based on a quantitative, cross-sectional design. The sample (n= 68) consisted of both males (n= 13) and females $(n$= 55). Participants were from three primary schools in West County Dublin. The data was based on four questionnaires, three self-report questionnaires and a demographics questionnaire. The relationship between personality, teacher stress and job satisfaction among teachers was measured using Costa and McCrae's (1992) Big Five Inventory, Fimian Teacher Stress Inventory (Fimian, 1988) and Teacher Satisfaction Scale (Ho & Au, 1996). Correlations found significant relationships between variables. Teachers reporting high levels of stress also reported low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of neuroticism correlated with teacher stress. None of the other personality measures (conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience) were significant in the relationship with teacher stress and job satisfaction. Further research suggestions are included, along with the limitations of the current study.

1. Introduction

While the impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction within the teaching profession has been well documented, how individual personality impacts on job satisfaction has received less attention. Research has been carried out to investigate teacher stress across a number of variables including research into the effects of stress in the teaching profession and burnout (Anderson & Barker 1999; Abel & Sewell, 1999). Additionally, job satisfaction in teachers has been studied across a wide variety of domains, for example, principal communication (Reyes & Hoyle, 1992), workplace conditions (Ma & MacMillan, 1999) and teaching strategy (Ben-Ari, Krole, Har-Even, 2003). Job satisfaction levels may also impact on teacher stress (Ho & Au, 2006), it is argued that job dissatisfaction may contribute to high levels of stress. Stress is not a result of one particular variable but a combination of internal and external factors and the interplay between the individual and the environment. As a result of this complex relationship, the role of personality as a possible contributor to stress will be explored.

There are many causes and levels of stress but stress is experienced at some level by all primary school teachers with varying consequences. Levels of stress and job satisfaction among teachers vary for a number of reasons. A study undertaken by the ESRI on Behalf of The Teaching Council (Darmody, & Smyth, 2011) found that 45% of Irish Primary School teachers experienced stress in their jobs and that both occupational stress and job satisfaction were effected by a number of factors such as, gender, age, length of service, class size, school facilities and adequate resources. Understanding the causes and the many variables associated with stress is important as it enables institutions to develop implementation strategies that teach people ways of coping with occupational stress (Davis & Wilson 2000; Brown & Nagel 2004; Austin, Shah & Muncer 2005). An additional variable that arose across the research was that the level of stress and job satisfaction may be dependant on the personality type of the individual (McCormick & Barnett 2010; Kumari 2006; Forrest & Jepson 2006).

The principle aim of this study is to explore the differences in levels of stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in relation to personality types as defined by the Five Factor Model or the 'Big Five' (Costa and McCrae, 1992), Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The study will also investigate the contribution of the demographic variables of age, gender, years of experience and position to the levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction.

1.1 Teacher Stress

The last decade has seen large changes to the teaching profession. Due to these changes teachers are working in more intense environments than ever before and reporting higher stress levels. United Kingdom (UK) teachers are reporting higher levels of stress than United States (US) teachers (Ho, 1996). Stein and Cutler (2002) define stress "as a total response to one's environmental demands and pressures and theorize that stress is an unavoidable part of life that everyone has to deal with" (as cited in Austin et al, 2005, p. 63). Specifically for teachers, "teacher stress may be defined as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression, resulting from aspects of his work as a teacher" (Kyriacou, 2001, p.28). Studies of the teaching profession have indicated that teaching may be one of the most stressful of all occupations, following air traffic controllers and surgeons (Ho, 1996). In certain instances and for certain people stress may be viewed as a positive experience 'eustress' and some degree of stress is invigorating (Selye, 1976), in most cases teachers occupational stress is very often viewed as a negative experience with inhibiting effects.

1.2 Sources of Stress

Teaching has become more challenging due to a number of factors including curriculum changes, discipline problems, increased pupil/teacher ratio, increased work load and more responsibilities. These changes have created the perception of teaching being an increasingly pressurised occupation (Chaplin, 2001). In addition, due to cuts in total education spending there are less resources available for students with more specialised needs further which further increased the demands placed on mainstream classroom teachers (Forlin, 2001).

Although it is recognised that teachers face numerous stressors, research has identified a number of specific organisational stressors that affect teachers differently across different contexts; student misbehaviour (Kokkinos, 2007), workload and student behaviour (Klassesn, 2010), role conflict, school stress, nonparticipation, role overload, task stress, management style, role ambiguity, supervisory support and peer support (Adams, 2007). Multiple studies have also explored the specific conditions that make teaching stressful, for example, teachers coping abilities (Pithers & Soden, 1998; McCormick et al., 2005; Richards, 2012), role-stress (Conley & Woosley, 2000), pupil behaviour (Robertson & Dunsumir, 2012) and inclusion (Forlin, 2001). These factors to increased stress to teachers will be investigated in this study, along with assessing if personality types contribute to perceived stress among teachers.

Bachkirkov (2005) investigated levels of stress and personal values of UK teachers and lectures. The research focused on how possible personal contributing factors i.e. personal values and personality characteristics contribute to levels of stress in teachers and lectures. Stress was explored in relation to three factors, an individual's personal values, ambition, and sensitivity threshold. The results found individuals with high ambition and low sensitivity threshold (easily upset 'thin skinned') had significantly higher levels of work-related stress. Bachkirkov identifies the lack of inclusion of individual differences in research as possible sources of stress and believes it is important not to overlook the significance of personality characteristics when examining the sources of stress.

Antoniou, Polychroni and Vlachakis (2006) compared occupational stress and burnout between primary school and high school teachers in Greece. They found the most highly rated sources of stress refer to problems in interaction with students such as the large number of pupils in the classroom, the lack of interest on the part of the pupils, handling students with "difficult" character and the slow progress of certain students. In attempting to identify specific sources of stress, Antoniou and colleagues (2006) highlight the possible link between specific personal sources of stress that may make people more vulnerable to stress. Györkös, Becker, Massoudi, de Bruin, Rossier, (2012) state that the same work stressors do not necessarily have the same effect on all individuals and in all contexts.

McCormick & De Nobile (2010) studied the relationship between biographical variables including gender, age, experience and position in relation to aspects of occupational stress of Catholic Primary School teaching and non-teaching staff in New South Wales, Australia. The study found males were more stressed overall than females, younger staff reported higher levels of stress than older colleagues and classroom teachers reported the highest levels of general stress. McCormick et al. (2010) suggest that these differences in levels of stress could be explained in terms of the coping skills of the older staff members that enable them to manage occupational stress. The ability of an individual to cope with stressful situations is influenced by how they perceive the situation which may in turn be influenced to a degree by their personality type. As the previous literature has indicated personality characteristics may go some way to explain these differences in levels of stress among individual teachers.

