CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
**Introduction**

The ultimate focus of any educational planning and practice, is the result of four factors, namely, the teacher, the taught, the instruction material and the learning environment. The main agent to activate the process of education in an organized manner is the teacher. How his qualifications, training and experience influence his performance is fairly known to many. But how his personality make up and environmental factors affect the quality of his instruction is not so obvious.

Teaching, like every other type of job, has some stress built-in. Some teachers take it lightly while others perceive it as a threat to their professional worth and well-being. Their professional effectiveness is bound to be influenced by it.

A view of the previous studies amply points to the prevalence of occupational stress among teachers, the different demographic, personality and environmental factors associated with it, the different factors that cause it, and the different coping strategies teachers adopt to face, contain and eliminate it.

Almost all the previous studies have been done abroad. The validity of their findings cannot be justifiably extended to the Indian population. This formed the basis for this research.
The Problem

Objectives of the Study
The study was conducted:

a) to find out if the demographic variables of age, sex, marital status, total teaching experience, and qualification are related to perceived teacher stress;

b) to find out if the personality variables of locus of control, trait-anxiety, neuroticism, and extraversion are related to perceived teacher stress;

c) to find out if the attitudinal variables of teacher morale and teacher job satisfaction are related to perceived teacher stress; and

d) to find out if the environmental variables of consideration and initiating structure, dimensions of principal's behaviour, school organization climate, type of school (high versus senior secondary), location of school (rural versus urban), management of school (government versus private), size of school, subject-taught, and teaching load are related to perceived teacher stress.

Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were tested:
a) Perceived Teacher Stress and Demographic Variables

It was hypothesized that there were no significant relationships between perceived teacher stress and the demographic variables of age, total teaching experience, marital status, and level of educational qualifications.

It was further hypothesized that female teachers experienced significantly higher level of perceived occupational stress than their male colleagues.

b) Perceived Teacher Stress and Personality Variables

It was hypothesized that there was a significant positive relationship between teacher stress and the personality variables of external locus of control, trait-anxiety and neuroticism.

It was further hypothesized that there was a significant relationship between perceived teacher stress and the personality dimension of extraversion.

c) Perceived Teacher Stress and Attitudinal Variables

It was hypothesized that there was a significant negative relationship between perceived teacher stress and the attitudinal variables of teacher morale and teacher job satisfaction.

d) Perceived Teacher Stress and Environmental Variables

It was hypothesized that there was a significant relationship between perceived teacher stress and the consideration and initiating structure dimensions of principal's behaviour.
It was further hypothesized that there was a significant positive relationship between perceived teacher stress and the environmental variables of size of school and weekly teaching load.

It was hypothesized that there were no significant differences in the perceived occupational stress scores of teachers teaching mathematics/sciences and humanities.

Lastly, it was hypothesized that teachers teaching in senior secondary, urban and privately managed schools, and those with closed organizational climate experienced greater levels of perceived occupational stress than those teaching in high, rural and government schools, and those with open climate, respectively.

Method and Procedure

The data for the investigation were collected by employing a descriptive survey method in which all the tools used were self-report measures. A final sample of 255 teachers from 25 high and senior secondary schools representing urban/rural areas and private/government managements, participated in the study. The sample consisted of teachers from four districts of Punjab, namely, Amritsar, Firozpur, Ludhiana and Ropar, and the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Data were collected on five demographic variables, namely, age, sex, teaching experience, marital status and qualification; four personality variables, namely, locus of control, trait-anxiety, neuroticism, and extraversion; two
attitudinal variables, namely, teacher morale and job satisfaction; and, nine environmental variables, namely, consideration and initiating structure dimensions of principal's behaviour, location, type, management and size of school, organizational climate of school, subject-taught, and teaching load.

Fifteen 'stapled' sets of questionnaires were randomly given to teachers in each school. Teachers were asked to respond to each measure as per the instructions given for it. As it required nearly three hours to respond to all the questionnaires, teachers worked on them both within and outside the school hours, whenever and wherever they had a chance to do so. They took two to seven days to return the responded questionnaires, which were collected through the senior-most teacher in each school. The confidentiality of the responses was sincerely promised and religiously kept.

