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**AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF DAYCARE TEACHER STRESS
AND LOCUS OF CONTROL**

by
Veronica Pearyl Schumann

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Psychology
College of Science and Mathematics
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
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at
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Thesis Chair: Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.

Dedication

I dedicate this manuscript to my family, friends, and professors who have supported my academic success.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Roberta Dihoff, George Brandon Gordon, and Dr. Terri Allen for their support and guidance throughout this research project.

Abstract

Veronica Schumann
AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF DAYCARE TEACHER STRESS AND
LOCUS OF CONTROL
2014-2015
Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.
Master of Arts in School Psychology

This study's purpose was to examine stress and locus of control in daycare teachers. A literature review was conducted to explore the various aspects of daycare services in America. The factors of locus of control and stress were signified and investigated as separate entities. The interaction between the two factors was also explored. In order to explore these two factors, a survey was administered to 19 daycare teachers from two different facilities. The presentation of both internal and external locus of control was expressed in approximately 70 percent of the teachers who were surveyed. A mild level of stress was reported in about 50 percent of this sample. There was no significance when a Pearson correlation was used to analyze the scores of the two factors. The study as a whole implies the need for stress reduction among teachers, which can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Development of an internal locus of control reduces stress and can be accomplished through reality therapy (Peterson, Chang, & Collins, 1997). Incorporating aspects of reality therapy may be beneficial in teacher training programs and workshops. This study's biggest limitation was the small sample size. This sample may not generalize to the entire population of daycare teachers. Future variations of this study should use a sample size that is more representative.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Need for Study

There is a need for more research involving non-parental care. The research that has been conducted remains inconsistent, with both negative and positive outcomes of children who receive non-parental care such as those who attend early childhood learning centers. The quality of the facility affects these outcomes (Pierrehumbert, Ramstein, Karmaniola, et al., 2002). Further research is aimed toward discovering positive qualities that lead to favorable outcomes.

Children are in day care for a variety of reasons. According to the U.S. Census, 15,060,140 out of 23,363,909 children under the age of six are in child care centers because both of the parents happen to work. Parents may also voluntarily place their children in these early learning centers for academic and social development. Childcare has been and still is one of the greatest investments people make, exceeding the cost of housing, college tuition, transportation, and food (NACCRA, 2014). Regardless of the reason behind the growing number of families utilizing these centers, parents expect positive outcomes given their investment of money and trust placed on the services provided.

Fostering learning at an early age is crucial when striving for a bright future. The earliest years of life holds the milestones that must be met when developing academically, socially, and physically. The environment for children in this age group is in the hands of their caretakers, so an optimal future for children starts with those who are most present in that child's life. The primary caretakers at the daycare centers are their

teachers. Daycare teachers tend to have elevated stress levels (Christie, 2013), which may have a negative impact on the children in their classrooms both directly and indirectly.

Stress and locus of control have been investigated in terms of their relationship in order to discover factors that contribute to this strain that teachers experience. A study was conducted that analyzed the locus of control, efficacy, and stress levels of workers by administering a series of surveys. Results indicated that those with an internal locus of control and high efficacy have lower levels of stress (Howatt, 2013). Implications suggest that teachers who have a high internal perception of their ability to control their environment would secure a better environment for children than those who have high external locus.

Purpose

This study aimed to discover if there is a relationship between teacher stress and locus of control among teachers who work in early learning centers. Further research in this area will increase awareness and knowledge of the potential issues that may not be apparent within these facilities. The quality of care that the children receive may be affected by the stress experienced by the teachers. This study also investigated the proportion of teachers that are lacking in internal locus of control and those who have high stress levels. The study of teacher stress and locus of control is applicable to the progression of daycare centers as well as the educational field.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that there will be a correlation between teacher stress and locus of control. Locus of control was explored in relation to the level of stress one experiences on an average day or when presented with conflict. If there is a correlation

between these two concepts, implications would suggest that training and education of teachers would incorporate supplemental coping skills for those who battle high stress levels and a high external locus of control.

