



# A Study on Occupational Stress among Teachers of Higher Educational Institutions in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu, India

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## ABSTRACT

This study delves into the issue of occupational stress among teacher educators, aiming to explore its prevalence and associated factors. Through correlation studies, it was observed that a majority of the correlations were both positive and significant. Gender did not emerge as a differentiating factor in occupational stress levels, yet private teacher educators exhibited higher stress levels compared to those in government institutions. The findings underscore the significant role of systemic working conditions and environment in contributing to occupational stress among teacher educators. To mitigate the adverse effects of stress on teacher educators, policymakers, stakeholders, educators, and management must collaborate to implement measures aimed at reducing stress levels, including creating conducive working conditions and providing adequate support systems. This study contributes valuable insights into the understanding of occupational stress among teacher educators and underscores the importance of addressing this issue to promote a healthier and more sustainable teaching profession.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Occupational Stress, Work Load, Higher Educational Institution

**JEL Classifications:** L33, H52

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is a common experience which can arise from pressures and challenges of work. It can be noticeable in various ways, including physical, emotional and psychological symptoms. Some common causes of occupational stress include heavy workloads, tight deadlines, lack of control over work tasks, conflicts with coworkers or superiors, job insecurity, and insufficient support from management. Teachers often face these occupational stress due to the demanding nature of their profession. The factors which contributes stress among teachers are listed as follows:

1. Classroom management: Dealing with diverse student needs and behaviors can be challenging and stressful for teachers, particularly when faced with disruptive or difficult students.
2. High expectations: Teachers often face pressure to meet academic standards, improve student outcomes, and satisfy

3. Lack of resources: Many teachers struggle with inadequate resources, such as outdated materials, limited technology, large class sizes, and insufficient support staff. These challenges can hinder their ability to effectively teach and support students.
4. Administrative tasks: Teachers must deal with administrative tasks, such as paperwork, data collection, and standardized testing, which can take time away from teaching and add to their workload and stress.
5. Professional relationships: Interactions with colleagues, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders can also contribute to stress, especially in cases of conflicts, misunderstandings, or lack of support.
6. Work-life balance: Balancing the demands of teaching with personal life can be difficult, especially with long hours, parents, administrators, and policymakers. These expectations can create stress and anxiety about performance and job security.

grading outside of institutions hours, and limited opportunities for breaks and vacations.

Thus, the teachers grappling with this stress frequently encounter challenges in fulfilling interpersonal obligations, managing time effectively etc., Additionally, they may confront psychological hurdles, leading to diminished work quality, more frequent absences due to illness and heightened work disability. These factors collectively lead to depression. Further research is necessary to comprehensively grasp the pivotal factors that contribute to the onset of depression symptoms among educators.

Thus, this work planned to investigate the prevalence and associated factors of stress, burnout, anxiety and depression among Higher Educational Institution teachers in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu.

## 2. RELATED WORKS

Teaching consistently ranks among the most stressful professions, with numerous stressors present in the school environment. These stressors include factors like large class sizes, excessive workloads, disruptive student behavior, and a perceived lack of appreciation. Consequently, researchers have extensively examined the prevalence of OS among teachers. The Correlation between gender, personality traits and occupational stress among teachers in southwest Nigeria, utilizing the transactional stress theory as a conceptual framework was investigated. The study concluded that male TLSN with extraversion and openness traits are particularly prone to OS (Adigun and Mngomezulu, 2022). The prevalence of OS and depression symptoms among school teachers were examined. The findings underlined the substantial occupational stress faced by teachers due to various stressors, with depression and stress-related physical symptoms posing serious challenges that warrant early psychological interventions and collaborative efforts across educational sectors to promote teacher well-being and enhance performance (Khalifa et al., 2022). The dominance of this stress specifically among secondary teachers from schools located in Colombo (Sri Lanka) was analysed by employing multistage cluster sampling. From the analysis, it is evident that focused attention must be given to implementing preventative interventions over occupational stress among teachers in SriLanka (Wickramasinghe et al., 2022). Demographic factors such as age, gender etc., demonstrated significant relations with occupational stressors among teachers. Prioritizing psychological well-being initiatives for school teachers, alongside enhancing overall school health, emerges as a critical imperative (Christian et al., 2022; Matyushkina et al., 2020). An analysis was conducted over the effect of OS and its associated factors among primary school teachers in western Ethiopia during COVID-19. The survey findings indicated a notable dominance of OS among these teachers during this period. Notably, job dissatisfaction emerged as significant predictors of stress. To address this issue, strategies emphasizing stress management and primary prevention of identified risk factors are advised to mitigate this condition (Tesfaye et al., 2023). A study was carried out in the Thalassery, Kannur district, Kerala about occupational stress among teachers. In the Thalassery block of Kannur, higher secondary