Findings

* The three dichotomies of high versus senior secondary school, rural versus urban school, and government versus private school, emerged as significant discriminators between a high and low stress scores. In the first dichotomy, senior secondary school teachers reported greater levels of stress. Likewise, urban school teachers reported greater levels of stress. As for the third dichotomy, the interaction effects showed private secondary school teachers
experiencing greater stress in urban areas while government senior secondary school teachers experiencing it in rural areas.

* Out of an array of twenty independent variables, representing demographic, personality, attitudinal and environmental domains, twelve were found significantly related to the dependent variable, eleven of them at .01 level of significance. They are locus of control, trait-anxiety, and neuroticism from the personality domain; job satisfaction and teacher morale from the attitudinal domain; and consideration, initiating structure, disengagement, esprit, production emphasis and thrust from the environmental domain.

* Among the demographic variables, only the educational qualification emerged as a significant correlate of perceived teacher stress. Post-graduate teachers reported significantly higher levels of stress than their colleagues with lower qualifications. Other variables in this domain, namely, age, sex, marital status and teaching experience failed to show any conclusive relationship with perceived teacher stress.

* From the environmental domain school organizational climate and school size failed to show any significant relationship with the dependent variable.

* A stepwise multiple regression analysis of the whole sample and four sub-groups revealed teacher morale as
the single, most stable significant predictor of teacher stress. Out of the five analyses, it emerged as number one in four of them and number two, after 'thrust', in the fifth one. Its contribution to the total variance is substantial, ranging from 18.1 per cent in urban schools to a maximum of 29.9 per cent in senior secondary schools. The second significant predictor is the 'consideration' dimension of principal's leadership behaviour. This emerged as the significant predictor in four of the five regression analyses. Other significant predictors are trait-anxiety, neuroticism, disengagement, thrust, teaching load, locus of control and teaching experience.

**Educational Implications**

The teacher is the main activator in the process of education of a child. Any factor that, directly or indirectly, has a bearing on his effectiveness in that process is of paramount significance. Perceived teacher stress is one such factor. With that assumption, the present study was undertaken. The specific aim was to identify the correlates of teacher stress. The results reported here have great relevance both for teachers and administrators.

The results revealed insignificant contribution made by age, sex, teaching experience and marital status to teacher stress. Yet the greater level of stress experienced by post-graduate teachers is a pointer to them to be wary at that
level; moreso, if their outlook is marked by external locus of control, if they are already anxiety-prone, and also, if they are high on neuroticism. But the effect of all these variables may be brought under control, depending on the attitudes of teachers. Notwithstanding the effect of other variables, a teacher may still feel comfortable if he has a high degree of job satisfaction, and, if his morale is high.

The administrators must take note of this finding. If the principal's behaviour is marked by consideration for his staff, and, if he knows and practises a proper structuring of roles for his staff (leaving no scope for role conflict/ambiguity), he may be assured of full cooperation of the latter. The findings that those teachers who teach mathematics/sciences, and those who teach in urban and senior secondary schools experience greater levels of stress than those teaching humanities, in rural and high schools, respectively also point to the fact that the school authorities must be flexible in dealing with their staff so that each teacher works at his optimum.

**Suggestions for further Research**

First of all there is a need to replicate the present study on the same population, taking a similar sample, as the present one is nothing but an exploratory attempt to identify the correlates of perceived teacher stress.
The relationship between demographic variables, such as age, sex, marital status, and so on, with perceived teacher stress, remains as 'foggy' as before the present study was undertaken. A study to look at this aspect, may be with a different design, e.g., by controlling the effect of such variables, is certainly needed to clarify the relationships, if any, between perceived teacher stress and these variables.

Four personality variables, namely, locus of control, trait-anxiety, neuroticism and extraversion were looked at for their relationship with perceived teacher stress. The first three have come out with definitive and unambiguous results. The fourth, extraversion, has failed to show any directional relationship. A study is required not only to verify these findings but also, some other personality variables, such as, 'hardiness', 'assertiveness', 'self-confidence', and so on, need to be included in a future study so as to complete the picture.

As regards the environmental variables, there are many which could not be included due to the time and financial constraints. These variables, such as material equipments in school, extra-curricular activities, role of parent-teacher associations, and the like are to be looked at.