Operational Definitions

Assistant teacher: Facilitator of the classroom who supports the head teacher's decisions and collaborates on procedural actions

Cortisol: A hormone that is released when one experiences stress

Daycare center/Early childhood center: Facility for children to learn, play, and socialize under the supervision of teachers.

External locus of control: An individual's perception of their fate being in the hands of their environment (Rotter, 1954)

Facility director: An individual who is in charge of controlling factors of an early learning center in terms of teachers and parents

Facility owner: An individual who is in charge of the overall operations within their early childhood care center.

Head teacher: Facilitator of the classroom who has ultimate control of the procedures

Internal locus of control: An individual's perception of their ability to manipulate their surroundings by taking action upon themselves (Rotter, 1954)

Locus of control: An individual's perception of their ability to manipulate their environment (Rotter, 1954)

Substitute teacher: Facilitator of the classroom when head or assistant teacher is absent

Assumptions

One of the most prevalent assumptions of this study is that daycare teachers are dissatisfied with their salary. It is also well-known that teaching is a stressful job, especially with such a young population. It is to be assumed that daycare teachers would perform better in their classrooms if they experienced low levels of stress.

An internal locus of control is favorable over an external locus of control in the professional world. It is to be assumed that daycare teachers would perform better in their classrooms if their locus of control was internal.

This study also goes off the premise that environmental factors and experiences within childhood impact individual lives through adulthood, which signifies the importance of quality caretakers.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study due to the small amount of resources and time. The sample size was limited to 19 teachers so it may not generalize to the population of daycare teachers. In addition, the survey that measured their stress level was designed for school age teachers, not daycare teachers. This may have affected the accuracy of the results. Also, the measurements of stress and locus of control were gathered via self-report- leaving room for inaccuracy or bias of the responses. This study was also administered while the teachers were on the job and it was time consuming, which may have skewed the results.

Summary

The quality of non-parental childcare may be a contributing factor to the outcome children's behavior and academic success. Young people need caregivers who are

capable of maintaining a calm and structured setting. Individuals who maintain an internal locus of control are more likely to exhibit self-efficacy and low stress, and are more likely to provide this type of environment (Howatt, 2013). Investigating how locus of control affects teacher stress is meant to uncover issues that may have gone unnoticed within the daycare field. Teachers are a strong influence on the children's experience at daycare, so it is important to explore factors that may impact the quality of their work ethic and investment. My interest in this topic was inspired by the classes that I have taken in both education and psychology as well as working in a daycare. This study will be supplemental to the future of early childhood education.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Need for Childcare

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 23.5 percent of preschoolers are in an organized childcare facility. There are many reasons parents enroll their children in daycare. It is a necessity for working parents who do not have other sources of childcare. Parents may also put their children in daycare for academic and social reasons (Holloway, Rambaud, & Fuller, 1995).

Awareness of Daycare Quality and Outcomes

Child care is a major investment and necessity to the lives of many households. Parents who are currently utilizing daycare services are generally satisfied, but only know about 45% of what goes on at the facility (Shpancer, Bowden, Ferrell, et al). The research behind this statistic involved a questionnaire that assessed the parental knowledge of the daycare's components and routines. On average, parents only answered 45% correctly. The lack of parental knowledge may be a factor in daycare quality.

Vermeer and IJzendoorn (2008) discuss the increase of cortisol levels of children in daycare, and the effects that group interactions may have on children who are away from their parents. They discuss that children who are in daycare have higher cortisol levels than those who are not, especially in those younger than 36 months. Another study was similar, but accounted for daycare quality. The most atypical cortisol levels are from children who attend low-quality daycare (Geoffroy, Cote, Parent, et al 2006). Both of these studies implicate the improvement of these facilities.