Chaplain (1995) studied sources of stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in England. He found that approximately 23% of the teachers identified their work as 'very' or 'extremely' stressful. Teacher's sex, age and amount of experience impacted differently on stress levels of the teachers. In contrast to the findings on gender by McCormick

and De Nobile (2010), Chaplain (1995) reported gender differences in relation to occupational stress experienced by teachers with female teachers scoring higher than male teachers. Females and males not only experienced different levels of stress, but also reported different sources of stress. Males (Chaplin, 1995) reported more stress than females on professional tasks such as, specialized activities, obtaining professional support, changing school conditions to improve on student learning, and feeling confident as teachers and pupil behaviour and attitude. Females (Chaplin, 1995) scored higher than males on professional concerns including supporting developmentally delayed and learning-disabled children helping children with problems, and accomplishing personal goals.

1.3 Consequences of Stress

Teacher stress may lead to negative consequences such as ill health (Maguire & O'Connell, 2007), absenteeism (Albertson & Kagan, 1987), job dissatisfaction (Griffin, 1990), reductions in student performance (Blasé, 1986) and the most serious consequence related to burnout. Long-term exposure to stress may lead to burnout. Burnout is described as "a syndrome of cynicism and emotional exhaustion that is a response to chronic stress, particularly in jobs where individuals work with people" (Mears & Cain, 2003, p. 72). Burnout is not the focus of this study but it is important to recognise that it is a serious consequence of prolonged stress. Consequences of burnout include diminished job satisfaction, reduced teacher-pupil rapport and pupil motivation, and decreased teacher effectiveness in meeting educational goals (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978).

With regard to burnout, Abel and Sewell, (1999) found urban secondary school teachers in Georgia and North Carolina experienced significantly more stress from poor working conditions and poor staff relations than did rural secondary school teachers. They also found stress from pupil behaviour was significantly greater that stress from any other source.

They found that these causes of stress predicted a high burnout rate for urban secondary school teachers. These results highlight the severity of stress and the importance of understanding the many facets of occupational stress in order to teach people how to manage stressful situations.

Mearns and Cain (2003) studied the relationship between occupational stress, burnout and distress among primary and secondary school teachers. The study explored how a teacher's negative mood regulation expectancies are predictors of their coping, burnout and distress in response to stress. Negative mood regulation (NMR) refers to the individual's belief that they can control the negative moods they experience. The study found that people high in NMR had lower levels of stress compared to those low in NMR who were less able to cope with work stressors. In their review of the results, Mears and Cain recommend the usefulness of incorporating an individual difference characteristic into the study of teacher stress.

Wu, Li, Wang, Wang, Li (2006) reported on the effects of stress for both the individual and the organisation, specifically, the effectiveness of intervention and prevention strategies in reducing stress among teachers in middle schools in China. The researchers posit that stress is caused by a combination of individual characteristics and characteristics of the work environment. They believe that individual factors can influence how teachers perceive and react to workplace stressors. Their results show that many factors influencing occupational stress can be modified and controlled by prevention programmes. These factors are summed up into two groups, individual factors and environmental factors. The results showed that stress education and stress management training served a useful function in helping individuals to recognize the symptoms of stress and manage them. The current study aims to further investigate the relationship between personality traits and environmental factors and how this relationship influences stress. It is anticipated the results will provide institutions with a deeper understanding of work-related stress and its causes, facilitating the development of successful

intervention strategies and prevention programmes capable of reducing levels of stress in teachers.

1.4 Personality

The literature suggests that stress is a result of the interplay between the environment and the individual. Most research on job satisfaction and stress supports the view that both the individual and the environment play a role. Literature also indicates that personality can play an important role in job stress and job satisfaction (Judge and Mount, 2002), the study aims to further research the role of personality structure in the disposition to job stress and job satisfaction. Frequently individual's personality characteristics, specifically of type A personality and Locus of Control (Jepson and Forrest, 2006), have been researched in relation to job stress and job satisfaction with little attention given to Costa and McCrae (1992), Five Factor Model.

Jepson and Forrest (2006) investigated individual contributory factors in teacher stress. The study measured personality (type A and level of teacher-specific achievement striving), occupational commitment, experience of teaching and gender in relation to teacher stress in primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom. The results revealed that achievement striving and type A behaviour showed a moderate positive relationship with perceived stress, indicating that as these factors increase, stress also increases. Primary school teachers reported more stress than secondary school teachers. These results highlight the possible impact personality type and individual differences may have on perceived stress. The study used the perceived stress scale when measuring stress whereas this study will use a scale designed to specifically measure teacher stress (Fimian, 1984). Also, personality will be measured using the Five Factor Model of openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion and neuroticism, this is a universally accepted measure of personality.

According to Grant and Langan-Fox (2007) the role of traits as defined by the Five Factor model are not well understood. The 'Big Five', Extroversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness are relatively stable personality traits that are universally accepted. Geant and Langan-Fox (2007) investigated the role of all five traits in the occupational stressor–strain relationship in a sample of female and male managers. Their findings suggest extroversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, play an important role in occupational health and well-being and that agreeableness and openness may be less important in this context. It was found neuroticism predicted higher job related stress and lower job satisfaction. These results support the role of personality in the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction.

Ghorpade, Lackritz, and Singh (2007) examined the relationship between personality and burnout among university lectures in the United States. The results supported a relationship between personality and burnout. According to the researchers desirable personality traits include extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and emotional stability (the opposite of which is neuroticism). Dimensions of burnout, for instance emotional exhaustion were negatively related to extraversion and emotional stability also depersonalisation was negatively related to agreeableness and emotional stability. In particular, the 'Big Five' shows incremental validity as predictors of burnout. The results support the importance of including personality in research into job stress, as prolonged periods of job stress lead to burnout. However, one factor not controlled for in the research was the inclusion of demographic variables, these factors together with personality traits may affect levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction, the current study will include these variables.

Kumari (2008) investigated the relationship between personality types and occupational stress in high school female teachers in Haryana. The sample was divided into two groups,

high burnout group and low burnout group. Personality was measured using Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised (EPQ-R, 1976) and Jenkins Activity Survey (JAS, 1979) designed to measure Type A, B and C. High burnout female teachers scored high on three scales of personality, psychoticism, neuroticism, lie scale and type-A behaviour and low on extraversion compared to the low burnout group. Interestingly, high burnout teachers scored significantly low on the occupational stress scale. The study failed to include other contextual variables, for example, demographic variables that might also account for the results.

Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz, Carrasco-Ortiz (2003) using a sample of elementary and high school teachers in Barcelona, Spain investigated the association between teacher burnout level, basic personality structure and some contextual variables. Contextual variables include opportunity for promotion, urban or rural school settings, holding the same position for a long time, being aware of little prestige in the profession and assigning value to relationships with students. The objective of the study was to highlight the important role of personality characteristics combined with some contextual variables in predicting burnout. Burnout was measured using Maslach Burnout Inventory and the 'Big Five' factors of personality were measured using the NEO-FFI. Results found that high scores of burnout were obtained by teachers scoring high in neuroticism and introversion. They found low scores in agreeableness and low scores in conscientiousness to be predictors of burnout. In relation to contextual variables high levels of burnout were associated with people who were aware of little prestige in their profession and who did not assigning value to personal relations with their students. Overall the results highlight the importance of personality structure in the relationship with teacher burnout and in some cases personality structure was more predictive of burnout that contextual variables.

