



Exploring Occupational Stress In Higher Secondary Education: Key Factors And Demographic Influences In Kerala

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Abstract : Teachers are indispensable to society, as they are responsible for equipping students with both knowledge and essential moral values that significantly shape their futures. Occupational stress among teaching staff in higher secondary schools poses significant challenges, impacting both educator's well-being as well as institutional performance. This study intends to determine the key factors contributing to occupational stress among higher secondary teachers in Kerala. Using the Rotation component matrix, six major factors emerged as significant contributors to occupational stress such as student behaviour challenges, administrative and professional constraints, work-life stressors and professional growth, curricular and societal pressures, insufficiency in institutional support, and classroom management challenges that collectively accounted for 69% of the variation in occupational stress, underscoring their substantial impact. The study findings emphasise that student behaviour challenges are the most prominent stressor, followed by administrative constraints and work-life balance concerns. Structural issues such as inadequate institutional support, heavy workloads, and large class sizes amplify stress. The study also clearly demonstrates that females and married individuals experience markedly greater stress levels compared to their unmarried and male peers.

Keywords: Occupational Stress; Student Behaviour; Work-Life Balance; Administrative Constraints; Institutional Support; Classroom Management

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is on the rise in the teaching profession, particularly among higher secondary school teachers who face a variety of challenges. Teachers have a significant impact on how their pupils develop academically and personally, but this accountability also comes with prevalent stressors that adversely affect their well-being. It is often acknowledged that teaching is one of the most challenging professions because of its diverse demands and responsibilities. Teachers must handle many different roles, including instruction, mentoring, and administration duties while adapting to changing educational policies and social expectations (Travers & Cooper, 1996). In the higher secondary education system, especially, the complex nature of these roles makes stress management an important consideration, since prolonged exposure to stress can result in burnout, decreased effectiveness, and attrition (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Teachers in Kerala, a state renowned for its high literacy rate and emphasis on quality education are constantly under pressure to meet students' needs, maintain academic standards, and manage administrative obligations. There has been a huge amount of research undertaken on stress among teachers in the global context. Research consistently highlights factors such as heavy workloads, time constraints, classroom management challenges, and lack of institutional support as major contributors (Kyriacou, 2001). Higher secondary school teachers

are particularly susceptible to these stressors due to the dual pressures of preparing students for board examinations while meeting the expectations of parents, administrators, and society at large (Antoniou et al., 2006) In Kerala, this issue is further amplified by the competitive academic environment and the emphasis on high student performance, often at the expense of teacher well-being.

The behaviour of students is frequently cited as among the most significant causes of mental stress for teachers. Classroom management is challenging due to disruptive attitudes, disciplinary issues, and low motivation among students (Boyle et al., 1995) Furthermore, teachers in higher secondary schools frequently battle to reconcile their commitments to their professional and their personal lives. Their stress levels are influenced by a lack of institutional support, long work hours, and the requirement for ongoing professional growth (Kinman & Jones, 2008).

Other stressors are also prevalent in Kerala. There are several challenges that teachers confront, including implementing curriculum reforms, addressing the diverse learning needs of students, and coping with societal pressures to achieve excellent academic results. Additionally, administrative requirements, such as bureaucratic hurdles and rigid evaluation systems, contribute to stress. Overall, these challenges can negatively impact teachers' mental health, job satisfaction, and performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Kabito and Wami (2020), teaching background, educational attainment, demanding job, and hostile interpersonal connections are all linked to work-related stress among educators. They recommend ways to reduce teacher stress by balancing expectations and experience. As a result, teachers ought to get the chance to improve their abilities by advancing their degrees. Teachers who have positive relationships with one another also experience less work-related stress.

According to Kaur and Kumar (2019), urban schoolteachers in India are particularly concerned about occupational stress. They also recommend that regular stress assessments and proper counselling can considerably reduce teachers' stress levels and improve their quality of life.

A study on "Sources of occupational stress among teachers in Libyan schools " was carried out by Mohamed.T. (2018). This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Information was gathered from the 103 educators. The researcher discovered that the job nature is among the prominent reasons of occupational stress, followed by compensation and incentives.

According to Harmsen et al. (2018), any future initiatives to lessen teachers' stress should focus on enhancing their interactions with students because these relationships are particularly significant for teachers. Teachers can feel a lot less pressure when they have positive relationships with their students.