Research about the outcomes of daycare is scattered. Behavior problems have been linked to those who attend daycare (Vandell, Burchinal, Friedman, & Brownell, 2001). There is evidence that refutes the findings of these issues by not revealing any linkage between behavioral issues and daycare enrollment, however (Borge, Rutter, Cote, Tremblay, 2004). One study of daycare children was conducted by comparing the standardized test scores of those who received early childhood learning interventions and those who did not. Craig and Sharon Ramey (2004) found that those who have early academic exposure have a better chance of academic success. A major predictor of a positive outcome of daycare is the quality of the facility.

Quality of Daycare

Assuring a satisfactory quality of daycare centers is important for the children, parents and staff. The American Academy of Pediatrics (1973) states that a high quality daycare center has the following characteristics: experiential opportunities away from and in congruence with parents, an environment of learning and exploration, ventricles for health services, and social and emotional support. These norms continue to this day (Shpancer, 2006).

Single parents reported what they found most important in a daycare in a study conducted by Turner and Smith (1983). The two most significant aspects that the participants reported were cleanliness and quality of care. Noncompliance with inspection regulations is over ten percent in seven different areas of a daycare, with outside play hazard prevention at the highest rate of noncompliance at over almost fifty percent (Crowley, Sangchoon, Rosenthal, 2013). The teachers hold responsibility of this issue by not reporting any dangerous aspects of the playground to the supervisors and by

not properly following the protocol when watching the children. Teachers are normally asked to remain strategically located on the playground to ensure all students are visible while at play. Teachers may also not enforce safety rules on the playground.

Ensuring the daycare providers are constantly in check with keeping a clean environment will keep the children as germ-free as possible. As far as safety, it is very easy to turn a safe environment into a dangerous one. Just one neglectful act of a teacher can turn a peaceful day into a nightmare. A reduction of these accidents and number of sick days is inevitable when daycare staff follow proper safety and sanitary precautions. Low-income, low-quality care centers especially need attention in this area (Campbell, Perry & Milbourne).

An important aspect of ensuring a quality environment for children is the implementation of a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate (Bredekamp, 1993). This was reinforced by a survey conducted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Academics and discipline are two other significant components to an environment full of wholesome childhood experiences. Exposure to a supplemental and exploratory environment with experienced and enthusiastic teachers prepares children for a successful academic future. Teachers have the power to make their students' day enjoyable and stimulating or boring and miserable.

When children become bored and miserable, troublesome behaviors tend to kick in and may be hard to extinguish. Furthermore, discipline is a characteristic that is not an instinct, it must be learned, practiced, and fostered from an early age on through adulthood. An adequate daycare staff will be able to achieve and follow an appropriate protocol for disciplinary actions when children engage in undesirable behaviors.

Advocating for students to achieve self-monitoring habits will be the foundation for responsibility as their education progresses. It is in the hands of the daycare teachers to make sure that their students are practicing these skills in natural and appropriate ways.

When redirecting or supporting certain behaviors, there are right and wrong ways to do it. Duncan, Kemple and Smith conducted a study in 2000 involving the implementation of positive reinforcement in a first grade classroom setting. They found that using positive reinforcement resulted in confounding results, especially when the functions of certain behaviors are identified. Even though many early learning centers advocate this type of reinforcement, it is difficult to get an accurate view of whether or not teachers are actually using this approach in their classrooms.

For many parents and children, dropping off at daycare can be an extremely stress-inducing event. It is important for teachers to be able to ease the minds of parents and ensuring that their little ones are in good hands. The relationship between the parent and the teacher has an effect on how the child is treated and educated. This relationship involves a mutual understanding of each other's role and areas of responsibility. A study was conducted that displayed vignettes of situations that children experience at home and at daycare to parents. These parents were then asked in what situations they would include the teacher's assistance. Negative situations had a prevalent request for teacher assistance. Parental factors such as number of children, social support, and closeness with the teacher were also examined (Shpancer, 2000).

