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DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND JOB STRESS AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Job Stress is considered as the pressure and tension the employees of any organization have to face during their duties due to the unnatural demands of their job. Job stress has become such a common phenomenon that almost none can deny to get experienced it. As the teachers belong to a noble profession, i.e., the profession of the Prophets, hence the researcher, in order to determine whether they also undergo job stress, conducted this survey-based, descriptive and cross-sectional study. This study was also supposed to measure the effects of demographic factors on job stress among different categories of teachers, i.e., PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs working in public sector schools in Punjab, Pakistan. Due to a shortage of time and financial resources, this study was delimited to of Faisalabad Division. The sample of this study comprised 700 respondents selected by a multi-stage proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A standardized scale was employed for determining workplace stress after taking permission. In addition to descriptive statistics, i.e., frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, inferential statistics, i.e., independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were also calculated from the collected data using SPSS 23 to test the already formulated null hypotheses of the study. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that the majority of school teachers are facing low-level job stress, whereas gender and qualification have no significant effect on job stress, but the designation has a significant effect on the job stress of teachers.

Keywords: Job stress; Employees; Organization; Perceptions; Demographic factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Job Stress is the pressure and the tension which the employees have to face during the course of their duties due to unnatural demands. Job stress for the current study refers to the score obtained by the participants on Workplace Stress Scale. A higher score represents a higher level of job stress. As a whole, occupational stress has become a permanent feature of our day-to-day life. Stress is a complex term that researchers have defined in different ways. Some of the researchers link it to an effect, thinking of it as a cause (Karasek, 1979; Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; Jex et al., 1992). In this regard, while defining job stress, many researchers focused on the demand control or work strain model of Karasek (1979) (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; Liu et al., 2005; Totterdell et al., 2006; Fox & Spector, 2006). This model explains three basic features of occupational stress: job demands, liberty of decision-making at the job (job decision latitude), and mental anxiety (psychological strain). A survey for exploring the way how different researchers considered occupational stress was conducted by renowned researchers, as reported by Husain et al. (2016), and found the following three practical ways: as a stimulus, reaction, or response, and as stimulus reaction (response) process. They further stated that a number of investigators considered it more appropriate to view occupational stress as a stimulus reaction or response process. Ellis (2006)

viewed occupational stress to be a response that exerts a negative impact on the well-being of a person. As per view point of Janssen (2004), occupational stress is a response like burnout or anxiety.

Factors of job stress, i.e., stressors can differ keeping in view the tasks assigned to the employees and the employer firm. Ormond et al. (2003), through a research study, found out that the common stressors of the job included an excessive load of work, wastage of precious time in meetings, shortage of liaison on the part of the boss, useless messaging, the nonexistence of criticism, absence of encouragement, complex roles, insufficient training, conflict in workers and deficiency of determination. Riaz & Ramzan (2013) viewed time management to be one of the major reasons of occupational stress. Research studies have pointed out that the intensity of job stress in teaching is greater than the job stress in other professions (Darmody & Smith, 2016). According to Sing & Katoch (2017), job stress usually arises due to the imbalance between supposed labour and supposed remuneration. It may also generate a feeling of having less control but great responsibilities in a profession. They also indicated that lack of support from coworkers on the job and lack of job security might also enhance job stress among teachers. As per the findings of Kokkinos (2007), the teachers' job stress is influenced by the following factors, i.e., time constraints, issues pertaining to discipline, dearth of means, lack of acknowledgment and assistance at the workplace, and variety of assignments supposed to perform. Job stress occurs due to the allotment of unanticipated assignments and an uneven load of work beyond the teachers' abilities, expertise, and awareness (Xu et al., 2017).