school teachers experienced some degree of occupational stress. The majority reported mild stress, while 35% experienced moderate and 9% were under severe stress (Raj et al., 2022). The occupational stressors experienced by elementary school educators was analysed. Form the analysis, it is imperative to accurately identify and understand the occupational stress faced by teachers to devise strategies for effectively managing stress and addressing pertinent issues within the teaching profession (Cabaguig 2022; Abd Karim and Nordin 2022). A study was conducted during June and December 2019 to assess stress levels and coping strategies among Pokhara Lekthnath Metropolitan. The study concluded that majority of teachers reported experiencing low levels of stress, with marital status emerging as the only statistically significant factor ( $P < 0.034$ ) associated with stress levels. Key stressors among teachers included entitlements (Poudel and Wagle 2022).

Hence, based on the analysis provided, it becomes evident that examining the occupational stress experienced by teachers is crucial (Raj et al., 2022; Nagaraj and Ramesh, 2020). Moreover, prioritizing the enhancement of psychological well-being among teachers, along with addressing institution health concerns, should be the primary areas of focus (Paul and Jain, 2020; Kaur and Kumar, 2019; Xin et al., 2019). Hence, this study aimed to examine the pervasiveness and determinants of stress among teachers in Higher Educational Institutions located in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu.

Therefore, the primary aim is to:

1. Evaluate the level of occupational stress among teachers
2. Analyze gender differences in occupational stress among teachers
3. Compare the levels of occupational stress between teachers working in government and private institutions.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 3.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in both private and governmental institutions located in and around Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu. The survey was conducted over 150 teachers. Among them, 100 teachers completed the questionnaires.

### 3.2. Research Methodology

#### 3.2.1. Hypotheses

- a. There is no significant difference between Stress level of Male and Female Teachers
- b. There is no significant difference in the Stress level on the basis of their teaching experience
- c. There is no significant difference between Stress level of Government and Private Institutions teachers
- d. There is no significant difference in the Stress level depending on their age
- e. There is no significant difference in the Stress level depending on their marital status.

The demography and their details are presented in Table 1.

The table indicates that among the 100 Teacher Educators, 29 exhibit mild levels of occupational stress, 56% experience

moderate levels of occupational stress, and 15% report severe levels of occupational stress. Figure 1, 2 and 3 depicts the distribution of samples based Gender, Marital status and OSI.

### 3.3. Research Instruments

All participants underwent the following methods,

- A pre-designed interview questionnaire was administered, covering socio demographic details (such as age, gender etc.).
- Occupational stress index questions. The scores are 5 - Strongly agree, 4 - agree, 3 - not decided, 2 - Disagree and 1 -Strongly disagree.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers employed appropriate statistical methods tailored to their study to inferences and conclusions. They utilized descriptive statistics, including standard deviation techniques. All data analysis was conducted using the SPSS.

Table 2 and Figure 4 examines the mean scores, S.Ds, the mean difference and level of significance of the difference of stress level over Male and Female Teachers.

The mean scores of female (78.72) and male (62.62) show that they differ in their occupational stress. The scores of these two groups show much difference. The t-value 4.23 is significant at 0.001. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the levels of stress experienced by male and female teachers is rejected. The high scores of female indicates that they are more in occupational stress than the male teachers.

Table 3 examines the means, S.Ds, t-value and level of significance of Occupational Stress of on the basis of their teaching experience.

