



**A Review Analysis of Occupational Stress Management among teachers during
COVID- 19**

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Abstract

The objective of the present study is to investigate whether COVID 19 affect the occupational stress level of the teacher or not. Stress involves physical, mental, and/or emotional reaction to demand-resource imbalances that cause bodily tension that negatively affects people¹. Physical symptoms of stress include aches and pain, chest pain, exhaustion or trouble sleeping, headaches, dizziness or shaking, high blood pressure, muscle tension or jaw clenching, stomach or digestive problem, weak immune system. Apart from this the emotional and mental symptoms include anxiety or irritability, depression, panic attacks, sadness². A rigorous review of the studies was done by the researcher. It was found that COVID-19 affected the occupational stress level of the teacher.

Key words: COVID 19, Occupational Stress, Emotional symptoms, Mental symptoms.

Introduction

It is a known health risk linked to a range of psychological, behavioral and medical disorders and illnesses. Organizations and individuals can alleviate these disorders through preventative stress management and improved well-being. This article discusses, first, the known evidence on the health risks associated with occupational stress; secondly, the use of preventive stress management in organizations as an intervention framework; and third, the emerging field of enhancing well-being, which empowers the individual. Premature death



and disability as well as chronic suffering due to work-related stress are not inevitable, although they are known risks³.

Work stress (OS) is a psychological condition that results from individuals' perception of an imbalance between the demands of work and their ability to cope with them. Job stress occurs when workers attempt to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other forms of pressure related to their work, but encounter difficulties, tension, anxiety and worry. Teaching has proven to be one of the most stressful, strenuous, and difficult professions, with a higher annual turnover rate than other profession⁴.

In particular, teaching in primary schools is more challenging, and the onset of professional stress is exacerbated by the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the pandemic has disrupted the teaching and learning process and aggravated the stress level of teachers due to fear of virus transmission and school closures or difficulty in adhering to the school protocol. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures have affected the education of many students around the world.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus spreading the COVID-19 disease was first discovered in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. In early 2020, it spread from China to Europe, where Italy became the first major area affected by the virus. It was announced as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 by World Health Organization Director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus⁵.

The global pandemic has affected all areas of national life, leaving behind indelible marks for the world to remember. COVID-19 has been dubbed the “black swan effect⁶.” The widespread outbreak could not have been predicted early on and economies around the world, including strong economies like the United States, were thrown into a state of global shock⁷. In March, 2020 World health organization declared COVID as worldwide pandemic.

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the occupational stress level among the teachers during and after COVID 19 period conceptually. Researchers in this study investigated the studies related to occupational stress level of the teacher and also the effect of COVID 19 on the work life balance of the teachers.

Conceptually analysis of review



Agyapong et al. (2022)⁸ discover that worldwide, stress and burnout continue to be a problem among teachers, leading to anxiety and depression. Burnout can harm teachers' health and is a risk factor for poor physical and mental well-being. Determining the prevalence and correlates of stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers is critical to addressing this public health issue. The objective of their study was to determine the extent of current literature on the prevalence and correlates of stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers. To achieve the objective of their study they did systematically scoping review using the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Scoping Reviews) extension. Relevant search terms were used to determine the prevalence and correlates of teacher stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression. Articles were identified using MEDLINE (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online), EMBASE (Excerpta Medica Data Base), APA PsycINFO, CINAHL Plus (Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Scopus Elsevier, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). Articles were retrieved, reviewed, collated and thematically analyzed, and the results were summarized and reported. They found that when only clinically significant psychological conditions (moderate to severe) among teachers were considered, the prevalence of burnout ranged from 25.12% to 74%, stress ranged from 8.3% to 87%. .1%, anxiety ranged from 38% to 41.2%, and depression ranged from 4% to 77%. The correlates of stress, burnout, anxiety and depression identified in this review include sociodemographic factors such as gender, age, marital status and (organizational) school and factors work-related, including years of teaching, class size, job satisfaction and the subject taught. Finally they concluded that teaching is a difficult and yet one of the most rewarding professions, but several factors correlate with stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression among teachers. Highlighting these factors is the first step towards recognizing the extent of the problems encountered by those in the teaching profession. They suggested that implementing a school-based awareness and intervention program is crucial to resolving early signs of teacher stress and burnout and preventing future deterioration.