Stress is such a common phenomenon that almost none can deny experiencing it. Stress can be traced in the lives of employees working varied jobs like teaching. Various kinds of changes in organizations exert unwanted effects on employees, upset them, and cause job stress. These organizational changes may include forceful transfers, illegal or out-of-turn promotions, amendments in rules and regulations, disciplinary actions or punishments, non-competitive salary packages, and changes in the attitudes of society (Hamid et al., 2015). Stress is considered as a force having an unwanted effect on the productivity and efficacy of any firm cum its workers and might develop bodily and psychological ailments (Alavi, 1993). Corporal overtiredness and the strain which penetrates into the stature of mankind may be traced and cured with ease, whereas stress which penetrates into the soul of mankind is invisible and cannot be measured in a simple way. That is why it exerts a damaging impact on the employees. Severe stress is not but sheer waste of human resources, due to which the overall aim of the firm is at stake. Job stress affects employees' bodily along with their intellectual state; it also exerts a great effect on the level of their satisfaction, output, and absenteeism (Tennant, 2001). Stress is the disproportion of supposed needs and means available to an employee (Saeed & Farooqi, 2014). Stress generates when a worker is uncertain about his competence to encounter fears for their well-being and their skill to meet the requirements perfectly supposed to be met by that employee (Lazarus, 1966). Workplace/Job Stress may also be defined as a damaging bodily, and psychological reaction occurred due to the clash between the demands of the job and the extent of control that the employee uses to attain these demands (Arandelović & Ilić, 2006). Blaug et al. (2007) found a strong relationship between people's job stress, sorrow, and sickness. According to Detert et al. (2006), the following factors develop job stress among teachers, i.e., excessive load of work, unpleasant terms with coworkers, role conflict, disciplinary issues, pressure due to shortage of time, role ambiguity, unscrupulous working environment, self-esteem, less cooperation on the part of friends, family members and unmotivated fellows in the students.

Avey et al. (2009) conducted research in which they concluded that occupational stress, these days, has taken the form of a common issue for managers dealing with human resource. Job Stress is considered the physical and psychological condition an employee has to face when he finds his resources inadequate to meet the pressures and requirements of that very situation he is passing (Michie, 2002). Ullrich & Fitzgerald (1990) are of the view that Job Stress is the outcome of a loss of balance between the needs of

the employer and the worker's capacity to meet those requirements. Job Stress may also be explained as the undesirable psychological condition arising due to the interaction which takes place between the employee and his employer or the employee and the environment of his workplace. According to a fundamental assumption of stress theory, the psychosomatic stressors, including role stress and absence of control along with no or less social support, exert damaging effects on the employees' health as well as the productivity of the organization (Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

Job Stress has been defined by Jamal (2005) as a person's response to the features of the settings of his workplace, which look frightening from emotional cum physical point of view. Most of the time, it has been observed that the employees who have to face extraordinary job stress do not enjoy good health, are unable to show good performance, have less motivation level, and feel insecure in work settings. It is also worth mentioning here that their organizations remain unable to earn a good name as compared to those organizations whose employees do not have to face job stress. Undue job stress generates physical as well as psychological ailments and maladies in the person, which will result in decreased performance (Işıkhan, 2004). Job stress is the reaction of the employee to the unnecessary pressure he faces in work life (Genc, 2005). Ali et al. (2013) conducted a study to determine the effects of occupational stress on the job performance of Pakistani teachers. The major findings of the study revealed that job stress affects physical as well as mental health, and it also results in poor quality of production along with less output. Prasad et al. (2016), through a multinomial regression approach, investigated teacher's performance as a function of occupational stress and coping with reference to CBSE-affiliated school teachers in and around Hyderabad. The results of this study verify the existence of medium-level workplace stress among school teachers, which should be removed in order to enhance their performance. Hanif et al. (2011) also researched the public and private school teachers working in primary and secondary schools in Islamabad, Pakistan, to explore the role of personal and job-related variables in teacher stress and job performance. In addition to it, this study was also supposed to know the relationship between levels and sources of job stress with the performance of school teachers. It was found that teachers' stress and job performance were negatively correlated with each other.

Keeping in view the literature review cited above, it can be summed up that with the advancement of Science and Technology, the pace of life has multiplied. The demands and requirements of every organization are touching the sky. They set high targets for their employees that are not easy to achieve. These high and illogical targets on the part of the business bodies may create job stress. Through the search of pages of history, it can be easily traced that the role of teacher was uni-dimensional and very simple in the past as the teacher of that time was confined only to teaching. But in the present age, the role of a teacher has become very complex and multi-dimensional. The teacher of today is not restricted to teaching only. Still, he is supposed to perform various other tasks, including increasing enrollment, decreasing dropout, ensuring 95% attendance of the enrolled students on a daily basis, achieving cleanliness targets of the school, ensuring the functionality of the available facilities, holding parent-teacher meetings, involving school council for utilization of funds like Farooq-e-Taleem Fund and Non-Salary Budget, performing a duty for the smooth conduct of PEC and Board examinations as invigilation or supervisory staff, doing election duty, extending services for census being a national cause, participating in polio eradication campaign and at the same time showing better results as compared to the results of PEC and concerned Educational Board. Moreover, he has become more accountable to the government and the public also. The government is pressing the teachers very hard to do more without considering the ground realities, which is causing a lot of job stress among school teachers (Farooq & Kai, 2017). Demir (2016) is of the view that the teachers' quality of work weakens if their workplace conditions are not favourable and the workload is not justified. When he tries to achieve all these targets of his job fixed by his employer, and he feels unable to attain them, ultimately, he faces job stress which affects the quality of his life by producing

numerous mental health disorders. Consequently, organizations fail to compete with their counterparts in the same field.