The mean scores of <20 (78.37) and >20 (72.17) indicate that they do not differ in the Occupational Stress scores. The scores of these two groups show not much difference. The t-value is 1.25 which is not significant at 0.01 levels. The mean scores and t-value indicate that the teachers do not differ significantly based on their experience. Hence, the null hypothesis positing that there is no significant difference in the levels of stress based on teaching experience is accepted.

The Table 4 and Figure 5 explains about the means, SDs, t-value and level of significance for Government and private institution teachers on Occupational Stress.

The mean scores of Government (73.00) and Private (60.00) institution teachers indicate that there is significant difference in their Occupational Stress scores. The t-value 4.73 indicate the significant level at 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis suggesting that there is no significant difference in the levels of stress between government and private institution teachers is rejected. This indicates that there is indeed a significant difference in the occupational stress experienced by government and private institution teachers.

The Table 5 examines level of significance of stress on the basis of age. The mean scores of teachers under 30 (70.00) and

**Table 1: Demographic details**

Democratic features	No	%
Age		
<30	34	34
30–40	37	37
>40	29	29
Gender		
Male	48	48
Female	52	52
Marital status		
Married	76	76
Unmarried	24	24
Institutions		
Private	49	71
Government	51	29
Teaching experience (years)		
<10	62	62
10–20	23	23
>20	15	15
Occupational stress index		
Mild	29	29
Moderate	56	56
Severe	15	15

**Table 2: Mean scores, S.Ds, CR value and the level of significance among male and female teachers**

Name of the group	Subjects	Mean	S.D	t-value
Female	52	78.72	7.82	4.23
Male	48	62.62	5.95	

**Table 3: Mean, S.Ds, t-value and level of significance of occupational Stress of on the basis of their teaching experience**

Name of the group	Subjects	Mean	S.D	t-value
<20	85	78.37	11.10	1.25
>20	15	72.17	10.00	

**Table 4: Mean, S.Ds, S.Em.S, t-value, and level of significance for OS of Government and private institution teachers**

Name of the group	Subjects	Mean	S.D	t-value
Government institutions	49	73.00	9.21	4.73
Private institutions	51	60.00	6.02	

**Table 5: Mean, S.D, t-value and level of significance of occupational stress on the basis of age**

Name of the group	Subjects	Mean	SD	t-value
<30	42	70.00	5.69	4.07
>40	48	78.00	6.02	

**Table 6: Mean, SD, t-value and level of significance of occupational stress on the basis of marital status**

Name of the group	Subjects	Mean	SD	t-value
Married	76	72.65	7.47	4.43
Unmarried	24	65.83	8.01	

**Table 7: Correlation analysis**

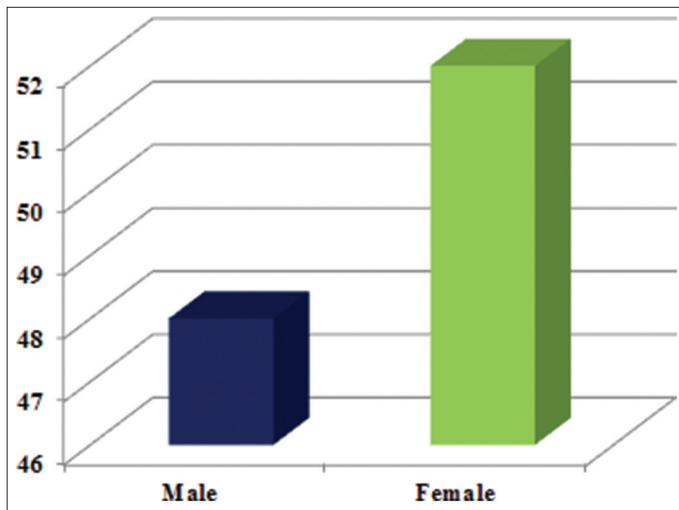
	1	2	3	4	5	4	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1												
2	0.33**	1											
3	0.55**	0.36**	1										
4	0.41**	0.65**	0.52**	1									
5	0.17**	0.61**	0.24**	0.45**	1								
6	0.07	0.72**	0.15**	0.46**	0.67**	1							
7	-0.10*	0.53**	0.04	0.33**	0.42**	0.64**	1						
8	-0.02	0.45**	0.05	0.34**	0.42**	0.65**	0.74**	1					
9	0.07	0.23**	0.12**	0.17**	0.11*	0.36**	0.33**	0.41**	1				
10	0.16**	0.42**	0.21**	0.32**	0.20**	0.44**	0.32**	0.36**	0.63**	1			
11	0.14**	0.28**	0.22**	0.27**	0.16**	0.35**	0.24**	0.42**	0.75**	0.73**	1		
12	0.08	0.20**	0.15**	0.17**	0.18**	0.33**	0.27**	0.42**	0.72**	0.66**	0.85**	1	
13	0.13**	0.27**	0.22**	0.23**	0.17**	0.34**	0.27**	0.41**	0.65**	0.73**	0.76**	0.71**	1

