



IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS: A REVIEW STUDY

Papiya Biswas¹, Dr. Sayak Gupta²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Netaji Subhas University, Jamshedpur, India,
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-6568-3663

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Netaji Subhas University, Jamshedpur, India,
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3057-2497>

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra30492>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra30492

ABSTRACT

Occupational stress is a growing concern in the teaching profession, significantly affecting teachers' well-being and performance. This review study explores the impact of occupational stress on the work-life balance of school teachers through an analysis of existing literature. It identifies major stressors such as excessive workload, administrative demands, time pressure, and student-related challenges. The review highlights how these factors disrupt the balance between professional responsibilities and personal life, leading to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and reduced effectiveness. It also discusses coping strategies and institutional measures that can help manage stress and improve work-life balance among teachers.

KEYWORDS: Occupational Stress; Work Life Balance; School Teachers; Burnout; Job Satisfaction; Teacher Well-being; Stress Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress in the teaching profession has become a major concern due to its significant impact on teachers' performance, well-being, and overall effectiveness. Teaching is a highly demanding profession that requires continuous intellectual engagement, emotional involvement, and the ability to manage multiple roles simultaneously. Teachers are responsible not only for delivering academic content but also for managing classroom behavior, assessing student performance, fulfilling administrative responsibilities, and maintaining communication with parents and school authorities. These diverse responsibilities often create excessive job demands, making teachers particularly vulnerable to occupational stress (Kyriacou, 2001).

Occupational stress is generally defined as the psychological and physical strain that occurs when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope effectively. In the context of teaching, stress is influenced by both organizational and individual factors. The transactional model of stress suggests that stress arises from the interaction between individuals and their work environment, depending on how they perceive and respond to job demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Similarly, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model explains that high job demands such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands, combined with insufficient resources like administrative support and autonomy, can lead to burnout and reduced well-being (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Several studies have identified common sources of occupational stress among teachers. Excessive workload, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks, is one of the most significant contributors to stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Additionally, student misbehavior and classroom management challenges require constant attention and emotional regulation, further increasing stress levels (Hargreaves, 1998). Lack of institutional support, role ambiguity, and limited decision-making power also contribute to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction among teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). These stressors, when experienced over a prolonged period, can lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased teaching effectiveness.

The consequences of occupational stress in teaching are far-reaching and affect both professional and personal domains. Chronic stress can result in burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). It may also lead to physical health problems, absenteeism, and increased turnover intentions among teachers. Furthermore, stress negatively impacts the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, highlighting the need for effective stress management strategies.

In conclusion, occupational stress in the teaching profession is a multifaceted issue influenced by various job-related and organizational factors. Understanding its sources and implications is essential for developing strategies to support teachers, enhance their well-being, and improve the overall quality of education.



2. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Table 1: Common Occupational Stressors among School Teachers

Stressors	Sources	Effects on Teachers	References
Excessive Workload	Lesson planning, grading, administrative tasks	Fatigue, reduced personal time, burnout	Travers & Cooper (1996); Borg & Riding (1991)
Student Behavior Issues	Classroom misbehavior, diverse learning needs	Emotional exhaustion, anxiety, reduced teaching effectiveness	Hargreaves (1998); Jennings & Greenberg (2009)
Administrative Demands	Paperwork, meetings, policy compliance	Stress, decreased job satisfaction, less instructional focus	Ingersoll (2001); Kyriacou (2001)
Role Ambiguity & Conflict	Unclear expectations, competing responsibilities	Frustration, decreased motivation, increased stress	Siegrist (1996); Blase (1986)
Lack of Support	Limited feedback, poor leadership, insufficient resources	Feelings of isolation, lower professional efficacy, burnout	Demerouti et al. (2001); Borg & Riding (1991)
Emotional Demands	Constant emotional regulation, managing parent expectations	Anxiety, emotional exhaustion, reduced well-being	Hargreaves (1998); Jennings & Greenberg (2009)

3. WORK–LIFE BALANCE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Table 2: Effects of Work–Life Balance on Teachers