There is no doubt that most of the research studies found that the employees of various organizations undergo job stress, but as teaching is a noble profession and the profession of the Prophets, so it seems quite appropriate, logical, and essential to conduct this study to know whether the persons connected with this noble profession in different categories, i.e., PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs working in SED Punjab also face job stress or it is otherwise in their case? On the other hand, this study is also of great value as it will examine teachers' job stress considering their demographic characteristics, i.e., gender, designation, and qualification. It has been observed that though some research has been conducted on the job stress of teachers, but no research study deals with the same population as this study. Therefore, the researcher planned to conduct this study.

The findings of this study will enable the concerned authorities to take appropriate action to address this issue of vital significance. It will prove a reference for future research and activate a plethora of research in this comparatively less explored area. Moreover, the current study will prove a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge regarding school education issues. This research study will also be significant for the researchers, teachers, educationists, planners, managers, administrators, and other stakeholders of the concerned area along with SED Punjab.

Hypotheses

1. The school teachers face no significant job stress.
2. There is no significant effect of gender of school teachers on their Job Stress.
3. There is no significant difference in job stress among different categories of School teachers, i.e., PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs.
4. There is no significant effect of qualification of teachers on their Job Stress.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sampling

This survey-based study is descriptive and cross-sectional. A quantitative approach was employed in this study. All 47237 (male and female) teachers of different categories, i.e., PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs working in public sector schools of all four districts of Faisalabad Division, constituted the population for this study (Report on Annual School Census, 2017-18). A sample consisting of 700 respondents with equal representation of both male and female genders and considering the urban and rural distribution of the public schools was selected by multi-stage proportionate stratified random sampling technique from all four districts of Faisalabad Division. The sample size is shown in Figure 1.

Research Instruments

To determine teachers' job stress, the Workplace Stress Scale developed by the American Institute of Stress (1998) was employed. This scale is comprised of 10 items. The respondent is required to enter a number from 1 to 10 which describes him the best. The numbers 1 to 4 express strongly disagree, 5 to 7 show somewhat agree, and 8 to 10 describe strongly agree. To get total job stress score, the replies to each question are added. The 10-30 scores indicate that the respondent handles the job stress well, whereas the scores 40-60 reflect moderately well, and scores 70-100 show that the respondent is facing problems that need to be fixed.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The researcher sought institutional permission for data collection from respective heads of departments and collected the data through various modes. In addition to descriptive statistics, i.e., frequencies,

percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, inferential statistics, i.e., Independent Sample t-test, were also calculated in order to draw meaningful conclusions from the collected data using SPSS 23. Moreover, One-Way ANOVA was used to measure the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables. Implications of the results were duly discussed at the end of this research report.