Moreover, **Cui (2022)**⁹ studied that well-being is considered an essential dimension of an individual's prosperity in the field of positive psychology. Underlying this multifaceted framework are forms of emotional, mental and societal well-being, which can be based on constructive relationships in the workplace. The professional well-being of educators is



linked to optimal mental functioning and their positive professional experience is characterized by the existence of constructive dimensions such as enthusiasm at work. Additionally, emotional exhaustion or fatigue is another central focus of educator burnout research and has a significant effect on educators' expert lives; conversely, excellent teacher-student relationships are important in the language learning process. Due to the significant effect of the concept mentioned above, their study attempted to focus on the importance of teacher-student relationships in this area. The findings of the literature review clarified that high-value teacher-student relationships prevent educators from feeling emotionally exhausted because they can increase the amount of enthusiasm and reduce the degree of exhaustion. In summary, this literature review offers suggestions for scholars and experts seeking to improve teachers' professional well-being.

Relationship between overtime and psychological stress reactions among teachers was found by **Furihata et al. (2022)**¹⁰. They also assessed the interaction between types of overtime (weekdays, holidays and bringing work home) and task content (educational, peripheral and both). Their cross-sectional study was conducted among Japanese primary and lower secondary school teachers. The primary outcome was psychological stress reactions measured using the Brief Job Stress Questionnaire. Participants were asked how much overtime they worked on weekdays, holidays and at home. Participants were also asked whether they performed educational tasks and/or work from home tasks during these overtime hours. Multiple linear regression analyzes were applied and 6,135 participants were included. Working hours of all three types were significantly correlated with higher psychological stress reactions. Furthermore, engagement in educational and peripheral tasks showed higher psychological stress reactions than in educational tasks only during overtime on weekdays and holidays. In the end they concluded that reducing overtime regardless of the type of work, is crucial to alleviate teachers' psychological stress reactions. It might also be possible to manage psychological stress reactions by dividing the role of task content, during weekday overtime and during school holidays.

The different levels of the occupational stress during COVID-19 among a national sample of 245 teachers in Ireland using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory as the primary outcome measure was measured by **Minihan et al. in 2022**¹¹. They found that moderate or high levels of personal burnout were reported by 82% (n = 202) of the sample and 79% (n =



193) reported professional burnout. Adverse effects linked to COVID-19 were reported by teachers on physical (43%) and mental health (67%), with a deterioration in diet (34%), sleep (70%) and alcohol consumption (33%). 100 (42%) participants felt unable to ensure their safety at work. Low levels of job satisfaction were present (66%) and also they were negatively correlating with burnout scores. They concluded that plans to ensure continued access to education for students must urgently include interventions that optimize the professional environment and resources for teachers. Furthermore, this is necessary to prevent the deleterious impact of burnout on teacher well-being and to minimize the likelihood of increased staff turnover, early retirements and negative impacts on the quality of teaching.

However, Tsubono& Ogawa (2022)¹²found that the job of a teacher is considered one of the most stressful jobs in the world. To maintain teachers' mental health, it is crucial to clarify the factors affecting work-related stress among teachers. Their study therefore aimed to examine the main stressors among primary school teachers, considering the difference in position, using data from a large-scale national survey. They analyzed data from a national survey of public school teachers conducted between June and December 2021. The total number of participants was 138,651. Information on major perceived stressors, working hours per day, workload, work control, workplace support, and stress response scores were assessed by position. They found that among all teaching positions, assistant principals' work hours were the longest, but their stress response scores were the second lowest. Moreover, in contrast, stress response scores among dietetics and nutrition teachers and health education teachers were the highest; Support scores from their supervisors and colleagues were the lowest among all teachers. Quantitative and qualitative workloads, work control, workplace support from supervisors and colleagues were significantly associated with teachers' stress reactions in all positions. The main stress factors perceived by teachers were different depending on the position held. However, regardless of position, relationships with supervisors and coworkers were significantly associated with stress response scores among teachers. Furthermore, dealing with difficult students and parents as well as the workload of administrative tasks were also associated with teachers' stress reactions depending on the position held. Hence, they concluded that the main stressors perceived by teachers were different depending on the position held. However, relationships with supervisors and coworkers were significantly associated with levels of stress reactions among teachers,



regardless of position. Their study highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships at work in terms of teachers' mental health. The results suggested that interpersonal skills training targeting peer relationships and harassment prevention measures would be crucial to maintaining teachers' mental health. The findings also suggested that it will become necessary to increase school staffing and provide sufficient organizational support to teachers to avoid teacher burnout.