According to a study of African American children in kindergarten or preschool, depictions of high quality care was found to be a result of the education of teachers, the enjoyment teachers get from their jobs, and opportunities for professional development

(Iruka & Morgan, 2014). The individuals who have the most contact with the children are the teachers. Consistency in following curriculum is expected by the parents and the directors, in addition to supporting a safe, clean, and nurturing atmosphere. For teachers to perform at the best of their ability, it is important that the teacher is in good spirits for a majority of the time. An investigation of how resilience affects the well-being of teachers was conducted in comparison with non-teaching employees. 170 teachers were asked about their well-being in terms of topics such as job satisfaction as well as their resilience. The results showed that the higher resilience expressed by the teacher, the greater their well-being was (Pretsch, Flunger, & Schmidt 2012). In order for a teacher to be resilient, they must maintain some level of perceived control and low levels of stress.

Teacher well-being was investigated in another study that analyzed thirty articles pertaining to the topic. The results were varied and the study concluded that more research was needed because of the fragmented results (Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2013). Exploring factors that contribute towards teacher well-being and resilience may guide future teacher education and training.

Factors that Influence Teacher Stress

There are many factors that contribute to the stress experienced by daycare teachers. Salary, interactions with superiors, and interactions with children will be explored in relation to teacher stress.

The responsibility that the teachers hold is tremendous, so an adequate salary should be granted. More than half of daycare teachers report their jobs as “stressful” (Christie, 2013). The article with this claim further explores the salary of these individuals, which reveals a median salary of less than half of the nation’s median

average income (Luhby, 2013). The demands and responsibilities that are placed on these teachers do not match their compensation.

A study was conducted in North Carolina that found a relation between teacher's supplementary salary and the turn-over rate of teachers. Salary was a determining factor in the teacher's decision to leave their position. Another study investigated the turn-over rates in teachers. The negative factors that teachers face in this field of work leads to a turnover rate of about 30 percent (Porter, 2012). Another study discovered a positive relationship between salary and student achievement using a Person correlation (Drummond, 2011). The higher the teachers' salaries were, the greater the student's achievement.

Monnat and Beehr (2014) concluded in their study of meaningfulness within the workforce that supervisors have an effect on the well being of their employees. The more positive feelings the employee had to their employer, the higher their scores were for well-being. It is crucial to explore how teachers feel about their superiors. If a high percentage of teachers despise their employers, they are likely to resent their job and even their students.

A study conducted in Singapore explored factors that affect the outcome of teacher performance. Teachers' perceptions of their supervisors' empowerment behaviors were found to be positively correlated aspects of their own empowerment-meaning, autonomy, competence, and impact- when using the School Leader Empowerment Behavior scale (Lee & Nie, 2014). The definition of teacher empowerment involves active participation in goal setting for the school in regards to what and how to teach (Bolin, 1989). Having a sense of empowerment constitutes the ability to cope with stress

(Pines, et al., 2012). Maintaining a positive perspective of superior staff is a contributing factor to teacher stress.

The relationship between the teacher and the child has also been investigated as a factor in workplace stress. As a result of the study, high stress levels in teachers have been associated with conflicted teacher-child relationships (Whitaker, Dearth-Wesley, & Gooze, 2015). It is important for teachers to foster positive relationships with their students for that reason. Two important aspects of a positive teacher-child relationship include the classroom ratio and the format of the classroom. The optimal characteristics are a low teacher-student ratio in a room that is partitioned to allow for separate play areas (Field, 1980).

Locus of Control

The United States is an individualistic, Anglo-European (Spector et al. 2002) nation that values independence and control of one's destiny (Gudykunst 1998). This implies that success is achieved through an internal locus of control. Applying this to the analysis of daycare teachers may contribute to the overall quality of care that the children receive. An individual who has a high internal locus of control believes that their own efforts dictate their success and failures (Rotter 1966). Internal locus of control has been linked to an overall more positive mood (Henson & Chang, 1998). Emotional states dictate one's cognitive performance and ability to multitask (Zwosta, Hommel, Goschke, et al., 2013). Also, having a higher internal locus of control related to better problem-solving skills (Konan, 2013). Teachers who exhibit these qualities may be the most successful.