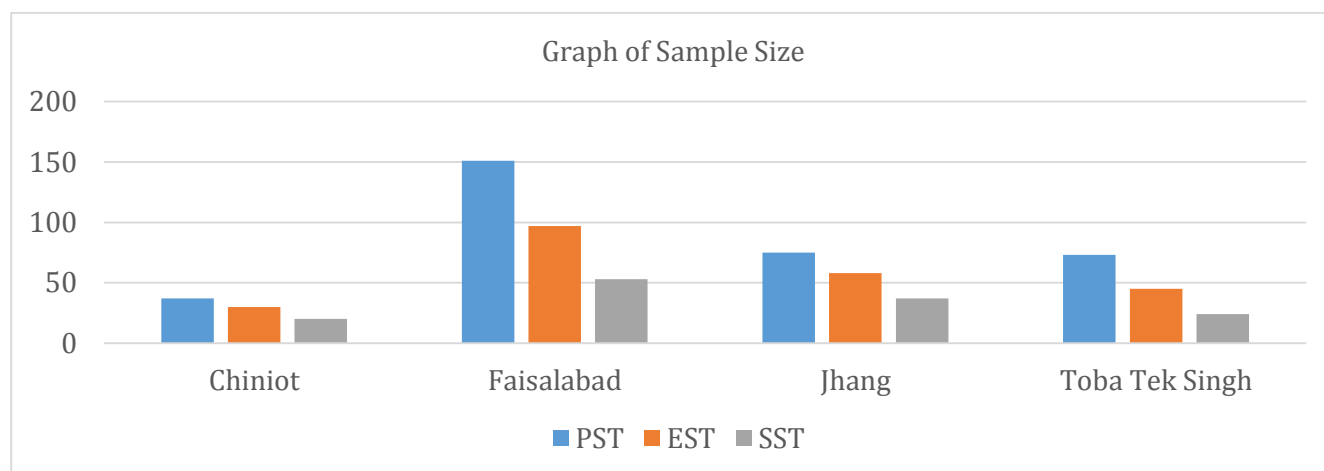


Figure 1. Sample size of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All the collected data were placed into SPSS for analysis; initially, the collected data were descriptively analyzed in light of research objectives, and then the research hypotheses were tested through inferential statistics.

Table 1. Teachers' perceptions about their workplace stress.

Sr.	Statements	Mean	S. D	Df	χ^2	Sig
1	I can't honestly say what I really think or get things off my chest at work	5.4100	2.43	9	197.25	.000
2	My job has a lot of responsibilities, but I don't have very much authority.	6.2243	2.49	9	143.31	.000
3	I could usually do a much better job if I were given more time	6.1357	2.61	9	96.086	.000
4	I seldom receive adequate acknowledgment or appreciation when my work is really good.	5.9757	2.64	9	70.914	.000
5	In general, I am not particularly proud/satisfied with my job.	4.3800	2.57	9	182.63	.000
6	I have the impression that I am repeatedly picked on or discriminated against at work.	4.3571	2.44	9	154.77	.000
7	My workplace environment is not very pleasant or safe.	3.8543	2.50	9	375.63	.000
8	My job often interferes with my family and social obligations or personal needs.	4.7257	2.55	9	120.34	.000
9	I tend to have frequent arguments with superiors, coworkers, or customers.	4.6829	2.57	9	97.914	.000
10	Most of the time I feel I have very little control over my life at work.	4.4500	2.60	9	155.51	.000
-	Cumulative scores	54.2343	11.69	9	377.71	.000

Table 1 provides detail about teachers' responses on workplace stress. According to the mean scores of items no 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 (5.41, 6.2243, 6.1357, 5.9757, 4.7257, and 4.6829 with standard deviations of 2.43, 2.49, 2.61, 2.64, 2.55 and 2.57) the respondents were somewhat agreed that they could not claim that they come home free from their work stress. Against my responsibilities, I have very less authority, am short of time to make the quality of my work done, and very few times my work is recognized, teachers' job often interferes with my personal, social, and family obligations. All these mean scores were significant as the χ^2 values 197.25, 143.31, 96.086, 70.914, 120.34, and 97.914 for these statements were significant at .000.

On the other hand, the mean scores of items 5, 6, 7, and 10 (4.38, 4.3573, 3.8543 and 4.45 with standard deviations of 2.57, 2.44, 2.50 and 2.60), the respondents strongly disagreed that they are not satisfied or proud of their job, rather they are more satisfied and proud of their teaching job. Furthermore, they also strongly disagreed with discrimination at the workplace and believed that they were never discriminated against at the workplace. They also disagreed with the statement that their workplace atmosphere was not pleasant or safe, and the respondents also strongly disagreed with the statement that they have low control over their working life. All these results of the mentioned items were also highly significant as the χ^2 values 182.63, 154.77, 375.63, and 155.51 were significant at .000.

Furthermore, the cumulative mean score for job stress at the workplace was 54.2343, with a standard deviation of 11.6932, reflecting that teachers somewhat agreed that they face job stress at the workplace. Therefore, it was concluded that the majority of teachers experience stress at the workplace, but they have a moderate level of ability to cope with their job stress.

Table 2. Gender-wise differences of the study participants about job stress.

Descriptive Results					t-test results			
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD	M.D	df	t-value	Sig.
Male	350	50.0	54.2629	11.425	0.5714	698	.065	.394
Female	350	50.0	54.2057	11.971				

Another important aspect of the gender-wise perspective in this study was related to the comparison of gender and job stress feelings. The mean score of male and female respondents about their job stress was 54.2629, and 54.2057, with standard deviations from mean scores were 11.425 and 11.971 that reflects same opinions about job stress which was confirmed by the mean differences 0.5714, t value .065 and these are not significant as the sig value was .394 higher than .05.

Therefore, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of males and female about their job stress at the workplace and gender has no significant effect on the job stress of teachers. Further, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female and gender has no significant effects on the job stress of teachers was accepted.

Table 3. Designation-wise differences of teachers about job stress.