Popoola, and Ilugbo (2010) investigated the relationship between the personality traits of self-concept, extraversion, locus of control and achievement motivation of female primary

and secondary school teachers in Osun State and levels of stress. The results showed that 80.3% of female teachers in Osun State Teaching Service had low level of stress and there was no significant relationship between stress and each of the personality traits of extraversion, locus of control, self concept and achievement motivation. Furthermore, there was not a significant relationship between levels of stress and personality traits of female teachers. These low levels of stress in female teachers are in contrast to other findings of similar research. However, the researchers highlight that these low levels of stress may be attributed to efforts by the government to improve working conditions and reduce overcrowded classrooms. Presently, this is not the case for Irish primary teachers where overcrowded classrooms are becoming the norm and possibly impact on teachers' stress levels.

Kokkinos (2007) adopted a more integrative approach to researching burnout in teachers where both environmental and individual factors were studied. The study examines the associations between job stressors, basic personality characteristics ('Big Five; factor model) and dimensions of burnout among primary school teachers in Greece. Both personality and job stressors were found to be significant predictors of burnout. The results from this promote the understanding of the role of personality characteristics in teacher burnout, thus supporting the inclusion of personality characteristics in this study.

1.5 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, as defined by Locke (1969 as cited in Ho and Au, 2006, p 172) refers to "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating one's job values" (p. 316). Evidence from research has supported a relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction in the teaching profession (Cheng and Chung-Yuan 2010) and has provided some understanding of the factors that influence teacher job

satisfaction. Similarly to occupational stress, job satisfaction has an impact at an individual and organisational level.

According to Demirtas (2010) it is expected that a school which has teachers with high level of job satisfaction gives qualified education and increases student success levels. Low teaching satisfaction correlates with the outcomes of work stress, that is, psychological distress and low self-esteem (Ho & Au, 2006). Low job satisfaction is cited as a possible cause of the current teaching crisis in the United Kingdom (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Research into general job satisfaction has shown a significant relationship with employee turnover and job performance (Bouckenooghe, Raja, & Butt, 2013). Evans (1997) defines job satisfaction "as a state of mind determined by the extent to which the individual perceives his/her job-related needs to be met" (p. 833). Evans conceptualises it as the individual's attitudes to their work and responses to situations and events which occur. Job satisfaction of teachers can be affected by a number of different factors environmental, personal and demographic.

Research on job satisfaction among teachers has been less researched than teacher stress. Research into causes of job satisfaction has linked it to the school environment and climate (Collie, Shapka and Perry, 2012; Shaalvik and Shaalvik, 2010). Research also identifies some external and individual factors as impacting on levels of job satisfaction including personal characteristics, such as: marital status, age, and gender (Koustelios, 2001) and teaching strategy (Ben-Ari, Krole, Har-Even, 2003). Be-Ari and colleagues (2003) differentiate between two types of teaching strategies, a simple teaching strategy and a complex teaching strategy. Simple teaching strategy refers to the methods of instruction employed by the teacher, whereby the curriculum is thought in a similar manner for all class children and evaluation standards are uniform for all students. In contrast, a complex teaching strategy involves a differentiation in the curricular content and evaluation standards depending on the pupil's individual needs, ability and preferred style of learning. According to the

researchers individuals using a complex teaching strategy would experience less stress, burnout and job satisfaction than teachers using a simple strategy. Collie, Shapka and Perry (2010) investigated relations between teacher's perceptions of school climate and social emotional learning and teacher's sense of stress, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Environmental factors thought to influence job satisfaction are principal's communication (Reyes and Hoyle, 1992; De Noble and McCormick, 2008), organisational factors (Hart, Wearing, and Conn, 2000) and workplace conditions (Perie and Baker, 1997). Specific research into the relationship between personality, stress and job satisfaction is less researched.

According to Evans (1997) job satisfaction and staff moral influence teacher's attitudes to their work and their work behaviours. In this study on teacher moral and job satisfaction among English Primary School Teachers, Evans (1997) noted the importance of individuality in explaining the differences in levels of job satisfaction despite sharing the same working environment. This study aims to address the issue of individuality by exploring individual personality traits.

Klassen and Chiu (2010) and Klassen, Usher and Bong (2010) found stress and job satisfaction to be negatively related when they were measured in relation to teacher's self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy beliefs refer to the teacher's beliefs that they have the capabilities and skills necessary for teaching. Both studies found that teachers with high self–efficacy showed higher levels of job satisfaction. Where self-efficacy was not a variable, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found teachers with greater teaching stress had lower levels of job satisfaction. This difference is interesting as it highlights the role of individual differences as moderating factors of stress and job satisfaction. The present study hopes to account for individual differences as moderating factors of stress and job satisfaction.

A study by Ma and MacMillan (1999) examined the relationship between teacher professional satisfaction, background characteristics and workplace conditions in Canada. The main focus of the study was on external influences on job satisfaction, for example, years of experience and workplace conditions. The results showed gender affected levels of job satisfaction. Their results found women had higher job satisfaction than their male counterparts. The study did show there are considerable gender differences in job satisfaction. Also, teachers with more years of experiences showed lower levels of job satisfaction. However, the study does not explore the role of individual characteristics on job satisfaction. The researchers state that individual differences in teacher satisfaction appear to be largely independent of workplace conditions. Individual characteristics may account for these individual differences and exploring them may contribute to our understanding of why teachers with over 20 years teaching experience are dissatisfied in their professional role.

De Nobile and McCormick (2005) investigated the relationships between job satisfaction and occupational stress among Catholic Primary Schools in New South Wales, Australia. They identified four occupational stress factors and nine job satisfaction factors. They identified supervision and relationship with the principal as the sources of stress to be strongly associated with teacher stress. They found the four occupational stress domains of i) school domain, ii) student domain, iii) personal domain and iv) information domain to be predictors of job satisfaction. Overall they found that higher job satisfaction is related to lower occupational stress.

Results from research into job satisfaction and occupational stress vary depending on the variables they are measured against, resulting in either a negative or positive relationship. The majority of studies mentioned in this literature review were conducted internationally, whereas, Irish primary teachers are the focus of this study and thus may yield different results.

Current research confirms that stress is prevalent among many professions and has far reaching consequences. Studies have explored many aspects of stress among teachers, primary and secondary, identifying individual and personal characteristics as moderating factors. Extensive studies have also identified some individual and environmental factors which influence the degree to which a person experiences and copes with stress. However, personality characteristics of teachers have been somewhat ignored when it comes to studying the relationship between occupational stress and its consequences. Personality, occupational stress and job satisfaction have been previously studied independently and in relation to many other variables, for example, self-efficacy, coping strategies and workplace conditions but not specifically together in one study.