In their research paper, "A Study of Occupational Stress among Secondary School Teachers," Sing and Katoch (2017) state that school administrators should foster a collaborative and supportive culture, teach faculty members about time and stress management, and give recreational opportunities. Moreover, they advocate for teachers' participation in decision-making. Furthermore, schools should provide teachers with a pleasant working environment, job security, a low workload, training to manage disruptive behaviours, as well as maximum facilities.

According to Bhui (2017), the presence of inequitable political influence within the organization, coupled with Role Ambiguity and Role Overload, constitutes the three predominant stressors faced by academic instructors within Business Schools in West Bengal. The author advocates for the implementation of job enrichment initiatives and an enhanced sense of autonomy for employees in order to alleviate occupational stress. Additionally, it is imperative that training sessions be conducted focusing on educational psychology and pedagogical methodologies.

A study on the work-related stress among government and private school teachers of Kurnool was carried out in 2015 by Ganapa. P and Sreedevi.A. Determining the signs of stress in educators and comparing the stress levels and associated factors of instructors in public and private schools were the main objectives of the study. In this study, 94 teachers from private schools and 180 teachers from public schools took part. The researchers discovered a significant difference in personality and system elements, but no appreciable difference in interpersonal traits between government and private teachers. Additionally, there are more indications of stress among private teachers.

Jain, Tyagi, and Kumar (2015) investigated how teacher educators' stress levels were influenced by their personality type, gender, age, education, and experience. A random sample of 100 teachers was selected from among males and females in the teacher training colleges in Delhi. The findings revealed that the male teachers, elder teachers, less qualified teachers less experienced teachers and introvert teachers are more prone to experiencing stress compared to their counterparts.

According to a study by Dr. Jeyaraj (2013), aided schoolteachers have higher levels of occupational stress than government teachers in Tamil Nadu's Madurai District. Furthermore, he points out that stressed instructors are less satisfied with their jobs and are more likely to quit and never return.

In their academic paper "Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout in Teachers of Primary and Secondary Education: The Role of Coping Strategies," Antoniou et al. (2013) state that educators within primary schools experience a heightened level of stress in comparison to their counterparts in secondary education, while also indicating that female educators exhibit elevated stress levels and diminished personal accomplishment relative to male educators. Furthermore, they elucidate that the execution of coping tactics serves to support educators in mitigating occupational stress and burnout, thereby facilitating the attainment of favourable outcomes for their students.

A study on occupational stress in teacher educators was carried out by Nagra (2013). The aim of this research is to ascertain the degree of occupational stress experienced by teacher educators in connection to their gender, subject areas, and work type. Information was gathered from a random sample of fifty-two teacher educators using the Occupational Stress Index. The data was examined using statistical techniques such as the t-test, mean, and standard deviation. The findings showed that a moderate degree of occupational stress was experienced by teacher educators. Significant results were found in regard to the nature of the profession, however, there were no appreciable variations in occupational stress among teacher educators based on gender or academic streams.

According to past studies, poor working conditions, strained relationships with superiors, and delayed salary payments were the main causes of teachers' stress levels (Ekundayo & Kolawole, 2013). There is a national teacher departure epidemic as a result of the demanding nature of teaching, which has been linked to burnout (McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009).

According to a study by Durlak et al., in 2011, students who were placed in settings with a positive atmosphere demonstrated significantly higher emotional and social competencies, positive societal behaviours, and lower levels of emotional distress compared to control groups. Furthermore, the favourable classroom atmosphere directly contributed to these pupils' improved academic achievement. Students' learning habits and level of educational engagement are greatly influenced by their relationships with their teachers. Furthermore, the favourable classroom atmosphere directly contributed to these pupils' improved academic achievement. Students' learning habits and level of educational engagement are greatly influenced by their relationships with their teachers.

Roodra et al. (2011), who have conducted comprehensive investigations into the dynamics of Teacher-Student Relationships, assert that the rapport established between educators and learners is of paramount significance for older pupils transitioning into late adolescence, particularly for youngsters originating from underprivileged backgrounds and those possessing disabilities.

