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Effect of Occupational Stress on Psychological Well-Being among School Teachers

Atul Kumar Singh[1], Prof. Mithilesh Singh[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi.
[2]Principal, Agrasen Kanya P.G. College, Varanasi.

ABSTRACT

Occupational stress refers to a particular stress experienced as a result of job-related factors. It is recognized in various cases as a major contributor to diminished psychological well-being. The present study is conducted to see the effect of occupational stress on the psychological well-being of teachers of Government and private schools. For this study, 50 Government school teachers and 50 private school teachers were selected from various schools of the Varanasi district by using the purposive sampling method. To assess the occupational stress of teachers, Dr. Meenakshi Sharma and Dr. Satvinder Kaur' Teacher's Occupational Stress Scale was used. Carol D. Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (42 items) was used to collect the data of psychological well-being. For statistical analysis, the correlation coefficient and t-test are used to assess the relationship and differences. The results indicate that the occupational stress of teachers affects the psychological well-being of teachers in both Government and private schools. It shows a negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being. The results indicate that occupational stress affects the psychological well-being of teachers, both Government and private, and it shows a negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being. To make better psychological well-being, it should be necessary to control stress level by using different behavioral techniques or coping strategies.

Keywords: occupational stress, psychological well being, teachers

INTRODUCTION

OCCPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress develops from stressors present in the workplace, including excessive workload, tight deadlines, limited autonomy, ineffective communication, and role ambiguity or conflict. It may appear through physical symptoms such as tiredness, headaches, and digestive disturbances, as well as emotional symptoms like anxiety, irritability, and diminished motivation. The term *stress* is derived from the Latin word *stringere*, which means "to draw tight" (Oladinrin et al., 2014; Ross, 2020).

The World Health Organization has identified stress as the "health epidemic of the 21st century," emphasizing its serious consequences for both mental and physical health (Fink, 2016). Hans Selye, widely acknowledged as the "father of stress," was the first to differentiate between positive stress (eustress) and negative stress (distress) (as cited in Landy & Conte, 2016). Likewise, Oladinrin et al. (2014) described stress as existing on a continuum, where at one end it can preserve life and enhance performance, and at the other it can become destructive.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualized stress as a transactional process, defining it as a relationship between an individual and the environment that involves personal characteristics and the nature of environmental demands. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), job stress refers to harmful physical and emotional reactions that occur when job demands exceed an employee's abilities, resources, or needs. Such imbalance may result in adverse health outcomes and even injuries. Workplace stress emerges from the interaction between the individual and the work environment. Additionally, factors beyond the workplace—such as family responsibilities, secondary employment, and poor physical or mental health—can further intensify stress levels.

Vadhiya (2017) examined occupational stress among government and private sector employees and reported significant differences between the two groups. Although no significant difference was observed between male employees in government and private sectors, a significant mean difference was found between male and female employees within the private sector.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is characterized by positive interpersonal relationships, self-acceptance, a sense of purpose in life, personal growth, autonomy, and environmental mastery. It is closely associated with improved physical health, greater happiness, and increased longevity. Importantly, psychological well-being can be enhanced by cultivating meaning in life, maintaining optimism, and strengthening social support networks.

Psychological well-being reflects an individual's emotional health and overall functioning of life. It includes dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life. Diener et al. (1999) proposed that subjective well-being is a broad construct comprising both affective and cognitive components. The affective component includes positive affect, which refers to feelings of enthusiasm, alertness, and activity, and negative affect, which involves experiences of distress. Negative affect encompasses various unpleasant emotional states such as anger, guilt, and fear (Watson et al., 1988). Emotional well-being is essential for experiencing happiness and effectively managing daily responsibilities. Developing positive habits—such as identifying personal strengths or recalling pleasant memories—can gradually improve optimism and overall psychological health.

Teachers' Stress and Psychological Well-Being

Numerous studies consistently report that teachers experience considerable stress across different educational settings and levels. Such stress can negatively affect their health, job satisfaction, and teaching effectiveness. Understanding the sources and consequences of teacher stress is essential for designing supportive interventions and improving educational outcomes. Teaching is widely regarded as one of the most demanding professions (Brady et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2005) due to frequent changes in educational policies, challenging parental expectations, and the responsibility of addressing students' behavioral, emotional, and academic needs (Herman et al., 2020). Teacher stress is commonly defined as adverse physical and psychological responses—such as anger, frustration, or depression—arising from job-related demands when there is an imbalance between risk factors and protective resources (Prilleltensky et al., 2016).