A study undertaken by the ESRI on Behalf of The Teaching Council (Darmody, & Smyth, 2011) states there is a need for more research into occupational stress and job satisfaction in teachers in Ireland. Furthermore, the literature is not conclusive on the relationship between individual personality characteristics, stress and job satisfaction, deeming further research necessary. The study demonstrated that individual contributory factors are significant to the prediction and understanding of occupational stress experienced within the teaching profession. Researchers recommend occupational stress should be explored through a broader range of individual contributory factors, which this study aims to explore.

1.6 Objectives

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction and personality in Irish primary school teachers. The principle aims of this study are, to examine the levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction in a sample of Irish primary school teachers, to explore the extent to which certain personality characteristics (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism)

predict occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers and finally to identify specific sources of teacher stress that contribute to job satisfaction. The secondary aim of this research is to examine the demographic variables of gender, age, years of experience and education and how they contribute to levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction.

1.7 Hypothesis

H.1. There will be a significant relationship between levels of stress and levels of job satisfaction.

H.2. There will be a positive relationship between individuals who score high in neuroticism and high levels of stress and low job satisfaction.

H.3. Extraversion will have an inverse relationship with job stress and a positive relationship with job satisfaction.

H.4. There will be a non-significant relationship between conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness and job stress and job satisfaction.

H.5. There will be a significant relationship between participants age, years of experience and education with job stress and job satisfaction.

H.6. There will be a significant difference between males and females on stress and job satisfaction

2. Methods

2.1 Materials

The methods used in this study consisted of a booklet containing three self-administered, paper and pen, anonymous psychometric questionnaires and one demographics questionnaire which included an explanatory letter which were filled out by the sample. The questionnaires were used to measure personality, teacher stress and job satisfaction among the participants.

The Big Five Trait Taxonomy. John & Srivastava (1999). The Big Five Trait Taxonomy is a 44 item, self-report questionnaire, which measures the 'Big Five' Personality Traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The questionnaire is adapted from the Five Factor Model of personality developed by Costa & McCrae (1992). Each question begins with the expression "I am someone who..." and a series of characteristics follow (e.g. "I am someone who is talkative";" I am someone who is full of energy"). The participants answer these statements using a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1="strongly agree" to 5="strongly disagree". Each question relates to a different one of the 'Big Five' personality traits so that the participant's personality can be measured. This test has been used in a lot of research around personality.

Fimian Teacher Stress Inventory. Fimian (1988) FTSI is designed to measure teachers' perception of stress as it relates to their occupation. The test identifies sources and manifestations of stress. It comprises of 49 stress-related questions divided into 10 subsections. The first 5 subsections represent sources of stress for teachers and the last 5 represent manifestations of stress. The 10 sections collectively represent the 'total stress score' for teachers. Participants read each statement and respond indicating their agreement or disagreement using a 5-point likert scale from 1= 'strongly disagree', 2= 'disagree', 3= 'neutral', 4= 'agree' to 5= 'strongly agree'.

The items measured are categorised under the following sub-headings: 1. Stress factors comprising of five different factors: i) time-management (reflects a balance between the role and tasks of the teacher), ii) work-related stressors (such as work load, life/work balance, administrative duties and class size), iii) professional distress (includes areas such as opportunities for promotion, progress at work, status, salary and acknowledgement in the workplace), iv) discipline and motivation (includes aspects of teacher pupil relations, discipline problems and pupil underachievement), v) professional investment (refers to teachers feelings about their position). 2. Manifestations of stress comprising of five teachers' responses to stress: i) emotional manifestations (feelings of depression, anxiousness and insecurity), ii) fatigue manifestations (e.g. exhaustion and sleeping habits), iii) cardiovascular manifestations (e.g. blood pressure and heart palpations), iv) gastronomical manifestations (e.g. stomach pains) and Behavioural manifestations (e.g. using prescription drugs, alcohol and calling in sick).

Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS). The Teacher Satisfaction Scale (Ho & Au, 2006) measures teachers' overall satisfaction with their profession. From this questionnaire a score that measures job satisfaction will be obtained. The scale consisted of five items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A high score is indicative of a high degree of teacher satisfaction. A participant can have a maximum score of 25. Ho and Au (2006) reported that Cronbach's alpha was 0.77 and the two-week test-retest reliability was .76 for their sample.

2.2 Demographics

The demographics questionnaire was adapted by the researcher from section A of TSI (Fimian, 1988) The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the teachers gender, age, years of experience, classes taught, highest level of education and support teachers

feel they received from their peers and principals. It is significant to know this data as previous research has identified these factors as contributing to teacher stress and job satisfaction.

2.3 Participants

Seventy (n = 70) respondents participated in this study. A total of one hundred questionnaires were distributed to both male and female teachers and seventy were returned accounting for a response rate of 70% This convenience sample consisted of primary school teachers from 3 schools in West County Dublin. The respondents included 55 females and 13 males with ages ranging from 20-50+. Only class and resource team teachers were asked to take part in this study, non-teaching principals were excluded from taking part. The resource team includes Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, Special Class teachers and English as Additional language teachers. Each participant completed the questionnaire booklet as mentioned in section 2.1. All participation was voluntary.

2.4 Ethics

Following a comprehensive outline of the nature of this project and the steps undertaken to protect the rights of the participants, the Psychology Department of Dublin Business School Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for this research project. Participants were assured that strict guidelines of confidentiality and anonymity would be followed. Participation was completely voluntary and respondents were informed they both could withdraw from the study at any time and also have access to the results once the project was completed if they so wished. The questionnaires were kept secured in a locked cabinet.

2.5 Design

A cross-sectional, correlational design which is descriptive in nature was used in this study. The independent variable (IV) included the five personality types of; i) openness to

experience, ii) conscientiousness, iii) agreeableness, iv) extraversion and v)neuroticism and the dependant variable (DV) was perceived stress and job satisfaction. The study aimed to asses the relationship between the three variables of: i) personality types, ii) perceived stress and iii) job satisfaction.

2.6 Procedure

A letter of induction, outlining the research project was sent to the principals of each school seeking permission to gather data. Once permission was received from each principal to carry out the research, self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaire were distributed to the participants. A letter detailing the research project was attached to each questionnaire requesting teachers to complete the questionnaire and return it in a sealed envelope to the distributor. The respondents were assured about confidentiality of their participation and provided with contact details for confidential helplines should the content raise any negative feelings for them. Each participant was informed they could withdraw from the study at any time and were advised that once the questionnaires had been returned, due to the anonymity of the questionnaires it would be impossible for the questionnaire to be retrieved.

2.7 Data Analysis

Returned questionnaires were analysed using a computer programme for analysing data called SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists).

A Pearson's Correlation Coefficient were used to test the five main hypothesis, they tested the relationship between

- Occupational stress and job satisfaction.
- Neuroticism, occupational stress and job satisfaction.
- Extraversion, occupational stress and job satisfaction.

- Conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness.

- Participants age, years of experience and education, occupational stress and job satisfaction.

An Independent samples t-test was used to test the final hypothesis, it tested for differences between

- Males and females on occupational stress and job satisfaction.

A Spearman's Rho was used to test the relationship between

- Sources of stress and job satisfaction.
- Supervisor support and job satisfaction.