1. Workload; 2. Physiological factors; 3. Peer; 4. Role ambiguity; 5. Psychological factors; 6. Organization climate; 7. Job satisfaction; 8. Personal growth; 9. Environment; 10. Self-acceptance; 11. Positive relations; 12. Purpose of life, 13. Psychological well-being overall \*0.05 and 0.01 level (2-tailed)

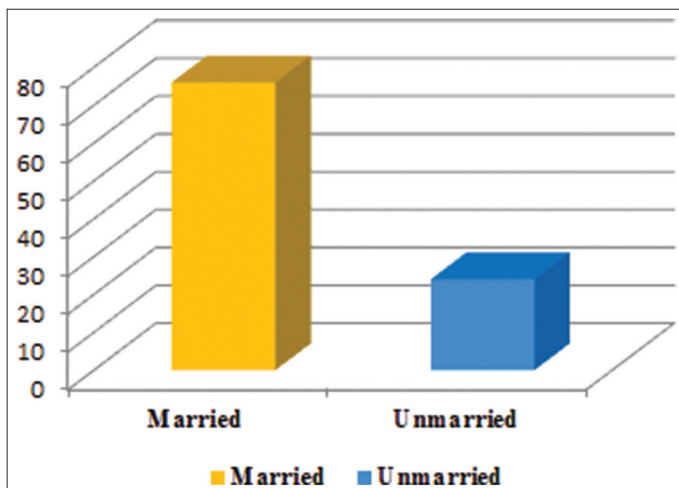
**Table 8: Analysis of variance among teachers of different types of institutions in their mean score of organization climate**

Variable	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	“F” value	Table value	Result at 0.05 level
Origin climate	Between	9.083.220	2	4.541.610	63.292	3.02	Sig.
	Within	24.899.560	97	71.757			

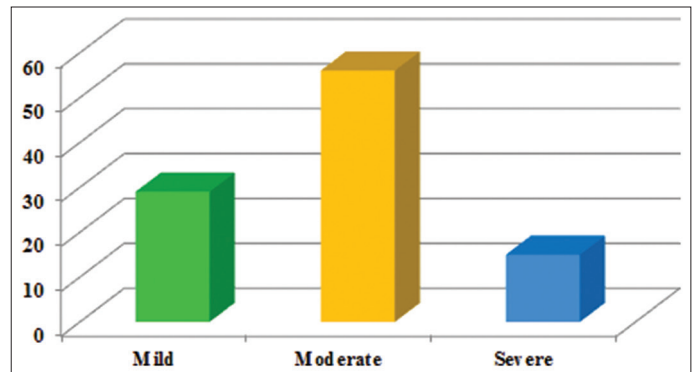
**Figure 1: Distribution of sample (gender based)**