Mohammadreza and Saba (2016) compared psychological well-being and job stress among teachers working in special and ordinary schools and found significant differences between the two groups. Teachers in ordinary schools reported higher levels of job stress than those in special schools. Teacher

well-being is increasingly recognized as an important concern for both schools and society, as it is closely linked to teaching effectiveness, student achievement, and educational administration (Duckworth et al., 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

McCallum et al. (2017), drawing from McCallum and Price (2016), described teacher well-being as dynamic and adaptable, shaped by individual, familial, cultural, and contextual influences over time. Their thematic analysis identified several contributing factors, including the development of personal skills and contextual supports such as effective school leadership, which play a crucial role in promoting teacher well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

K. D. V. Prasad et al. (2025), in their study titled *The Relationship Between Work–Life Balance and Psychological Well-Being: An Empirical Study of Metro Rail Travelers Working in the Information Technology Sector*, examined the association between work–life balance and psychological well-being among information technology employees who regularly commuted by metro rail during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in India (2022). The researchers adopted a quantitative survey design to collect data. Structural equation modeling (SEM) results indicated that occupational stress had a statistically significant impact on psychological well-being ($p < .005$). Furthermore, significant effects were observed for the psychological well-being dimensions of environmental mastery ($p < .001$) and self-acceptance ($p < .05$). With regard to work–life balance components, work interference with personal life (WIPL), work enhancement of personal life (WPLE), and personal life interference with work (PLIW) demonstrated statistically significant relationships ($p < .05$; $p < .001$) across all four dimensions of psychological well-being. The findings suggested that despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, commuters were able to maintain a certain level of work–life balance.

Rawat and Dani (2024) explored the relationships among work-related stress, coping resources, and job satisfaction among meal servers working in the hotel and catering industry. Data were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. The results revealed that job demands, job control, and work–life balance practices were the most influential predictors of occupational stress. Specifically, high job demands, limited job control, and inadequate work–life balance practices were associated with elevated levels of stress among employees.

Reddy and Vijayan (2023), in their study titled *Psychological Well-Being and Occupational Stress Among Blue Collars*, investigated the relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers. A quantitative research design was employed using standardized instruments, namely the Psychological Well-Being Scale and the Occupational Stress Scale. The study sample consisted of 150 blue-collar workers, divided equally into two groups: 75 employees with fixed income and 75 with variable income. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between psychological well-being and occupational stress. Additionally, significant differences were observed between fixed-income and variable-income groups in both psychological well-being and occupational stress levels.

Said and El-Shafei (2020) conducted a study examining occupational stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions among frontline nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic in Zagazig City, Egypt. The results indicated that nurses working in COVID-19 triage hospitals experienced higher levels of physical, psychological, and social stressors compared to nurses in general hospitals. Major stressors identified among triage hospital nurses included excessive workload, dealing with death and dying,

personal fears and anxieties, strict biosecurity measures, and social stigma. In contrast, the primary stressor reported by nurses in general hospitals was the risk of infection exposure.

Nirmala and Hidayathullah (2018), in their study titled *Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-Being: A Study on Employees in Food Delivery Services*, adopted a descriptive research design and used convenience sampling to collect data from 180 food delivery executives in Malappuram district, Kerala. Ryff's 18-item Psychological Well-Being Scale was utilized for data collection. The results demonstrated that occupational stress played a significant role in influencing employees' psychological well-being.

Similarly, Hari (2018), in his article *Occupational Stress and Women Nurses – A Study on Corporate Hospitals in Kerala*, investigated occupational stress among female nurses working in five selected corporate hospitals in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. The findings revealed that major contributors to occupational stress included irregular working hours, excessive workload, inadequate welfare schemes, lack of workplace ethics, and absence of union support.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Generally, Occupational stress negatively correlated with Psychological well-being among common masses. In the field of Teaching, occupational stress also affect the psychological well-being of teachers, either Government or private school teachers; both are affected by occupational stress, which keep impact on well-being of teachers. Hence, This study will focus to see the effect of occupational stress on psychological well-being among Government and private school teachers.

Objectives

1. To examine the relation between occupational stress and psychological well-being among Government and private school teachers.
2. To assess and compare the occupational stress between Government and private school teachers.
3. To assess and compare the psychological well-being between Government and private school teachers.

Hypotheses

H1: There would be a significant difference in the level of occupational stress between Government and private school teachers.

H2: There would be a significant difference in the level of psychological well-being between Government and private school teachers.

H3: There would be a negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample was comprised of 50 Government School Teachers and 50 Private School Teachers from various schools of Varanasi region.

Inclusion Critera

1. Teachers of both, Government and private Schools are included.
2. Age range from 25 to 45 years old ,only male teachers are included.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Participants who are suffering from chronic disease are excluded.
2. Female teachers are excluded.

Reasearch Design

In this study, a Correlational research design is used between variables. Correlational research design observes the relationship between predictor and criterion variables without manipulating them.