3. Results

Before running tests to check for significant relationships, a number of descriptive statistics were calculated to discover any trends in the scoring of different variables. A report of means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of all predictor and criterion variables are shown in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, the scoring patterns were very similar among females and males.

Table 1: *Means and Standard Deviations for the Predictor and Criterion Variables.*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Teacher Stress	Female	54	2.55	.51
	Male	13	2.72	.65
Job Satisfaction	Female	54	18.64	4.03
	Male	13	16.92	3.60
Neuroticism	Female	54	21.49	5.87
	Male	13	21.46	7.11
Extraversion	Female	54	28.18	5.22
	Male	13	25.85	6.65
Openness to Exp.	Female	54	33.35	5.90
	Male	13	31.36	6.47
Conscientiousness	Female	54	36.27	5.72
	Male	13	32.21	6.01
Agreeableness	Female	54	37.63	4.12
	Male	13	36.77	4.51

The main objective of the research project was to examine the relationships between personality type, teacher stress and job satisfaction. This relationship was investigated using a Pearson Correlation coefficient (see Table 2). Tests for normality were run to ensure all variables met the assumptions.

Table 2: *Correlation table*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Openness to Exp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agreeableness	.24*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conscientiousness	.22	.42**	-	-	-	-	-
Extraversion	-.41**	.28*	.24*	-	-	-	-
Neuroticism	-.18	-.31**	-.42**	-.41**	-	-	-
Job Satisfaction	.16	.22	.19	.27*	.06	-	-
Teacher Stress	-.00	-.16	-.21	-.20	.48**	.40**	-

* *p* significant at .05 level.

** *p* significant at .01 level.

3.1 *Hypothesis 1: It is hypothesized that there will be a significant inverse relationship between Perceived Stress and Job Satisfaction*

Tests for normality showed that all the variables met the assumptions. Therefore, it was decided that a number of parametric tests would be run to explore the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. The relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction was investigated using a Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed a moderate negative and significant correlation between perceived stress and job satisfaction (r = - .40, p < .01, 2-tailed). These results indicate an inverse relationship between the two variables, suggesting that

teachers experiencing high perceived stress levels also reported low job satisfaction. Based on these results the hypothesis is accepted.

3.2 *Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant relationship with individuals scoring high in neuroticism and high levels of stress and low job satisfaction*

This hypothesis relates to the second aim of this study, to examine the extent to which a personality type can predict perceived stress and job satisfaction. Tests for normality showed all variables met the assumptions. Again, a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was carried out to examine the relationship between neuroticism, perceived stress and job satisfaction. Results indicated a moderate positive yet significant association between perceived stress and neuroticism ($r = .48$, $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). These results suggest that participants scoring high in neuroticism also reported high perceived stress levels. Results revealed a non-significant relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction ($r = -.06$, $p > 0.05$, 2-tailed). These results partially support the second hypothesis.

3.3 *Hypothesis 3: Extraversion will have an inverse relationship with job stress and a positive relationship with job satisfaction*

The relationship between extraversion, perceived stress and job satisfaction was tested using a Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed a non-significant relationship between extraversion and perceived stress ($r = .20$, $p. > 0.05$, 2-tailed), therefore, the first part of the hypothesis is rejected. In contrast, the results indicate a weak positive significant relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction ($r = .27$, $p. < 0.05$, 2-tailed) suggesting that participants scoring high in extraversion will report higher levels of job satisfaction. This result partially supports the second hypothesis.

3.4 *Hypothesis 4: There will be a non-significant relationship between conscientiousness, openness to experience and agreeableness and job stress and job satisfaction*

A Pearson's Coefficient Correlation was used to investigate the nature of these associations. Results indicated a non-significant relationship between conscientiousness and job satisfaction (r = .19, p. > 0.05, 2-tailed) and conscientiousness and perceived stress (r = .21, p. > 0.05, 2, tailed). Non-significant relationships between agreeableness and perceived stress (r = .16, p > 0.05, 2-tailed), agreeableness and teacher satisfaction (r = .22, p. > .05, 2-tailed), openness and perceived stress (r = .00, p > 0.05, 2-tailed) and openness and teacher satisfaction (r = .16, p > 0.05, 2-tailed) were identified. Results support the third hypothesis that the personality traits of conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness have a non-significant relationship with perceived stress and job satisfaction among teachers. The hypothesis is accepted.

3.5 *Hypothesis 5: There will be a significant relationship between participants age, years of experience and education with job stress and job satisfaction*

A Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between these variables. The results revealed that there was a non-significant relationship between participants age and perceived stress (r = .14, p > 0.05, two-tailed) and participants age and job satisfaction (r = .03, p. > 0.05, two-tailed). A non-significant relationship was also identified between years of experience and perceived stress (r = .04, p > 0.05, two-tailed) and years of experience and job satisfaction (r = .08, p. > 0.05, two-tailed). Similarly a non-significant relationship was found between participants highest qualification and perceived stress (r = .10, p > 0.05, two-tailed) and participants highest qualification and job satisfaction (r = .10, p > 0.05, two-tailed), therefore the hypothesis is rejected.

3.6 *Hypothesis 6: There will be a significant difference between males and females on stress and job satisfaction*

An independent t-test was used to explore the difference between males (n = 13) and females (n = 54) on perceived stress and job satisfaction. Results obtained from the independent

samples t-test did not indicate significant difference between gender and perceived stress (t(66) = -1.06, p = .29) and gender and job satisfaction (t(68) = -.1.32, p = .18), therefore the hypothesis cannot be accepted.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to build on previous research in the areas of personality, job stress and job satisfaction. The main focus of the current study was to examine what factors influencing occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers and investigate how the personality traits of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism can significantly contribute to occupational stress and job satisfaction. Therefore, the first aim of this study was to explore the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction and personality type among a sample of primary school teachers in Ireland. The second aim was to explore how perceived stress correlates with personality and job satisfaction. Finally, the third aim of this study was to examine how the variables of gender, age, years of experience and education correlate with occupational stress and job satisfaction. Six hypotheses were formulated, the results of which are discussed below. The results of the current research can be linked back to previous studies but it also found some interesting contrasts.

4.1 Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Results obtained from a Pearson's Correlation Coefficient indicate a moderate negative significant relationship between the variables occupational stress and job satisfaction. These results signal an inverse relationship therefore supporting the first hypothetical statement. These findings are consistent with findings from other studies (Klassen and Chiu 2010; De Nobile and McCormick 2005). Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that job stress was inversely related to job satisfaction the study supports the assertion that as stress increases job satisfaction decreases.

However, it is worth noting that these results are not the same across all cultures, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that the inverse relationship was supported in relation to North

American teachers but not for Korean teachers. This cross-cultural difference is explained in terms of Korean teachers focus on student performance and achievement, teachers experiencing high stress due to the pressure of high performance focus on student outcomes, the researchers note that there is no reason to believe that this pressure will translate into job dissatisfaction due to their beliefs. Korean teacher's perceptions of stress are mediated by different factors in comparison with teachers from different cultures. The findings from the current study support the findings from Mc Cormick and De Nobile (2005) who found a moderate to strong correlation existed between job satisfaction and occupational stress variables. They researchers found levels of job satisfaction were influenced differently by sources of job stress.