Occupational stress (OS) is a psychological state resulting from people's perception of an imbalance between job demands and their abilities to cope with them. It was studied by **Tesfaye et al. (2023)**¹³. They found that COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the teaching and learning process and aggravated teachers' stress levels due to fear of virus transmission and school closures or difficulty adhering to protocol COVID-19 prevention. Their survey study therefore aimed to investigate the prevalence of occupational stress and its associated factors among primary school teachers during the second wave of COVID-19 in Western Ethiopia.

They used the methods of a cross-sectional survey within establishments from April to May 2021. They conducted a survey in the town of Gimbi among 672 primary school teachers in western Ethiopia. The standardized Teacher Job Stress Scale was used to measure job stress over the past 4 months. They collected data via a self-administered questionnaire. The collected data were entered into EpiData version 4.6 and analyzed using Stata software version 14. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to identify factors associated with occupational stress. They found that the response rate was 96.8% (N = 651). Out of which the majority, 389 (59.8%) of the study participants were males. The mean (\pm SD) age was 35.8 (\pm 9.3) years. The prevalence of occupational stress in the second wave of COVID-19 in the past 4 months was 50.1% (n = 326) [95% CI (46.1, 53.9)]. Job dissatisfaction [AOR: 2.06, 95% CI (1.43–2.97)] and high-risk perception of COVID-19 infection [AOR: 2.20; 95% CI (1.46–3.31)] were significantly associated with occupational stress.

Therefore, they concluded that there was a high prevalence of occupational stress among primary school teachers during the second wave of COVID-19. They also found that Job Dissatisfaction and Perceived High Risk of COVID-19 infection were significant predictors of the occurrence of job stress among teachers. It was advised to improve stress



management skills and focus on primary prevention of identified risk factors to reduce the disease.

Need for the stress management strategies has been empirically studied and supported by taking into account workplace demands were investigated by **Ogakwu et al. (2022)**¹⁴. According to them, some people in public positions do not appear to have been exposed to occupational health strategies that could reduce the detrimental effects of stress on work productivity and quality of life. Therefore, they become susceptible to mental health disorders requiring the attention of occupational therapists. Keeping this in mind, they studied the impact of occupational health coaching on the management of stress at work among technical college teachers. By using a randomized controlled study, 90 technical college teachers were selected and ready to participate. Eligible teachers were included and assigned to intervention and control groups. A career stress index was given to participants before, immediately after, and 2 months after the delivery of the career coaching program by career counselors, while the comparison group received no intervention. The collected data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance. They found a significant improvement in work stress management after receiving rational and emotional occupational health coaching. According to multivariate analysis of variance analysis, there were differences between groups immediately after the intervention and 3 months later. As a result, their study suggested that guidance counselors and school management systems should integrate rational-emotive behavior therapy into work programs and the workplace.

Strategies are necessary for the occupational stress removal as school teaching is considered one of the most stressful professions in the world, found by **Tsubono and Mitoku (2023)**¹⁵. In order to preserve the mental health of teachers, it is necessary to clarify the factors that influence professional stress among teachers. Their study aimed to investigate work-related stress among public school teachers, accounting for differences between schools types, using data from a large-scale national survey conducted during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic in Japan. Data from a national survey of public school teachers carried out between June 2019 and December 2022 were analyzed. The dataset consisted of repeated cross-sectional data. The total number of participants was 270,777 in 2019, 296,599 in 2020, 299,237 in 2021 and 307,866 in 2022. Information on working hours, job requirements, workplace support, response to stress and major perceived stressors were assessed for each



type of public school. Results: Regardless of school type, quantitative workload and long working hours were the most important factors affecting teachers' stress reactions. However, factors related to teacher stress varied significantly by school type. The percentage of junior high school teachers who perceived “extracurricular club activities” as their main stressor was the highest of all school types. The highest proportion of primary school teachers perceive “dealing with difficult students” as their main stressor. Meanwhile, interpersonal conflict scores were highest among special school teachers. Teacher workload and stress levels increased significantly in the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2022) compared to the pre-pandemic year (2019) across all school types, despite slightly small differences in scores. This study highlighted the importance of reducing teachers’ workload for their mental health, regardless of the type of school. At the same time, the perception of work-related stress among teachers differed significantly by school type. Given the possible prolonged impacts of the pandemic on teachers' occupational stress, teachers' stress levels should be monitored throughout and after the pandemic. The results suggest that it is necessary to increase the number of teachers and support staff and provide adequate organizational support to avoid teacher sick leave due to mental disorders. Furthermore, taking comprehensive measures against teachers' job stress, taking into account differences between school types, is crucial to safeguard teachers' mental health.