Tools

1. M. Sharma and S. Kaur. Teacher's Occupational Stress Scale (TOSS–SMKS) English. This scale is consists 30 items divided into nine Dimensions—I. Workload, II. Role Ambiguity, III. Groupism and External Pressure, IV. Responsibility for Others, V. Powerlessness, VI. Work Relationships, VII. Working Conditions, VIII. Personal Inadequacy, IX. Lack of Motivation. Test re-test reliability of this scale is .801 ($p<.01$). The scale was personally administered on a sample of 1800 teachers working in all types of educational institutions (both government and private) including primary schools, elementary schools, secondary schools, colleges).
2. Psychological well being scale Developed by Psychologist Carol D. Ryff , the 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale measures six aspects of wellbeing ; autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff et al., 2007; adapted from Ryff, 1989).validity of this scale is highly positive and also test re-test reliability of this scale is .902 ($p<.001$).

PROCEDURES

For this study, The participants are approached after taking permission from Schools. Fifty Teachers (N=50) from Government school and Fifty Teachers (N=50) from Private School are selected from Primary schools of Varanasi and nearby areas through using purposive Sampling method. Initially, a good rapport would be made to administer the test through questionnaire and direct interaction, some additional factors may also be considered to obtain the data. Detail Instructions are given to the subject before administering the test. After the completion of the Test, Data are separately and confidentially collected from each subject and the result are analyzed through statistical implication.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 20). t-Test and correlation analyses are used to identify significant predictors of changes in criterion variables.

RESULT

Table 1: Mean, SD and t score of occupational stress

	Group	N	MEAN	MEAN Difference	S.D.	t- value	Remark
Occupational Stress	Government school teacher	50	92.02	17.60	5.12	16.78*	Significant
	Private school teacher	50	109.62		5.33		

Note- $p< .01$*

In occupational stress, Mean value of Government and private school teachers are 92.02 and 109.62 respectively. Mean difference which is 17.60, shows that private school teachers feel more stressful

situation in their occupation as compare to Government school teachers. t-value shows significant difference between the group.

Table 2: Dimensiowise group statistics of occupational stress

Dimesion	Teacher	MEAN	MEAN Diff.	S.D.	t- value
Workload	Government	16.58	1.36	2.43	3.026*
	Private	17.94		2.04	
Role Ambiguity	Government	9.10	1.32	1.58	4.707*
	Private	10.42		1.16	
Groupism and ext. pres.	Government	8.36	1.86	1.36	7.101*
	Private	10.22		1.25	
Responsibility for others	Government	8.96	2.52	1.70	8.113*
	Private	11.48		1.38	
Powerlessness	Government	12.60	2.84	1.72	8.646*
	Private	15.44		1.55	
Work Relationship	Government	9.46	1.90	1.78	6.313*
	Private	11.36		1.15	
Work condition	Government	9.00	1.82	1.77	5.314*
	Private	10.82		1.64	
Personal inadequacy	Government	8.90	2.28	1.66	7.790*
	Private	11.18		1.22	
Lack of Motivation	Government	9.06	1.70	1.42	5.807*
	Private	10.76		1.50	

Note- p<.01*

Table 3: Mean, SD and t value of Psychological well-being

	Group	N	MEAN	MEAN Difference	S.D.	t- value	Remark
Psychological well-being	Government school teacher	50	223.50	20.398	6.59	20.398*	Significant
	Private school teacher	50	195.88		6.93		

Note- p*<.01

In Psychological well being, Mean value of Government and private school teachers are 223.50 and 195.88 respectively. Mean difference which is 27.62. It shows, the Psychological well being of

Government school teachers is better than Private school teachers. t value shows significant difference between the variables at .001 level.

Table 4: Dimension wise group statistics of Psychological well being

	Teacher	MEAN	MEAN Diff.	S.D.	t- value
Autonomy	Government	16.58	3.620	2.408	8.215*
	Private	17.94		1.976	
Enviromental mastery	Government	9.10	2.320	2.597	3.906*
	Private	10.42		3.301	
Personal growth	Government	8.36	5.580	3.986	7.714*
	Private	10.22		3.205	
Positive Relation with others	Government	8.96	5.980	2.611	11.863*
	Private	11.48		2.426	
Purpose in life	Government	12.60	5.560	2.533	8.465*
	Private	15.44		3.892	
Self acceptance	Government	9.46	4.56	2.614	7.641*
	Private	11.36		3.312	

Note- p<.01*

There are six dimensions occur in Ryff's Psychological well being scale. On each dimension, mean difference and t score shows significant differences at .001 level.

Table 5: correlation between occupational stress and psychological well being

		Occupational stress	Psychological well being
Occupational stress	Pearson correlation	1	-.746*
	Sig.(two tailed)		.000
Psychological well being	Pearson correlation	-.746*	1
	Sig.(two tailed)	.000	

Note- p<.01*, N=100 (Government and private school teacher)

Correlation between occupational stress and psychological well being would be always negatively correlated. In above table 5, result shows that correlation between occupational Stress and psychological well being, both are negatively correlated and significant at .01 level (p<.01).