To further test the significant relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction, a Spearman's Rho was used to identify sources of stress that correlate the most with job satisfaction. The results found that job satisfaction among Irish primary school teachers is influenced by three particular groups of common stressors. The Teacher Stress Inventory (Fimian, 1988) groups sources of stress into five categories: time management, work–related stressors, professional distress, discipline and motivation and professional investment. An analysis of data revealed a moderate, negative significant relationship between professional distress and job satisfaction ($r = -.49$, $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). Professional distress refers to participant's feelings regarding recognition at work in terms of opportunities for promotion, advancements in work and salary. The results suggest that these factors impact on the satisfaction teachers derive from their work. Similarly, a negative strong significant relationship was revealed between the variables contained within the professional investment sub heading and job satisfaction ($r = -.51$, $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). Professional investment refers to teachers feelings about their position and the control they feel they have over school and classroom matters. The results reveal that teachers have feelings of discontent towards the

profession and feel they lack opportunities for professional development. Finally, discipline and motivation was found to have a moderate negative significant relationship with job satisfaction (r = -. 35, p, < 0.01, 2-tailed). Teachers reporting high levels of stress as a result of classroom problems, pupil behaviour, pupil's lack of motivation and teachers lacking authority with their students report more dissatisfaction with their job than teachers who report lower perceived stress levels.

Job satisfaction is influenced by teacher's interaction with colleagues and students. The current study found the three areas of stress to correlate the most with job satisfaction were, professional investment, professional distress and discipline and motivation. The contribution of discipline and motivation to job satisfaction is supported by findings from similar studies by Robertson and Dunsumir (2012), Klassen (2010) and Kokkinos (2007) into factors that contribute to job satisfaction, these studies found occupational stress arising from student behaviour and teachers capabilities to manage discipline in their classroom impacts on job satisfaction. The relationship found between professional investment, professional distress and job satisfaction in the current study is supported by Adams (2007) who examined the linkage between role-conflict, role-overload (professional investment) and internal characteristics (professional distress) and job satisfaction. Professional distress reflects the participants disillusion with the education system and the lack of opportunities for promotion and advancement within the system. This links with Adams (2007) findings that the vast majority of the stressors associated with teachers are divided into three specific domains, system, internal and students. A culmination of these stressors results in reported job dissatisfaction among teachers, which appears to be the case in the Irish context.

4.2 Relationship between Personality, Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

The results from the current study reveal a significant relationship with neuroticism and perceived stress and a non-significant relationship with job satisfaction. This result is consistent with research that supports the role of neuroticism in the stress process (Abbasi, 2011; Grant & Langan-Fox, 2007; Ghorpade, Lackritz & Singh, 2007; Kumari, 2008; Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munozo, Carrasco-Oritz, 2003). The findings indicate that teachers high in neuroticism are likely to respond to stressors in the environment more so than teachers low in neuroticism. The literature on stress emphasis that stress is a subjective experience and what may be a stressor for one individual may not be a stressor for another individual. Personality may go some way to explain this difference in how stress is perceived. Neuroticism, describes unstable individuals who are reactive and easily affected by stimuli in their environment. They tend to worry, get nervous, and become sad and temperamental easily and frequently (Ghorpade et. al. 2007). According to this definition of neuroticism, it is possible that people lack the characteristics or coping mechanisms necessary to deal with stressful situations and may be somewhat predisposed to stress. This research proposes that certain personality types are mediators of stress, it was hypothesised that neuroticism would have a significant relationship with job stress and job satisfaction this hypothesis was partially supported.

The results from the study found a non-significant relationship between extraversion and occupational stress and a weak positive significant relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction. This supports evidence from an investigation by Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) into the relationship between all five personality traits and job satisfaction which found that extraversion had a moderate correlation with job satisfaction. Heinstrom (2003 as cited in Ghorpade et al, 2007, p. 242) states that extraversion portrays an individual who is adventurous, energetic, assertive, sociable, gregarious, and talkative. According to Judge, Heller and Mount (2002) extraverts are predisposed to experience positive emotions and this positive emotionality most likely generalises to job satisfaction.

The relationship between openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness, job satisfaction and occupational stress was investigated and results revealed a non-significant relationship between the dependant variables of occupational stress and job satisfaction and the independent variables of openness to experience, conscientiousness and agreeableness. These finding are mostly supported by findings from previous research (Kokkinos, 2007; Ghorpade et al. 2007; Grant and Langan-fox, 2007) with the exception of Judge et al (2002) who found that conscientiousness was moderately correlated with job satisfaction. The personality types of agreeableness and openness to experience have been less explored in the relationship with occupational stress and job satisfaction. This is in part due to the view that these personality traits are viewed as desirable traits that provide the individual with coping mechanisms that will allow an individual to appraise negative situations positively and make the individual less susceptible to stress. These individuals may fail to see the demands from the environment, or they may even reinterpret the demands as challenges and as a positive experience (Ghorpade et al. 2007).

4.3 Relationship between gender, age, years of experience and education, occupational stress and job satisfaction

The findings in this study do not support the existence of a relationship between the independent variables of participant's gender, age, years of experience and highest level of education and the dependent variables of perceived stress and job satisfaction. Various tests for differences and correlations were performed on demographic information which was also requested in the questionnaire to further test the relationships between the main variables explored in this study.

An independent samples t-test did not support any significant differences between females and males in relation to occupational stress and job satisfaction. However, as research

has supported gender differences in relation to the two main variables with the direction of the relationship varying depending on the context of the study (Forlin, 2001; Mc Cormick and De Nobile, 2010; Ma and MacMillan, 1999; Darmody and Smyth, 2011; Klassen and Chiu, 2010), the researcher ran a number of descriptive statistics to explore any scoring trends among the variables. One must consider the gender range in the current study before analysing the results of gender differences tests. There were 54 females and only 13 males. The sample of males was very small in this study and it is difficult to draw general conclusions from tests of gender difference in this study. Nevertheless, an analysis of means among males and females showed that males scored slightly higher (M = 2.72, SD = 6.54) than females (M = 2.54. SD = .51) on teacher stress and lower on job satisfaction (M = 16.92, SD = 3.59) than females (M = 18.63, SD = 4.03).

Although this difference is quite small it is none the less significant, it indicates that males may be experiencing higher levels of stress and lower job satisfaction than their female counterparts thus supporting the proposition that gender differences exist in the relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction. This trend is consistent with findings from Mc Cormick and DeNobile (2010) who found that males experienced more stress compared to their female counterparts and Darmody and Smyth (2011) who found that females were significantly more satisfied with their jobs than males. Once again, one must recall the lack of gender balance in the current study which would contribute to the scarcity of gender differences among the variables. If there was more of a balance in the gender of the participants, there may have been very different results.