Maolin and Xiaoxin (2008) investigated 182 special school teachers' coping mechanisms and work-related stress. The findings indicated that special education teachers are under moderate stress, with student-caused issues being the main cause of stress.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite extensive research on occupational stress, limited research has been done to identify and analyse the specific factors causing occupational stress among higher secondary school teachers in Kerala, a state with a unique educational and sociocultural context. Existing studies often overlook the distinct challenges faced by this group, such as administrative workload, curriculum demands, and adolescent student management. Furthermore, the interaction of factors like age, gender and institutional settings remains underexplored, and very few studies have employed a comprehensive multivariate approach to analyse these stressors. This study proposes to bridge this gap by examining the key stressors affecting teachers and providing actionable insights for educational institutions and policymakers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on occupational stress determinants among higher secondary school teachers in Kerala holds great significance in addressing their well-being and enhancing educational outcomes. Teachers do have an essential impact on student's academic and personal development, but work-related stress can negatively affect their physical and mental health as well as their job happiness, which in turn affects their performance and the standard of instruction. Through the identification and analysis of stressors unique to Kerala's distinct sociocultural and professional environment, this study closes a significant knowledge gap regarding the difficulties experienced by educators in the area. Policymakers, educational administrators, and institutions can use the findings to guide the creation of focused stress management programs, teacher welfare programs,

and organisational changes that will foster a more positive and healthy work environment. This study underscores the urgent need for institutional reforms, including enhanced support systems, administrative changes, and initiatives to address student behaviour, ensuring a conducive environment for teaching staff in higher education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify and group the key factors that cause occupational stress among the Higher secondary teaching staff.
2. To examine the association between gender and occupational stress levels.
3. To examine the association between marital status and occupational stress levels.

METHODOLOGY

This is quantitative research, and it involves descriptive and inferential analysis. The statistical analysis was done using SPSS. The study was carried out on Higher Secondary school teachers of Thrissur District, Kerala. The Research is based on both primary and secondary data. The non-probability sampling i.e. convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The sample size of teachers is 120, out of which 101 respondents answered all the questions in the questionnaire. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using factor analysis and chi-square techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis			
Sl. No	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	46	45.5
	Female	55	54.5
Age	Less than 30 years	15	14.9
	30 - 35 years	12	11.9
	36 – 45 years	52	51.5
	More than 45 years	22	21.8
Highest Educational Qualification	Post Graduate	45	44.6
	SET	38	37.6
	NET	10	9.9
	M. Phil	8	7.9
Marital status	Married	92	91.1
	Single	9	8.9
Monthly Income	Upto 50,000	29	28.7
	50,001 - 85,000	29	28.7
	85,001 - 1,00,000	15	14.9
	1,00,001 - 1,50,000	23	22.8
	1,50,001 & above	5	5.0
Type of Family	Nuclear	76	75.2
	Joint	25	24.8
Number of Children	None	16	15.8
	One	25	24.8
	Two	43	42.6
	> 2	17	16.8
Nature of Institution	Government	23	22.8
	Aided	64	63.4
	Private	14	13.9
Teaching domain	Commerce	34	33.7
	Science	30	29.7
	Arts / Humanities	21	20.8

	Languages	16	15.8
Experience	Less than 5 years	28	27.7
	5-10 years	9	8.9
	11-20 years	29	28.7
	More than 20 years	35	34.7

Table 1. shows the Descriptive analysis and it reveals a predominantly female (54.5 %) and middle-aged demographic, with over half of respondents aged between 36-45 years. Most are highly educated, with 44.6% holding postgraduate qualifications, and the majority (91.1%) are married. Respondents primarily belong to nuclear families (75.2%) and are evenly distributed across middle-income brackets, with only 5% earning over ₹1,50,000 monthly. Most work in aided institutions (63.4%), with Commerce (33.7%) and Science (29.7%) being the dominant teaching domains. Nearly 63% have over 11 years of experience, indicating a mature workforce.

KMO and Bartlett tests were conducted on the data to verify that it was suitable for factor analysis. According to Table 2, the KMO-Bartlett Test yielded the following result:

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.873
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1928.253
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

Considering the above table, the KMO value is 0.873, which is greater than 0.5. This means the data is sufficient for factor analysis to proceed. In addition, the Bartlett Test shows a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, confirming the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. A factor-analysis technique was then run. Table 2 and Table 3 show the two major steps of factor analysis, namely the Rotation of Principal Components and Factor Extraction Process.