Moreover, **Igu et al. (2023)**¹⁶ studied that workplace stress is highly prevalent in the job market worldwide and tends to threaten the physical and mental well-being of employees, thereby reducing organizational outcomes. The negative impacts of job stress on academics have been found to disproportionately interfere with institutional research productivity and student learning outcomes. Their study analyzed data from a randomized controlled trial, to validate the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral therapy combined with yoga in the treatment of work-related stress among professors at two universities in southeastern Nigeria. Participants included 93 academic staff from two federal universities in Enugu and Ebonyi States of Nigeria. They allocated participants into Y-CBT groups (N=46) and waitlist control groups (N=47) using random sampling techniques. A 2-hour Y-CBT program was delivered weekly for a 12-week period. Two instruments were used to collect the study data. A Single Item Stress Questionnaire (SISQ) was used to identify potential participants, while the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) was used for data collection at baseline, post-intervention and feedback. Mean, standard deviations, t-test, statistics and repeated measures analysis of



variance were used to analyze the data. It was revealed that perception of stressors and stress symptoms were significantly reduced at post-test and follow-up assessments following the Y-CBT intervention. Hence, the findings support the hypothesis that Y-CBT is useful in harmonizing the mind and body for a stable psychological state. The conclusion was that Y-CBT can minimize the perception of stressors and manifestations of stress among university professors.

Stress also affect the wellbeing of teachers as well as affect their students also. In this area **Jogi et al. (2022)**¹⁷highlighted that teachers' stress, affect the overall professional well-being that influence their teaching and their students. However, how teachers' daily physiological stress and positive affect are related in the classroom is unknown. To reduce teacher stress and enhance positive affect, it is crucial to understand how well-being at work is linked to stress and affect. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationships between teachers' daily physiological stress and positive affect in authentic classroom contexts and the roles played by teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions of school climate and burnout symptoms in daily stress and affect. The sample consisted of 45 teachers. Daily physiological stress was assessed by measuring salivary cortisol levels three times in two days. A positive effect was reported by experience sampling at the same time as cortisol collection. Questionnaires were used to assess self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions of school climate, and burnout symptoms. Three-level modeling with random intercepts and slopes was used to analyze the relationships between daily stress and affect and the effect of teachers' general professional well-being on stress and affect. No relationship was evident between teachers' physiological stress and positive affect or between daily changes in stress and affect. Self-efficacy beliefs were linked to lower stress and higher affect in the middle of the school day. Having sufficient school resources was linked to higher positive affect. Teacher burnout symptoms were associated with lower positive affect.

Furthermore, **Iacolino et al. (2023)**¹⁸investigated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to social and professional changes and also because new technological methods of distance teaching, teachers were subjected to increased work pressure, which affected their well-being and led to an increase in negative stress and burnout. They studied whether dysfunctional outcomes resulting from adapting to new teaching methods via technological tools can be mitigated by the protective factors of emotional intelligence and



metacognition or not. Their study involved a data of 604 teachers from Sicily and completed a questionnaire consisting of four different scales: (1) the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT); (2) the Metacognitive Functions Screening Scale (MFSS-30); (3) the Link Burnout Questionnaire (LBQ); and (4) the STSS-I Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale. The results showed that emotional intelligence plays a mediating role in the relationship between certain risk factors related to remote work, as well as stress and burnout. Additionally, metacognition was found to be an important moderating factor in the relationship between risk factors and emotional intelligence.