Tests for relationships found a non-significant relationship between the variables of age and years of teaching experience with job satisfaction and occupational stress. Darmody and Smyth (2011) found that length of service had an impact on job satisfaction, with those who had been teaching the longest reporting the highest levels of satisfaction, a finding not

supported by the current study. Research into age and job satisfaction is contradictory, Lee and Wilbur (1985) and Weaver (1980) found a positive relationship with job satisfaction and age while Ang, Goh and Coh (1993), Herbert and Burke (1997), Oshagbemi (1997) and Rhodes (1983) identify age as a characteristic that affects job satisfaction (as cited in Koustelios 2001, p. 354). The design of this research cannot adequately explain these finding, the relatively small and unequal sample size may account for the non-significant result. Klassen and Chiu (2010) investigated the relationship among teacher characteristic, years of experience, job stress and job satisfaction. Their results found that years of experience were positively related to teacher stress and job satisfaction. The researchers found that these results were mediated by the characteristic of self-efficacy. It could be argued that the non-significant result yielded in the current study could have been influences by other variables not included in the study.

One interesting correlation arising from an investigation into the demographic factors, occupational stress and job satisfaction was between participant's feelings about the support they receive from their supervisor (principal) and levels of job satisfaction. A Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient identified a weak negative significant relationship between supervisor support and job satisfaction ($r = -.25$, p. < 0.05, 2-tailed). A non-significant relationship was identified between supervisor support and occupational stress. In contrast, the results identify an inverse relationship between the two variables, suggesting that as participants feel they are not supported by their principal the level of satisfaction they derive from their work diminishes.

Supervisor support was not defined in the questionnaire and was open to interpretation by the participant therefore a thorough analysis of this finding is beyond the scope of this paper. However, based on research by Reyes and Hoyle (1992) it is possible that principal support refers to feedback teachers receive from their principal and is a measure of how satisfied teachers are with principal's communication. The relationship between teachers and

their principal play an important role in teachers overall job satisfaction. Findings from the current research is supported by Adams (2007) who found variables relating to the school system to be contributing factors in the stress levels of teachers. As occupational stress and job satisfaction have a significant relationship the role of the principal as a contributor to stress and job satisfaction is an important discovery.

4.4 Limitations

This study was not without its limitations. One such limitation is attributed to the sample size. The sample used in this research was quite small, and was obtained from three schools in west Dublin. In total a hundred questionnaires were distributed with only 70 returned and from that 70, missing values associated with 2 questionnaires were removed from the analysis. Due to the small sample it is difficult to arrive at a comprehensive result and a larger more varied sample may have contributed to a more generalisable result. Furthermore, as previously discussed the underrepresentation of males in the sample may have contributed to the lack of significant differences between males and females in relation to the different variables. Females represent a higher proportion of the teaching profession which may reflect the gender imbalance in this study. A larger more randomised sample may have reduced the gender imbalance in this study, thereby removing some of the bias in this study.

A further limitation of this research is the methods used to obtain measures of personality, perceived stress and job satisfaction. Future research may benefit from a mixed method research design employing both quantitative and qualitative measures which may give a more meaningful result. The self-report questionnaires do not account for the subjective nature of stress and its sources and the personality measure does not take into account the feelings of different individuals at different times and how these feelings may change on a day-to-day basis. Employing qualitative measures in the form of interviews may give further

insight into the feelings of individuals. Despite the proven reliability of the teacher satisfaction scale when predicting teaching stress and psychological distress (Ho and Au, 2006, p. 183) with only 5 statements on the scale, it is difficult to truly investigate teacher satisfaction and the TSS model could be extended to explore the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and affect more.

Finally, this study focuses on urban schools in Dublin, further study could benefit from an urban-rural comparison providing opportunities to compare teaching conditions, identify any differences in the sources of stress and job satisfaction at a national level allowing for a more comprehensive data analysis.

4.5 Further Research

Despite the limitations discussed, the results obtained significantly contribute to our understanding of the factors influencing occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Ireland. Considerations for further research are outlined below.

The findings previously discussed highlight how certain factors within the teaching profession can facilitate high levels of stress thus affecting levels of job satisfaction among teachers. Research suggests that individual differences are quintessential to understanding the variation in workplace stress (Jepson and Forrett, 2006). The effects of sources of stress identified in this study on teacher stress and job satisfaction could be explored further in relation to the specific personality trait of neuroticism. As this was found to relate to job stress and job satisfaction, identifying whether personality dimensions are related to job stressors would help to identify which individuals are most susceptible and vulnerable to workplace stress. According to Jepson and Forrett (2006) this would facilitate the development of coping strategies, targeting vulnerable individuals, thereby reducing workplace stress and enhancing well-being in the workplace. Research of this type could have implications for stress

intervention and prevention strategies (Grant and Langan-Fox, 2007). This is further supported by Bachkirkov (2005) who states that research very often ignores the individual's pre-stress personality structure and belief system on which the stress was imposed.

Also, in future research, one would recommend investigating further the relationship between sources of stress at an organisational and administrative level and their impact of job stress and job satisfaction. As highlighted in this paper job satisfaction is affected by professional investment and professional distress, based on the statements in the (TSI) questionnaire, for example, 'I lack promotion and advancement opportunities' and 'I lack control over decisions made about classroom/school matters', and research by Ma and MacMillan (1999) these sources of distress are understood to refer to the degree of the individual's identification with the school, an individual's perceived ability to contribute positively and the organisational conditions that allow an individual to feel valued. Job dissatisfaction as a result of these factors may contribute to teacher's lack of commitment and motivation, reduced productivity and affect pupil performances. Only further research can truly investigate how workplace conditions affect professional satisfaction.

4.6 Conclusion

The overall aim of the current study was to discover the main factors contributing to occupational stress and job satisfaction. Much research seeks to explain the phenomenon of stress and inform measures used to reduce the level of stress at work. Despite the limitations discussed, the current study achieved some insight into the areas of perceived stress, job satisfaction and the role of personality. A combination of factors were discovered that may shed some light on teacher's vulnerability to stress and sources of stress affecting job satisfaction among teachers. Results identified neuroticism as a significant predictor of perceived stress, and extraversion acts as a mediator in its relationship with job satisfaction.

The research also found that the areas of professional investment, professional distress and discipline and motivation impact on teachers job satisfaction. It is hoped that the current research and future research opportunities will inform practise and individuals and precipitate methods of reducing levels of stress at work.

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Appendix A

The Big Five Trait Taxonomy

John, O. P. & Srivastava, S (1999)

How I am in general

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly

I am someone who…

1. _____ Is talkative

2. _____ Tends to find fault with others

3. _____ Does a thorough job

4. _____ Is depressed, blue

5. _____ Is original, comes up with new ideas

6. _____ Is reserved

7. _____ Is helpful and unselfish with others

8. _____ Can be somewhat careless

9. _____ Is relaxed, handles stress well.