Table 3 : Total Eigen Values and Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.716	40.401	40.401	11.716	40.401	40.401
2	2.869	9.893	50.293	2.869	9.893	50.293
3	1.949	6.720	57.013	1.949	6.720	57.013
4	1.331	4.590	61.604	1.331	4.590	61.604
5	1.183	4.080	65.684	1.183	4.080	65.684
6	1.056	3.640	69.323	1.056	3.640	69.323
7	.845	2.914	72.237			
8	.818	2.822	75.059			
9	.764	2.634	77.693			
10	.639	2.202	79.895			
11	.593	2.046	81.941			
12	.566	1.952	83.893			
13	.507	1.748	85.641			
14	.470	1.621	87.262			
15	.439	1.514	88.776			
16	.415	1.430	90.207			
17	.366	1.261	91.468			
18	.331	1.142	92.610			
19	.330	1.137	93.747			
20	.276	.953	94.700			
21	.252	.870	95.569			
22	.238	.822	96.391			
23	.227	.784	97.175			
24	.197	.678	97.854			
25	.150	.518	98.372			

The 'variance explained' is shown in Table 2, where Eigen values have been considered. A higher Eigen value means more variance is explained by the factor. So, only variables with an Eigen value of 1 or more have been retained to identify the main variables.

The 6 factors extracted totally account for 69% of the variance in the cumulative percentage column of Table 2, six out of 34 factors have eigenvalues greater than 1, which can be further analyzed. Accordingly, 69% of the variance can be attributed to the nine factors extracted together.

The Rotated component matrix was analysed using Table 3 to identify the constituents of each factor. Using the rotated component matrix, one can determine which factors are strongly associated with the original variables after factor extraction. Additionally, each variable is loaded onto each retrieved factor.

Table 4: Rotation Component Matrix						
Rotated Component Matrix^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Heavy workload due to curriculum requirements	.226	.058	.069	.792	.054	.047
Lack of support from school administration	.163	.080	.379	.076	.739	.185
Limited resources and facilities in schools	.129	.110	.352	.377	.702	-.229
High expectations from parents and society	.189	.195	.367	.604	.141	-.031
Student misbehaviour and disciplinary issues	.232	.035	.302	.629	.180	.257
Pressure to achieve academic excellence in standardized tests	.138	.173	.598	.517	-.025	.156
Role conflict (e.g., balancing teaching duties with administrative tasks)	.203	.144	.397	.668	.078	.274
Inadequate professional development opportunities	.178	.253	.670	.337	.262	.116
Poor work-life balance	.141	.145	.791	.137	.146	.154
Limited recognition or appreciation for your work	.130	.254	.685	.261	.330	.093
Management of Large class sizes	.210	.192	.225	.141	.116	.698
Lack of support from colleagues	.071	.345	.020	.008	.540	.265
Time constraints and deadlines in lesson planning and grading	.188	.621	-.015	.442	.023	.136
Issues related to Classroom management and student behaviour	.331	.334	.170	.261	.116	.613
Inadequate facilities or equipment in classrooms	.221	.462	-.006	.452	.470	-.003
Conflicts with school administration or policies	.151	.657	.100	.027	.511	.157
Lack of autonomy you have in decision-making regarding teaching methods and curriculum adaptation	.099	.774	.156	.127	.209	.061
Lack of recognition or appreciation for your efforts	.253	.693	.375	-.072	.266	.179
Conflicts or challenges in maintaining professional boundaries with students and their families	.243	.612	.374	.079	-.177	.160
Insufficient professional development opportunities	.318	.574	.423	.193	.140	.056

Disruptive behaviours in the classroom (e.g., talking out of turn, refusal to follow instructions)	.601	.190	.161	.253	.230	.319
Student conflicts and Disciplinary issues	.722	.139	.210	.134	.122	.350
Disrespectful or defiant attitudes from students	.822	.198	.114	.098	.142	-.004
Student apathy or lack of motivation	.773	.051	.085	.079	.206	.275
Bullying or harassment among students	.743	.184	-.125	.167	.157	.094
Disruptions caused by students using electronic devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets) during class	.741	.134	.244	-.044	.128	-.182
Academic pressure and competitiveness among students	.624	.204	.175	.210	-.112	-.013
Managing a diverse range of student behaviors and personalities in your classroom	.800	.166	.129	.211	-.012	.078
Lack of concentration or attention span among students	.751	-.033	.075	.300	-.041	.280
Method of extraction: Principal Component Analysis. Method of rotation: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.						
a. Rotation converged after 8 iterations						

Table 4 represents the rotated component matrix. All the above-mentioned variables are having acceptable loadings and can be grouped to the six factors except two variables i.e. 'Lack of support from colleagues' and 'Inadequate facilities or equipment in classrooms' whose loadings doesn't fit to any factor.