Table 6: correlation between occupational stress and each dimension of psychological well-being

	Autonomy	Enviromental mastery	Personal growth	Positive relation with other	Purpose of life	Self acceptance
Occupational stress		**Psychological well-being**	-.488*	-.682*	-.545*	-.480*

p <.01*

There is a negative Correlation between occupational stress and each dimension of psychological well-being. In table 6; occupational stress shows highly negative correlation with Positive relation with others, (-.682, p<.01) and low level of negative correlation (-.315, p<.01) with environmental mastery dimension of psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

Here is the **refined and fully developed discussion**, written in APA 7 style, incorporating and discussing the data values in a scholarly and humanoid form:

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being among government and private primary school teachers. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being, $r = -.746$, $p < .01$. This indicates a clear inverse relationship, suggesting that as occupational stress increases, psychological well-being decreases. The strength of the correlation reflects a substantial association between the two variables, highlighting occupational stress as a critical factor influencing teachers' mental and emotional health.

The dimension-wise analysis further supported this pattern. Occupational stress demonstrated a moderate negative correlation with autonomy ($r = -.488$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher stress levels are associated with reduced feelings of independence and self-regulation. A stronger negative relationship was observed between occupational stress and environmental mastery ($r = -.682$, $p < .01$), suggesting that stress significantly impairs teachers' perceived ability to manage work-related and personal responsibilities effectively. Similarly, occupational stress was negatively correlated with personal growth ($r = -.545$, $p < .01$) and positive relations with others ($r = -.480$, $p < .01$), implying that elevated stress levels may hinder professional development and interpersonal functioning.

In the comparative analysis, private school teachers reported significantly higher occupational stress (M = 109.62, SD = 5.33) than government school teachers (M = 92.02, SD = 5.12), $t(98) = 16.78$, $p < .01$. Conversely, government teachers demonstrated higher overall psychological well-being (M = 223.50, SD = 6.59) compared to private teachers (M = 195.88, SD = 6.93), $t(98) = 20.398$, $p < .01$. These findings suggest that institutional context plays a significant role in shaping both stress levels and psychological well-being. The higher stress observed among private school teachers may be attributed to increased workload, performance pressure, limited job security, and reduced autonomy. In contrast, the comparatively stable work environment of government schools may contribute to enhanced psychological well-being.

Except for the low-status dimension, all sub-dimensions of occupational stress demonstrated a significant adverse effect on psychological well-being. This indicates that most workplace stressors—including workload, role ambiguity, powerlessness, and interpersonal strain—contribute meaningfully to reduced psychological functioning among teachers.

Overall, the findings confirm that occupational stress and psychological well-being are closely interconnected. Elevated stress not only diminishes teachers' emotional stability and sense of competence but may also negatively affect organizational productivity and educational effectiveness. Private school teachers appear to be particularly vulnerable to occupational stress, which in turn adversely impacts their psychological well-being.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the primary education system, in collaboration with policymakers, implement structured stress management and intervention programs for both government and private school teachers. Institutional reforms emphasizing balanced workload distribution, supportive leadership, enhanced professional autonomy, and accessible mental health support are essential to promote teachers' overall well-being and professional performance.

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CONCLUSION

Occupational stress was found to have a strong and significant association with psychological well-being, indicating a clear inverse relationship between the two variables. The results demonstrated a substantial negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being among government and private primary school teachers. In addition, psychological well-being showed a moderate negative relationship with nearly all sub-dimensions of occupational stress. Except for the low-status dimension, each component of occupational stress exerted a significant detrimental effect on teachers' psychological well-being.

These findings suggest that as occupational stress increases, psychological well-being correspondingly declines. Elevated stress levels may contribute to a range of unfavorable outcomes, including reduced emotional stability, diminished motivation, and compromised professional functioning. Such consequences may ultimately impair organizational efficiency and productivity within educational institutions.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that the primary education system, in coordination with policymakers, develop and implement comprehensive stress management and reduction programs tailored for both government and private primary school teachers. Structured interventions aimed at minimizing occupational stress could enhance teachers' psychological well-being and support more effective performance of their professional responsibilities.

The study further highlights that occupational stress and psychological well-being are deeply interconnected among teachers. Notably, private school teachers appear to be more susceptible to occupational stress, which adversely influences their mental and emotional health. Therefore, institutional reforms emphasizing balanced workload distribution, supportive leadership practices, enhanced professional autonomy, and accessible mental health support are essential to strengthen teachers' overall well-being and professional competence. In conclusion, improving teachers' working conditions is not merely an administrative priority but a psychological necessity essential for sustaining both teacher effectiveness and institutional success.

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