

Sally Ann Ennis

The Prevalence of Occupational Stress among Post-Primary Teachers in Ireland. Are adequate supports in place to safeguard their mental health and well-being?

The Irish Education System is regarded as a central bolt in the social, economic and cultural development of Irish society (DES, 2004). The system has been advanced by the quality of our teaching staff who empower learning that is vital for Irish economic and social progress. Hence, choosing this profession shoulders much responsibility, inspiring quality learning for all students, where the actions and characteristics of the teacher significantly link to the students learning experience and outcomes (Rockoff, 2004). While every job presents with its own set of challenges - frustration, tension and anxiety, teaching is no different (Ajaganandam & Rajan, 2013). Occupational stress (OS) is one of the most pressing challenges for teachers today, and has significant negative influences on a teacher's performance and job satisfaction (Greenglass et al, 2007).

The aim of this study was to establish the prevalence of OS among the profession while identifying the causes and manifestations of stress that Post Primary Teachers in Ireland experience within their working environment. Due to the nature of the information being sought, demographic, environmental and organisational predictors of OS among the profession were explored. This helped determine if existing safeguards are available, utilised, fit for purpose and in line with, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The Act sets out the obligations and rights of employers, employees and Government in implementing occupational health and safety policy in Ireland. An insightful and critical analysis of the findings are presented, and a summary of prominent points are conferred, and recommendations of such presented.