Table 5: Variable with corresponding loading from the Rotated Component Matrix.

Factors	Variable with respective loading from Rotated Component Matrix	Loading
Factor 1	Disruptive behaviours in the classroom (e.g., talking out of turn, refusal to follow instructions)	(0.601)
	Student conflicts and Disciplinary issues	(0.722)
	Disrespectful or defiant attitudes from students	(0.822)
	Student apathy or lack of motivation	(0.773)
	Bullying or harassment among students	(0.743)
	Disruptions caused by students using electronic devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets) during class	(0.741)
	Academic pressure and competitiveness among students	(0.624)
	Managing a diverse range of student behaviours and personalities in your classroom	(0.800)
	Lack of concentration or attention span among students	(0.751)
Factor 2	Time constraints and deadlines in lesson planning and grading	(0.621)
	Conflicts with school administration or policies	(0.657)
	Lack of autonomy you have in decision-making regarding teaching methods and curriculum adaptation	(0.774)
	Lack of appreciation for your efforts	(0.693)

	Conflicts or challenges in maintaining professional boundaries with students and their families	(0.612)
	Insufficient professional development opportunities	(0.574)
Factor 3	Pressure to achieve academic excellence in standardized tests	(0.598)
	Inadequate professional development opportunities	(0.670)
	Poor work-life balance	(0.791)
	Limited recognition for your work	(0.685)
Factor 4	Heavy workload due to curriculum requirements	(0.792)
	High expectations from parents and society	(0.604)
	Student misbehaviour and disciplinary issues	(0.629)
	Pressure to achieve academic excellence in standardized tests	(0.517)
	Role conflict (e.g., balancing teaching duties with administrative tasks)	(0.668)
Factor 5	Lack of support from school administration	(0.739)
	Limited resources and facilities in schools	(0.702)
Factor 6	Management of Large class sizes	(0.698)
	Issues related to Classroom management and student behaviour	(0.613)

Factor Nomenclature

Factor 1: Student Behaviour Challenges

This factor includes issues like disruptive behaviours, disciplinary conflicts, defiant attitudes, apathy, bullying, and electronic device disruptions. It captures the broad spectrum of behavioural difficulties encountered in a classroom setting. As a result, this can be aggregated into a single factor called "Student Behaviour Challenges". Teachers face significant challenges managing both behavioural issues and student engagement, which disrupt the classroom flow. The variable "Disrespectful or defiant attitudes from students" (0.822) and "Managing a diverse range of student behaviours and personalities in your classroom" (0.800) has the highest impact, suggesting that classroom discipline and behavioural issues are key concerns for teachers.

Factor 2: Administrative and Professional Constraints

Incorporates time constraints, lack of autonomy, conflicts with administration, lack of appreciation, and challenges with professional boundaries. These aspects point towards administrative pressures and limited professional freedom which forms a factor of "Administrative and Professional Constraints". Teachers struggle with external pressures, lack of independence, and conflicts with the administration, which can hinder their professional satisfaction and performance. The variable "Lack of autonomy in decision-making" (0.774) has the highest impact, highlighting teachers' frustration with limited control over their teaching methods and curriculum.

Factor 3: Work-Life Stressors and Professional Growth

This includes pressures to develop academic excellence, inadequate development opportunities, work-life balance issues, and lack of recognition. It highlights challenges balancing personal well-being with professional demands which accounts the factor "Work-Life Stressors and Professional Growth". Teachers struggle with external pressures, lack of independence, and conflicts with the administration, which can hinder their professional satisfaction and performance. The variable "Poor work-life balance" (0.791) has the highest impact, indicating that teachers face significant challenges balancing their professional and personal lives.

Factor 4: Curricular and Societal Pressures

This includes heavy workload, societal expectations, student misbehavior, and role conflicts. It represents the stress linked to curricular demands and external societal pressures which forms the factor "Curricular and Societal Pressures". Teachers are overwhelmed by their workload, conflicting responsibilities, and high expectations from parents and society. The variable "Heavy workload due to curriculum requirements" (0.792) has the highest impact, showing that excessive workload is a major stressor for teachers.