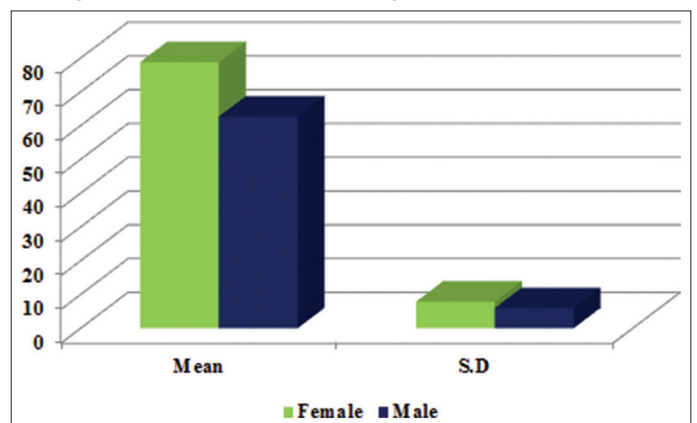
**Figure 2: Distribution of sample (marital status based)**



**Figure 3: Distribution of sample occupational stress index**



**Figure 4: Mean scores, S.Ds among male and female teachers**



above 40 (78.00) show that there is significant difference in their occupational stress. The scores indicate that the two groups have difference. The t-value of the group is 4.07 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, we conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected.

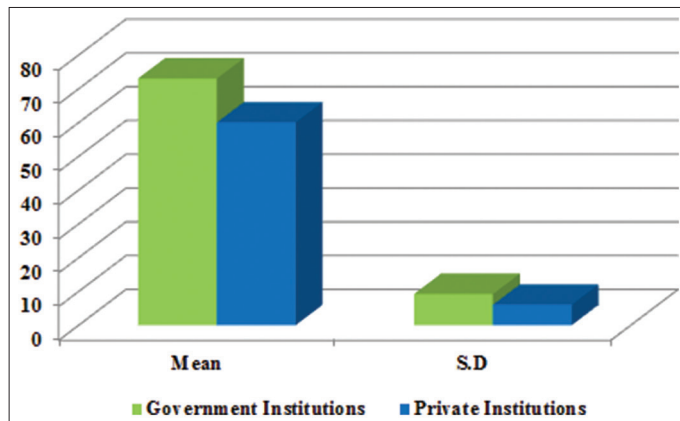
**Figure 5:** Mean, S.Ds OS of Government and private institution teachers

Table 6 shows the level of significance of occupational stress on the basis of marital status. The mean score of the married teachers (72.65) and unmarried teachers (65.83) shows that there is difference in occupational stress. The value (4.43) is significant at 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be said that there is significant difference in occupational stress on the basis of the marital status. The high mean score of Married teachers indicate that they are more stressed than the unmarried teachers.

The researchers conducted correlation studies and noted that the majority of the correlations were both positive and significant, as illustrated in Table 7.

The Table 8 reveals that the calculated “F” values exceed the table value of 3.02 at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is no significant difference among teachers from different types of institutions in their mean scores of organizational climate.

Based on the findings, male and female teacher educators exhibited comparable levels of occupational stress. Additionally, occupational stress was found to be lower among government teacher educators compared to their counterparts in private institutions.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Occupational stress has become increasingly prevalent within the teaching profession, attributed to mounting occupational challenges and individual economic pressures. Stress among teachers predominantly stems from systemic working conditions and the environment. Gender did not emerge as a differentiating factor in occupational stress levels in this study; however, private teacher educators exhibited higher stress levels compared to their counterparts in government institutions. Notably, a significant amount of stigma surrounding stress arises from within the teaching community itself, often leading to comments suggesting leaving the profession if unable to cope. Thus, fostering a supportive environment within the profession is crucial.

Teachers must prioritize self-care, recognizing that stress is a deeply personal experience that varies from individual to individual. This may involve utilizing personal stress coping mechanisms such as mindfulness and exercise, as well as seeking support from friends, family, colleagues, administrators, and healthcare professionals when needed. Additionally, teachers should feel empowered to openly discuss stress without fear of stigma, whether perceived or genuine.

To mitigate the adverse effects of stress on teachers, policymakers, stakeholders, educators, and management must collaborate to identify and implement measures aimed at reducing stress levels. This could include creating conducive working conditions, reducing workloads, ensuring job security, and providing ample resources and support systems. By addressing these factors, the teaching profession can cultivate a healthier and more supportive environment, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students alike.

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