Individuals who have the perception that one's rewards and consequences are caused by forces outside of themselves have an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). More stress is experienced when individuals have an external locus of control because they are more likely to experience feelings of helplessness when faced with conflict (Adeyemi-Bello, 2001).

High levels of external locus of control have been linked to negative mood experience (Henson & Chang, 1998) and one's performance decreases as mood becomes more negative (Freid, et al, 2000). This type of locus may not be the most successful outlook at the workplace and in life. Teachers who have an internal locus of control will have more success with children when faced with chaos and other conflicts. They will also be more likely to have a better relationship with their employers because they will be less likely to blame mistakes on external factors.

Teacher Stress and Locus of Control Interaction

There may be an interaction between the loci of control that teachers hold and the levels of stress that they experience based on previous research. A study conducted in Taiwan investigated this topic by distributing a questionnaire with appropriate instruments of measurement for locus of control and job stress. The study revealed that those who have high internal locus of control have low work related stress (Chen & Silverthorne 2008). High external locus of control in teachers and severe job stress has been found to have an effect on each other in qualitative research (Crothers, Kanyongo, & Kolbert et al., 2010). This study investigated Western and non-Western educator's perception of work related stress and locus of control. Results were significant for

Western societies and weak for non-Western societies. Locus of control has a great effect of work related stress in the United States.

A study that revealed teachers with high levels of stress will perceive child behavioral problems more than those who are less stressed (Friedman-Krauss, Raver, Neuspiel, & Kinsel, 2014). One who perceives child-behavior problems more than one who does not may indicate the individual's locus of control. An individual with an internal locus of control may attribute a child misbehaving as a result of their own teaching tactics. This teacher is likely to engage in effective problem solving skills (Konan, 2013) and changing approaches until the desired results are acquired. A teacher with high external locus of control may attribute the misbehaving child as an unmanageable nuisance who will always be uncontrollable- that is the way the child is. The teacher with high internal locus of control would feel accomplished, while the teacher with high external locus of control remains helplessly disturbed by the behavior.

Contributing Factors

An older study found an interaction between locus of control and burnout rates among daycare teachers. Results deduced that the higher level of internal locus of control, the more accomplished the teacher feels, indicating less stress (Fuqua and Coture, 1986). A factor that indicated this stress level had to do with the age of the children, with older children inducing more of a burnout rate. Occupational stress and burnout rates were investigated to discover if locus of control and leader-member exchange are predictive factors (Nufer, 2013). Those who have a high external locus of control and reside in the out-group for the leader-member exchange had higher rates of stress and burnout. The research implications suggest that teachers who maintain a high

level of internal locus of control would be favorable over those with an external locus of control.

Job applications and interview questions that assess one's locus of control may be beneficial in deciding who is hired. It may not be ethical to decide whether or not to hire a person solely on their locus of control, but improving the responsibility of one's actions may be an option. Reality therapy has been effective in improving one's locus of control (Peterson, Chang, & Collins, 1997). This research is supportive of this exploratory investigation of locus of control and teacher stress.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were daycare teachers. Nineteen female daycare teachers were chosen who have worked in a daycare for an average of five years (between 1-19). In order for the subject to participate, they must have been employed at the school for at least three months. Subjects were recruited by the co-investigator asking permission of the daycare directors to distribute surveys to their teachers during the school day.

The co-investigator explained the aspects of confidentiality and anonymity of the study, as well as the potential risks and benefits. The co-investigator also explained that the subjects were free to decide whether or not to participate in the study and ensured that they were free to discontinue at any time.

Instrumentation

A survey was used to assess the interpretations of locus of control and stress experienced by teachers in early childhood care centers. The survey gathered information about the different factors that contribute to teacher stress. Another component of the survey explained if the teacher exhibits more of an internal or external locus of control. The results that described the teachers' locus of control and stress come from the Locus of Control Instrument and the Teacher Concerns Inventory.