To study the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on the education system **Leksy et al. (2023)**¹⁹ did a study in which they found that school principals have faced many significant challenges in school management during the epidemiological crisis, which could generate a lot of work-related stress. They examined the stress perceived by Polish school principals and its association with exhaustion and psychosomatic complaints as burnout risk indicators. The gender and age of school principals as sociodemographic control variables were also considered in their research. They conducted an online cross-sectional study in eight provinces of Poland from June to December 2021. The study was part of a global survey of COVID-HL school principals as part of the Global Research Network on COVID-19. Two subscales of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) (perceived helplessness [PH] and perceived self-efficacy [PSE]) were considered as independent variables in relation to mental and physical exhaustion and complaints. psychosomatic of school principals. It was found that nearly 50% of school principals experienced a lack of control which caused anger and stress. Mental and physical exhaustion during the pandemic was often or always felt by 30% of those surveyed. Almost half of Polish school principals have suffered from psychosomatic disorders in the form of muscle pain and headaches. Regression analysis revealed significant associations between burnout and mental health outcomes, even after controlling for demographic variables. In the end they concluded that their study showed that almost half of Polish school principals reported a high frequency of perceived stress during the pandemic. PH was more significantly associated with mental and physical exhaustion among young female principals than among female postsecondary students. Young school principals reported more exhaustion and psychosomatic complaints. Furthermore, this finding should serve as basic information for policy makers to improve the well-being of Polish school principals and prevent the risk of burnout.



Omeke et al. (2023)²⁰ investigated that many workers in developing countries complain about poor working conditions, unhappiness and job insecurity. Accordingly, the irrationality of employees' judgments about the unsatisfactory status of Nigerian organizational environments has been linked to the deviant behavior of civil servants. Apparently, workers in this work environment face job-related risks and distorted feelings about their well-being at work. With this in mind, they assessed the impact of rational-emotional occupational health coaching on quality of work life and work stress management among education administrators in Nigeria. Their research used a group randomized trial design. A total number of 70 administrators were recruited, measured with 2 measurement tools during the study. Frequency, percentage, and chi-square statistics were used to describe the recruited sample, and inferential statistics (mixed model ANOVA) were used to examine the information collected from participants. The outcome showed a significant effect of Rational-Emotional Occupational Health Coaching (REOHC) group in decreasing stress perception and work-family conflict management among school administrators. Additionally, the study revealed a significant effect of time on administrators' job stress and work-family conflict management. The results also indicated that professional stress and administrators' coping skills for work-family conflicts have a significant influence due to group and time interaction effects. They concluded that REOHC is a powerful and useful coaching strategy that improves administrators' perceptions of work-life and job stress in the work environment. Based on these results, we recommend REOHC to practitioners in different areas of life.

Yao & Xu (2023)²¹ investigated that on December 7, 2022, China optimized its response to the virus and significantly changed its epidemic policy by downgrading COVID handling and gradually restoring offline teaching in schools. This change has had many impacts on teachers. Through qualitative thematic analysis research, this article studied the professional pressure of primary school teachers in China after the epidemic policy change. Two recruitment methods were adopted for this study. One of them was to send an email to the principals of several primary schools in Zhejiang Province to introduce the research project and indicate the idea of recruiting participants. With their help, they found teachers who volunteered to participate. The second was to post recruitment information on the network forum (e.g., online teacher forums) to find volunteer participants. Through semi-structured interviews and diaries, 18 primary school teachers from different regions and schools in Zhejiang Province were interviewed. All interview responses were transcribed



anonymously. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was used to analyze participants' responses. Eighteen participants took part in the research project. Forty-five final codes, generated from 89 codes initially obtained from the dataset, were categorized into five final themes: uncertainty, overload, neglect, concern for students, and influence, which reflected teachers' professional stress of primary school following epidemic prevention policies. It was concluded that five themes were identified in the research. Problems described by participants include cumbersome offline activities, being disturbed outside of business hours, and understaffing in the face of infection. These issues took a toll on participants' mental health, including anxiety, fatigue, stress, and other adverse psychological issues. Raising awareness and paying attention to the psychological situation of primary school teachers after the easing of COVID control is crucial. Researchers believed it is necessary to protect the mental health of teachers, especially during this particular time.

Conclusion

Teachers' job is one of the most difficult job in the world. From the review it is clear that teacher-student relationship sometimes create emotional stress among the teachers. Moreover COVID-19 impacted the well-being of the teachers to a larger extent due to the implementation of the new technologies and remote working. It hampered the life of the teachers because of the lack of technology as well as work life balance. Strategies should be implemented by the School/University management to minimize the occupational stress level of the teachers. Timely consultation is also required by the management to slow down the occupational stress of the teachers. This review was conducted with the purpose of whether the pandemic (COVID-19) affected the occupational stress of teachers or not. Researchers found that COVID-19 affected the occupational stress level of the teachers.



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