10. _____ Is curious about many different things

11. _____ Is full of energy

12. _____ Starts quarrels with others

13. _____ Is a reliable worker

14. _____ Can be tense

15. _____ Is ingenious, a deep thinker

16. _____ Generates a lot of enthusiasm

17. _____ Has a forgiving nature

18. _____ Tends to be disorganized

19. _____ Worries a lot

20. _____ Has an active imagination

21. _____ Tends to be quiet

22. _____ Is generally trusting

23. _____ Tends to be lazy

24. _____ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset

25. _____ Is inventive

26. _____ Has an assertive personality

27. _____ Can be cold and aloof

28. _____ Perseveres until the task is finished

29. _____ Can be moody

30. _____ Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

31. _____ Is sometimes shy, inhibited

32. _____ Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

33. _____ Does things efficiently

34. _____ Remains calm in tense situations

35. _____ Prefers work that is routine

36. _____ Is outgoing, sociable

37. _____ Is sometimes rude to others

38. _____ Makes plans and follows through with them

39. _____ Gets nervous easily

40. _____ Likes to reflect, play with ideas

41. _____ Has few artistic interests

42. _____ Likes to cooperate with others

43. _____ Is easily distracted

44. _____ Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

Appendix B
TEACHER CONCERNS INVENTORY

Fimian (1988)

The following are a number teacher concerns. Please identify those factors which cause you stress in your present position. Read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Then, indicate how strong the feeling is when you experience it by circling the appropriate rating on the 5-point scale. If you have not experienced this feeling, or if the item is inappropriate for your position, circle number 1 (no strength; not noticeable). The rating scale is shown at the top of each page.

	1	2	3	4	5
HOW STRONG ?	no strength; not noticeable	mild strength; barely noticeable	medium strength; moderately noticeable	great strength; very noticeable	major strength; extremely noticeable

TIME MANAGEMENT

1. I easily over-commit myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I become impatient if others do things to slowly.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have to try doing more than one thing at a time.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have little time to relax/enjoy the time of day.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think about unrelated matters during conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel uncomfortable wasting time.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There isn't enough time to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I rush in my speech.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 1 through 8; divide by 8; place your score here:

WORK-RELATED STRESSORS

9. There is little time to prepare for my lessons/responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There is too much work to do.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The pace of the school day is too fast.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My caseload/class is too big.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My personal priorities are being shortchanged due to time demands.	1	2	3	4	5
14. There is too much administrative paperwork in my job.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 9 through 14; divide by 6; place your score here:
PROFESSIONAL DISTRESS

15. I lack promotion and/or advancement opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am not progressing my job as rapidly as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5

17. I need more status and respect on my job.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I receive an inadequate salary for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I lack recognition for the extra work and/or good teaching I do.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 15 through 19; divide by 5; place your score here:

DISCIPLINE AND MOTIVATION

I feel frustrated...

20. ...because of discipline problems in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
21. ...having to monitor pupil behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
22. ...because some students would better if they tried.	1	2	3	4	5
23. ...attempting to teach students who are poorly motivated.	1	2	3	4	5
24. ...because of inadequate/poorly defined discipline problems.	1	2	3	4	5
25. ...when my authority is rejected by pupils/administration.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 20 through 25; divide by 6; place your score here:

PROFESSIONAL INVESTMENT

26. My personal opinions are not sufficiently aired.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I lack control over decisions made about classroom/school matters.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I am not emotionally/intellectually stimulated on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I lack opportunities for professional improvement.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 26 through 29; divide by 4; place your score here:

EMOTIONAL MANIFESTATIONS

I respond to stress...

30. ...by feeling insecure.	1	2	3	4	5
31. ...by feeling vulnerable.	1	2	3	4	5
32. ...by feeling unable to cope.	1	2	3	4	5
33. ...by feeling depressed.	1	2	3	4	5
34. ...by feeling anxious.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 30 through 34; divide by 5; place your score here:

FATIGUE MANIFESTATIONS

I respond to stress...

35. ...by sleeping more than usual.	1	2	3	4	5
36. ...by procrastinating.	1	2	3	4	5
37. ...by becoming fatigued in a very short time.	1	2	3	4	5
38. ...with physical exhaustion.	1	2	3	4	5
39. ...with physical weakness.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 35 through 39; divide by 5; place your score here:

CARDIOVASCULAR MANIFESTATIONS

I respond to stress...

40. ...with feelings of increased blood pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
41. ...with feeling of heart pounding or racing.	1	2	3	4	5
42. ...with rapid and/or shallow breath.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 40 through 42; divide by 3; place your score here:

GASTRONOMICAL MANIFESTATIONS

I respond to stress...

43. ...with stomach pain of extended duration.	1	2	3	4	5
44. ...with stomach cramps.	1	2	3	4	5
45. ...with stomach acid.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 43 through 45; divide by 3; place your score here:

BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS

I respond to stress...

46. ...by using over-the-counter drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
47. ...by using prescription drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
48. ...by using alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5
49. ...by calling in sick.	1	2	3	4	5

Add items 46 through 49; divide by 4; place your score here:

TOTAL SCORE

Add all calculated scores; enter the value here _____

Appendix C

Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale

Ho & Au (2006)

The Teacher Satisfaction Scale is used to measure overall satisfaction with one's career as a teacher. Please answer all of the following questions using this guide: 1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither disagree/agree, 4= somewhat agree, and 5= strongly agree.

1. In most ways, being a teacher is close to my idea.   1   2   3   4   5

2. My working conditions as a teacher are excellent.   1   2   3   4   5

3. I am satisfied with being a teacher.   1   2   3   4   5

4. So far I have gotten the important things I want   1   2   3   4   5

from being a teacher.

5. If I could choose my career over, I would change   1   2   3   4   5

almost nothing.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Your sex:___

Number of years you have taught? _____

Your age: _____

How many students do you teach each day? _____

What level students do you teach?   (circle the rest of your answers)

Junior School   Senior School
Junior infants   3rd Class
Senior infants 4th Class
1st class   5th Class
2nd Class   6th Class

With what type of students do you work with?

        Mainstream   Learning Support   Resource

Which is the most advanced degree you have?

        Bachelors   Postgraduate   Masters   Doctorate

Do you and your peers support one another when needed?   Yes   No

Do you and your supervisors support one another when needed?   Yes   No

Appendix E

Letter to Participants

> **Stress and Job satisfaction among Irish Primary School Teachers: The Role of Personality**

My name is Aoife Kenney and I am conducting research in the Department of Psychology, Dublin Business School that explores occupational stress, job satisfaction and personality in primary school teachers. This research is being conducted as part of my studies and will be submitted for examination.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves completing and returning three anonymous surveys. The surveys are designed to measure levels of stress, job satisfaction and types of personality and should take approx. 20 minutes to complete. The surveys ask some questions that might cause some minor negative feelings. If any of the questions do raise difficult feelings for you, support services are provided by Samaritans on 1850 60 90 90 or email jo@samaritans.org

Participation is completely voluntary and you are not obliged to take part.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from the questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored on a password protected computer.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact me by email My supervisor can be contacted at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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