The Locus of Control instrument is an adaptation of Julian Rotter's original scale (See appendix B). It was developed by a psychology professor named Terry Pettijohn. Rotter (1954) is the father of the social learning theory as well as the locus of control

theory. This particular modified instrument has been used in various business organizations to determine factors such as retention and hiring decisions (Yemen & Clawson, 2003). In order to assess an individual's locus of control, the Locus of Control Instrument listed a variety of statements that some individuals may or may not find true. These statements tend to indicate whether an individual perceives their control as a product of their own choice or through environmental dictation. For example, if an individual answered true for the statement "People must be the master of their own fate," they show signs of an internal locus of control. Answering false to this statement may indicate an external locus of control because they do not agree that they have control over the events that happen to them.

The Teacher Concerns Inventory (See appendix A), created by Michael J. Fimian (1988) provides evidence of content, convergent and factorial validity. This model breaks down teacher stress into various components: time management, work-related stressors, professional distress, discipline and motivation, professional investment, emotional manifestations fatigue manifestations, cardiovascular manifestations, gastronomical manifestations, and behavioral manifestations. The total score was then calculated to gather an overall measure of the individuals' stress as a teacher. The vast areas of stress that are analyzed in this survey ensure that not only mental stress is accounted for, but physical manifestations as well, because not all individuals experience stress the same way.

Procedures

Surveys were distributed to teachers from two different daycares. The teachers were chosen via convenience sampling. The survey did not impose any harm on the participants. As the participants completed the teacher stress survey, they were asked to average scores of each section as well as the total average score. The co-investigator took the total average scores (0-5) of the teacher stress surveys and the locus of control scores and transcribed them into SPSS to conduct a Pearson correlation.

Statistical Analysis

The scores of locus of control and teacher stress ranged from zero to five. For locus of control, zero indicated high internal and five indicated high external. For the teacher stress, zero indicated no stress and five indicated high stress. A Pearson correlation was conducted that compared the scores of teacher stress and locus of control. This was executed through SPSS. This type of analysis reflects the goal of the study because it results in the extent the two variables relate.

Chapter 4

Results

All participants were asked to complete the same survey regarding locus of control and teacher stress. Nineteen female participants completed the survey properly and were included in the data analysis. All women experienced some level of stress at their job. The majority of the daycare teachers reported mild levels of stress. The daycare teachers' locus of control reports were a combination of internal and external locus of control. On the survey that measured their locus of control, these teachers agreed with around half of the internalized loci sentences. The presentation of both internal and external locus of control was expressed in approximately 70 percent of the teachers who were surveyed. Mild levels of stress were reported in about 50 percent of this sample.

A statistical procedure of a correlation was used to analyze the results of these surveys. A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between teacher stress and locus of control. It was hypothesized that there would be a correlation between the two factors. There was no significant correlation between teacher stress and locus of control [$r=.325$, $n=19$, $p=.174$], although *Figure 1* almost resembles a positive relationship. There is a convergence of scores in the median area of the graph with an outlier at both of the extremes of the graph. *Table 1* reports the scores that the teachers received on the teacher stress portion of the survey and the part of the survey that assesses their locus of control.

Table 1
Reports of Teacher Stress and Locus of Control Scores.

Stress	None (0-.99)	Low (1-1.99)	Mild (2-2.99)	Moderate (3-3.99)	High (4-5)
	0	3	9	6	1
LOC	High Internal (0-.99)	Internal (1-1.99)	Both (2-2.99)	External (3-3.99)	High External (4-5)
	0	5	13	1	0