Aspect	Description	Impact on Teachers	References
Workload Management	Balancing teaching, grading, and administrative duties	Reduced stress, increased job satisfaction	Greenhaus & Allen (2011)
Family and Personal Life	Time for family, social activities, and self-care	Better mental health, higher life satisfaction	Allen et al. (2000); Voydanoff (2005)
Emotional Well-being	Managing emotional demands at work and home	Lower anxiety, reduced emotional exhaustion	Bakker & Demerouti (2007)
Job Satisfaction	Ability to balance professional and personal roles	Increased motivation, engagement, and teaching effectiveness	Greenhaus & Allen (2011)
Retention and Commitment	Feeling supported in balancing work and personal life	Higher teacher retention, lower turnover intentions	Allen et al. (2000)
Physical Health	Adequate rest and recovery from work-related stress	Reduced fatigue, fewer health-related issues	Voydanoff (2005)

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Occupational stress and work–life balance among teachers have been widely studied, highlighting the critical impact of job-related stressors on teachers’ well-being, job satisfaction, and performance. Research indicates that teaching is a high-stress profession due to workload, administrative pressures, student behavior, and emotional demands (Kyriacou, 2001; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Excessive workload, including lesson planning, grading, and extracurricular responsibilities, has been consistently linked to teacher burnout and reduced personal time, affecting both professional effectiveness and family life (Borg & Riding, 1991; Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Student-related challenges, such as disruptive behavior and varying learning needs, are major contributors to emotional stress. Hargreaves (1998) emphasized that teachers experience emotional labor when regulating their feelings to maintain classroom harmony, which increases psychological strain. Similarly, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) highlighted the importance of teachers’ social-emotional competence in managing stress and promoting positive classroom outcomes.

Administrative and organizational factors also play a significant role in teacher stress. Lack of support from school management, unclear role expectations, and excessive bureaucratic demands contribute to role conflict and job dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001; Siegrist, 1996). Studies using the Job Demands–Resources model suggest that high job demands without adequate resources increase the risk of burnout and reduce professional efficacy (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Work–life balance is strongly affected by these stressors. Allen et al. (2000) found that work–family conflict significantly reduces life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Teachers who cannot balance professional and personal roles are more likely to experience fatigue, anxiety, and burnout (Voydanoff, 2005). Greenhaus and Allen (2011) emphasized that supportive school policies, flexible scheduling, and adequate resources are essential to enhance teachers’ work–life balance and reduce stress.

Coping strategies at both individual and institutional levels have been identified as key to mitigating the effects of stress. Individual strategies include time management, mindfulness, and emotional regulation, while institutional measures involve administrative support, reduced workload, and counseling services (Collie et al., 2012; Shuck et al., 2014). However, gaps remain in longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of these interventions and their adaptation to different educational contexts.



In summary, the literature consistently shows that occupational stress negatively affects teachers' work–life balance, well-being, and professional effectiveness. Addressing stress through individual and organizational strategies is essential for sustaining teacher health, improving job satisfaction, and enhancing overall educational outcomes.

5. DISCUSSION

The literature consistently indicates that occupational stress significantly affects school teachers' work–life balance, well-being, and professional performance. High job demands, including excessive workload, student behavioral challenges, administrative responsibilities, and emotional demands, create chronic stress, which interferes with teachers' ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities effectively (Kyriacou, 2001; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Studies suggest that when teachers' work encroaches on personal and family life, it leads to work–family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000; Voydanoff, 2005).

The consequences of occupational stress are multidimensional. Physically, teachers may experience fatigue, sleep disturbances, and other health-related issues. Psychologically, stress manifests as anxiety, depression, and burnout, which negatively affect motivation, classroom performance, and student outcomes (Borg & Riding, 1991; Hargreaves, 1998). Chronic exposure to stressors, especially without adequate coping strategies or institutional support, can also contribute to teacher attrition and a decline in overall school performance (Ingersoll, 2001).