Factor 5: Insufficiency in Institutional Support

Covers the lack of support from school administration and limited resources. This reflects deficiencies in institutional support and infrastructure. This comes under the factor "Insufficiency in Institutional Support".

Teachers face a lack of support from their institutions, which is further exacerbated by limited access to necessary resources and infrastructure. The variable "Lack of support from school administration"(0.739) has the highest impact, indicating that insufficient administrative support severely affects teachers' ability to perform their roles effectively.

Factor 6: Classroom Management Challenges

Encompasses managing large class sizes and general classroom behavioural issues. This focuses on logistical and management difficulties within the classroom that can be grouped as a factor called "Classroom Management Challenges". Large class sizes exacerbate behavioural issues and pose a challenge for teachers in maintaining effective classroom management.

Hypothesis 1:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between gender and occupational stress levels.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant association between gender and occupational stress levels.

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.786 ^a	4	.029
Likelihood Ratio	11.580	4	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.147	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	101		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.38.

The p-value is 0.029, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This suggests to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. There is a statistically significant association between gender and occupational stress. Females show a notably higher proportion of "Very High" stress (34.5%) compared to males (8.7%). Males report higher proportions in the "Very Low" stress category (21.7%) compared to females (9.1%).

Hypothesis 2:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between marital status and the level of occupational stress.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant association between marital status and the level of occupational stress.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.862 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.050	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.211	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	101		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.02.

The p-value is 0.000, which is far below the 0.05 significance level. We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Marital status significantly influences occupational stress levels. Compared to married respondents (5.6% and 23.6%, respectively), single respondents report significantly larger percentages of "Very Low" stress (37.9%) and "Low" stress (44.8%). Those who are married report higher percentages of "Very High" stress (30.6%) than those who are unmarried (3.4%).

CONCLUSION

The study underpins the key causes of occupational stress among teachers such as Student Behaviour Challenges, Administrative and Professional Constraints, Work-Life Stressors and Professional Growth, Curricular and Societal Pressures, Insufficiency in Institutional Support, and Classroom Management Challenges. When taken as a whole, the aforesaid factors account for 69% of the variation in occupational stress, which is a significant amount. The findings highlight that student behaviour concerns, such as disruptive attitudes, disciplinary issues, and a lack of motivation, appeared as the most significant stressors. Additionally,

administrative limits and work-life balance concerns exacerbate lecturers' stress, emphasizing the necessity for institutional reforms. Inadequate support, hefty workloads, and big class sizes all reveal structural issues that must be addressed by the institution.

This study reveals significant links between gender, marital status, and occupational stress levels. The p-value of 0.029 shows that females experience higher rates of "Very High" stress compared to males, who report more "Very Low" stress. Additionally, the p-value of 0.000 indicates that single respondents tend to report lower stress levels, while married individuals experience higher levels of "Very High" stress. These findings highlight the importance of considering demographic factors when addressing occupational stress and suggest a need for targeted interventions.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study highlight several managerial implications for addressing occupational stress among higher secondary school teachers. Educational institutions must prioritize establishing robust support systems, such as counselling services, mentoring programs, and teacher training workshops, to equip educators with the skills to manage stress effectively. Streamlining administrative processes, reducing excessive workloads, and providing adequate institutional resources, including smaller class sizes and better infrastructure, are crucial for minimizing stressors. Additionally, policies to improve work-life balance, such as flexible schedules and stress management training, can significantly enhance teachers' well-being. Addressing student behaviour challenges through structured disciplinary policies and providing professional development opportunities to teachers can further alleviate stress while promoting job satisfaction and career growth. Policymakers and administrators must collaborate to implement these reforms, ensuring a supportive and conducive environment for educators, ultimately enhancing institutional performance and student outcomes. Furthermore, institutions must concentrate on putting focused interventions into place, such as better classroom management techniques, increased administrative support, and professional development opportunities, to lessen these pressures. Resolving these problems can create a more encouraging atmosphere for teachers, allowing them to carry out their responsibilities efficiently without sacrificing their well-being.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies can examine how these stressors affect lecturers' mental health and long-term job satisfaction, as well as potential solutions to these problems in various educational contexts.

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