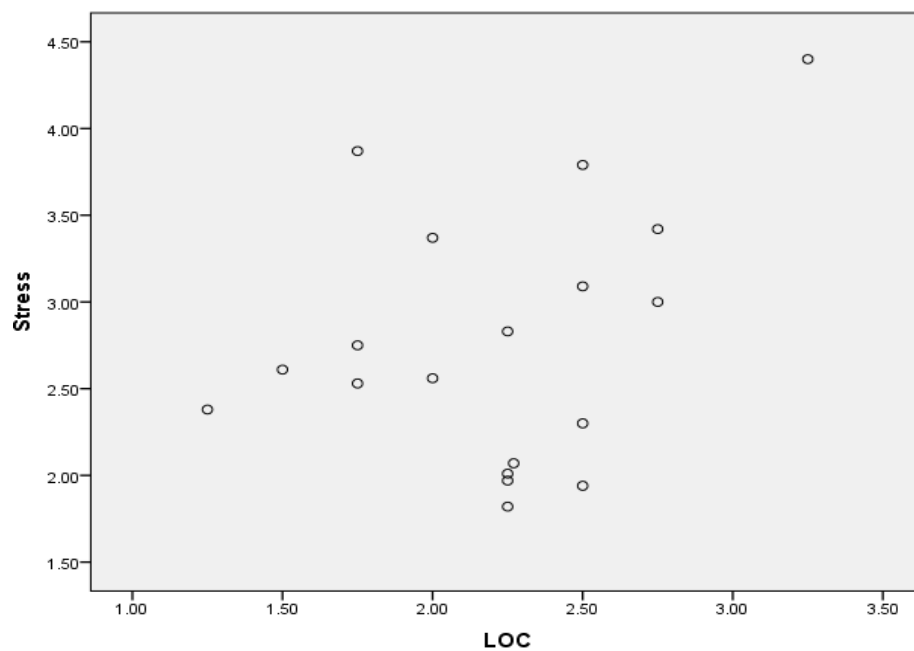


Figure 1. Scatter Plot of the Correlation Between Teacher Stress and Locus of Control
Note. Finding is not significant at $p > .05$.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Conclusion

The conclusion to this study revealed the sample has moderate levels of stress and both an external and internal locus of control, although the factors of locus of control and teacher stress are not correlated. Previous research suggests the ideal teacher as high internal locus of control and low stress. It is possible to increase the internalization of one's control through methods of reality therapy. In a study that observed teachers locus of control and other variables before and after attending a two-day workshop that increases self-understanding and taking efficient control of their lives, their internal locus of control increased as well as other personal improvements (Parish, 1988). Teachers who display high levels of external locus of control and high occupational stress may benefit from these types of workshops. The optimization of teachers' well-being is crucial to the efficacy of daycare facilities.

Reflecting on previous literature, teachers with high internal locus of control had low stress and those with high external locus of control had high stress, which infers that teachers with mild stress may exhibit both internal and external locus of control. The presentation of stress and locus in the sample may be related to the fragmented results that divulge the outcomes of children who attend daycare.

Occupational stress, sources of occupational stress, and job satisfaction was measured in a study that had a larger population of teachers in a more diversified setting. This study found that teachers who have a mild to moderate level of stress report satisfaction within their jobs, while teachers who have very high stress report little satisfaction as a teacher

(Hawe, Tuck, Manthei, Adair, & Moore, 2000). The teachers who participated in the current study may all experience levels of job satisfaction based on their reported stress levels.

Daycare teachers' level of stress did not significantly correlate to their locus of control in this investigation. Although this study did not reveal a correlation, it pointed out that all teachers do experience some level of stress at their jobs. The presence of both external and internal locus of control may be related to the moderate level of stress. Those who experience long-term mild to moderate stress levels are at higher risk for developing psychiatric diseases such as depression later in life (Ohman, Bergdahl, Nyberg, & Nilsson, 2007). This implies that the stress levels in daycare teachers should be monitored and managed if needed.

Some studies report the experience beneficial outcomes such as academic advantages later in life (Shriver, 2010), while others report negative outcomes in children such as behavioral problems (Borge, Rutter, Cote, & Tremblay, 2004). The inconsistent results may relate to the inconsistency of daycare outcomes.

Limitations

This study was confined to a limited amount of resources. There is a self-report bias in this study, so the teachers may not have consistently provided accurate information. Teachers who took this survey may not have answered truthfully because their responses may jeopardize their jobs if their superiors were to see it. Although this was not a potential situation to occur in this particular study, the possibility may have skewed their responses.