Work–life balance emerges as both a protective factor and an outcome affected by stress. Teachers with effective balance report better emotional and physical well-being, higher job satisfaction, and stronger professional commitment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Institutional support, including flexible scheduling, counseling services, and administrative backing, plays a crucial role in helping teachers manage stress and maintain balance (Collie et al., 2012). At the individual level, coping mechanisms such as time management, mindfulness, and emotional regulation reduce stress and prevent burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Shuck et al., 2014).

However, gaps remain in research. Most studies are cross-sectional, limiting understanding of long-term effects of stress and balance interventions. Few studies explore cultural, regional, or school-level differences in how occupational stress impacts teachers' personal and professional life. There is also limited research on the effectiveness of combined individual and institutional strategies over extended periods.

In conclusion, occupational stress and work–life imbalance is closely interconnected in the teaching profession. Addressing stress through a combination of personal coping strategies and organizational support can improve teachers' well-being, reduce burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately promote better educational outcomes. Policymakers and school administrators must prioritize stress management and work–life balance initiatives to retain effective teachers and foster a healthier work environment.

6. COPING STRATEGIES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Occupational stress among teachers can be mitigated through a combination of individual coping strategies and institutional interventions, which together promote well-being and work–life balance.

6.1 Individual Coping Strategies

Teachers can adopt personal strategies to manage stress effectively. Time management is critical, allowing teachers to prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, and reduce feelings of being overwhelmed (Kyriacou, 2001). Emotional regulation and mindfulness practices help teachers manage classroom stress and maintain a positive mindset, reducing the risk of burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Engaging in hobbies, physical exercise, and maintaining social support networks also serve as protective factors against stress (Collie et al., 2012).

6.2 Institutional Interventions

Schools play a key role in reducing teacher stress and supporting work–life balance. Providing administrative support such as clear role expectations, reduced bureaucratic workload, and access to resources allows teachers to focus more on teaching and less on extraneous stressors (Ingersoll, 2001). Workload management, including equitable distribution of teaching hours and reasonable expectations for grading and lesson planning, helps prevent chronic stress. Counseling services, professional development opportunities, and mentorship programs enhance teachers' coping capacities and overall resilience (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Research shows that combining individual coping strategies with organizational support is most effective in reducing stress and improving work–life balance. Teachers who practice mindfulness or time management while working in a supportive school environment report higher job satisfaction, reduced emotional exhaustion, and improved teaching performance (Shuck et al., 2014).

In conclusion, effective stress management for teachers requires a dual approach. Individual strategies empower teachers to regulate their own stress responses, while institutional measures create a supportive environment that reduces unnecessary stressors. Together, these strategies contribute to better work–life balance, teacher well-being, and enhanced educational outcomes.



7. CONCLUSION

Occupational stress is a significant concern in the teaching profession, with far-reaching consequences on teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and professional effectiveness. The literature consistently demonstrates that high workload, student behavioral challenges, administrative demands, and emotional labor contribute to chronic stress among teachers (Kyriacou, 2001; Travers & Cooper, 1996). This stress, when unmanaged, disrupts work–life balance, leading to burnout, physical and psychological health issues, reduced teaching quality, and even increased teacher attrition (Allen et al., 2000; Borg & Riding, 1991).

Maintaining a healthy work–life balance is crucial for sustaining teacher motivation, performance, and overall life satisfaction. Both individual and institutional strategies play a pivotal role in mitigating stress and enhancing balance. Individual coping mechanisms such as time management, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and social support empower teachers to handle daily challenges more effectively (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Collie et al., 2012). Simultaneously, institutional interventions such as workload management, administrative support, professional development, and counseling services create a supportive environment that reduces unnecessary stressors and promotes well-being (Ingersoll, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The findings from this review underscore the importance of a dual approach to stress management, combining personal and organizational strategies. Policy makers, school administrators, and education stakeholders must prioritize teacher well-being by designing interventions that support both professional demands and personal life. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of stress management strategies, cultural and regional differences in teacher stress experiences, and the effectiveness of combined interventions in diverse educational contexts.

In conclusion, addressing occupational stress and promoting work–life balance is essential for maintaining a healthy, motivated, and effective teaching workforce, which ultimately benefits both teachers and students by creating a positive and productive educational environment.

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