This study was administered during the school day, so the teachers may not have been in the best spirits to sit down with a survey. It was time consuming and required the participant to add and average their scores. This may frustrate the participant and skew the results. Aside from the frustration, there is the possibility that the participants did not score their surveys correctly due to human error. This could be accounted for in future research by obtaining a more concise version of the study.

The sample size was limited as well. Nineteen teachers is not an accurate representation of the entire daycare teacher population. This limitation could be eliminated by beginning data collection sooner to have enough time to recruit and adequate sample of subjects. Also, teachers were selected from only two schools participated in this survey. Both of these daycares were in similar demographic and socio-economic categories, which may have affected their responses. This could be adjusted by starting the collection of data sooner, to assure that there is enough time to include multiple daycares in more diversified regions.

The survey that was used to assess teacher stress is not specifically designed for daycare teachers. This may also contribute to the limitations of this study. Daycare teachers have different experiences than school age teachers based on the ages of their students, the curriculum, their responsibilities, their salary and their superiors. This could be adjusted in future investigations by finding or creating a survey that is tailored to the stress experienced by teachers of early learning.

Future Research

Implications for further investigation should involve the distribution of this survey to a larger population of daycare teachers. Having a larger population would have a more

accurate overview of the average stress level and control perception of daycare teachers. In addition, the diversity of the daycare teachers in the United States should be replicated for the same purposes. Variations of this study would be more successful with a sample that would generalize to the population that is being researched. Future studies should be conducted in multiple areas with different socio-economic statuses.

Further research should compare factors such as the components of teacher stress, the outcome of the students, parental satisfaction, and employer evaluations of teachers. The relationship between teacher stress and aspects of the student's experience will expand on this research. This can be assessed by determining the teacher's stress level and comparing it to an evaluation of the students' progress.

To get a better picture of stress and locus of control of daycare teachers, it may be more useful to utilize focus groups to obtain this information. One-on-one interviews may also be effective. These forms of data collection may provide more detailed experiences of the teachers in regards to these two factors.

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Appendix A

Teacher Concerns Inventory



TEACHER CONCERNS INVENTORY

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.

Examples:

I feel insufficiently prepared for my job. 1 2 3 4 5

If you feel very strongly that you are insufficiently prepared for your job, you would circle number 5.

I feel that if I step back in either effort or commitment,
I may be seen as less competent. 1 2 3 4 5

If you never feel this way, and the feeling does not have noticeable strength, you would circle number 1.

	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 too 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 _____.

Then, divide by 10; enter the Total Score here _____.

Demographic Variables

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)

Elementary Middle School Secondary

With what type of students do you work?

Nonhandicapped Handicapped

Which is the most advanced degree you have?

Bachelors 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 B

Locus of Control Instrument



UVA-OB-0786

THE LOCUS OF CONTROL

Please check true or false to the statements below that best fit your own beliefs. Please do so before reading the rest of this note.

Locus of Control Instrument ¹		
	TRUE	FALSE
1. I usually get what I want in life.		
2. I need to be kept informed about news events.		
3. I never know where I stand with other people.		
4. I do not really believe in luck or chance.		
5. I think that I could easily win a lottery.		
6. If I do not succeed on a task, I tend to give up.		
7. I usually convince others to do things my way.		
8. People make a difference in controlling crime.		
9. The success I have is largely a matter of chance.		
10. Marriage is largely a gamble for most people.		
11. People must be the master of their own fate.		
12. It is not important for me to vote.		
13. My life seems like a series of random events.		
14. I never try anything that I am not sure of.		
15. I earn the respect and honors I receive.		
16. A person can get rich by taking risks.		
17. Leaders are successful when they work hard.		
18. Persistence and hard work usually lead to success.		
19. It is difficult to know who my real friends are.		
20. Other people usually control my life.		

¹ A professor in the psychology department at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania, Terry Pettijohn developed this variation to Rotter's original Locus of Control survey.

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