Descriptive results			ANOVA Results				
Designation	Mean score	Standard deviation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PST	55.7143	11.35329	1470.097	2	735.048	5.444	.005
EST	53.1659	11.09641	94105.481	697	135.015		
SST	52.3630	13.05877	95575.577	699			

Table 3 explains teachers' designations and their job stress at the workplace. The highest mean scores were found for PST teachers 55.7143 and EST teachers 53.1659 as compared to SST 52.363. Furthermore, these differences among these teachers' designations were significant as these designations lead toward job stress at the workplace among teachers as the *f* value 5.444, which is significant at .005, as this is less than .05.

Therefore, it was concluded that PST teachers are more exposed to job stress at the workplace because of their designations. These results enable the researcher to reject the null hypothesis and formulate an alternative hypothesis that PST teachers' designation (lower Grades) contributes to job stress at the workplace as compared to other designations of teachers.

Table 4. Teachers' differences on the basis of their academic qualification regarding job stress.

Descriptive results			ANOVA Results				
Qualification	Mean scores	Standard Deviation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Matric	57.0526	10.67954	886.118	4	221.530	1.626	.166
Intermediate	57.0476	14.36829	94689.459	695	136.244		
Graduation	54.3474	10.45331	95575.577	699			
Masters	53.5079	11.73576					
MPhil/PhD	55.9000	11.98206					

Table 4 explains teachers' academic qualifications and their job stress at the workplace. The highest mean scores were found for matric and intermediate qualified teachers 57.0526 and 57.0476, respectively; however, the differences among these academic qualifications were not significant as these academic qualifications don't lead to any differences in their job stress at the workplace because the *f* value 1.626 is not significant at .166.

Therefore, it was concluded that teachers' academic qualifications have nothing to do with the perceptions of teachers' job stress at their workplace, which enables the researcher to accept the null hypothesis because qualification has no significant effect or differences from the perspectives of job stress.

The cumulative mean score was 54.2343, with a standard deviation of 11.6932. Teachers reflected that teachers have low-level stress at their workplace, and they have a moderate level of ability to cope with their job stress in an effective manner (Table 1). There were no gender-wise differences between male and female teachers on Job Stress, as shown by the *t* value of .065, which was not significant at .394 (Table 2). The differences among teachers' designations were significant as PST designation leads toward job stress among teachers as compared to EST and SST, as the *f* value for teachers was 5.444, which was significant at .005 (Table 3). The differences among these academic qualifications of different categories of school teachers were not significant as these academic qualifications do not lead towards any differences in their job stress at the workplace because the *f* value 1.626 is not significant at .166 (Table 4).

Job stress was one of the main study variables, and the results extracted from the analysis revealed that teachers have a low level of job stress at their workplace. This stress was because of the working environment prevailing in schools, low authority, time constraints, and absence of good work recognitions. The same results were found in the study of Ali et al. (2013), who concluded that teachers in Pakistan are facing job stress, and it has a negative impact on their overall professional performance. The same was also supported by the findings of Prasad et al. (2016), who conducted this research work in Hyderabad on CBSE school teachers who recorded a medium level of job stress among teachers.

The results also indicated that the majority of the teachers face low-level job stress; therefore, it has not affected their physical, mental, and psychological health. However, according to Michie (2002), teachers facing a high or moderate level of job stress are always exposed to severe physical and psychological health issues and must take medicines regularly. Hanif et al. (2011), in addition to other results in their study conducted in Islamabad, concluded that teachers experience low levels of job stress, the same results yielded by this study. Furthermore, as compared to the current study and cited studies, teachers in China face high-level work stress due to the change in their system of education and limited resources, as concluded by Yang et al. (2009).

Additionally, gender was not found to be a significant indicator of job stress in this study. The results were similar to the results of the research studies of Baytar (2010), Check & Okwo (2012), and Agyemang & Arkorful (2013), who found no significant differences in job stress due to gender. However, these results differed from the results of Yang et al. (2009), who concluded that male teachers experience less job stress at the workplace compared to female gender. These differences may be due to general cultural differences in Pakistan and China.

Moreover, it was revealed that the designation had a significant effect on job stress. The results are in congruence with the study of Aslam et al. (2022), who concluded that designation is a significant demographic factor for workplace spirituality. It is perhaps due to the reason that PSTs are the lowest category teachers who have a small grade, less salaries and less physical as well as human resources but are answerable before a number of authorities, i.e., Assistant Education Officer, Deputy District Education Officer, District Education Officer, Chief Executive Officer, and Monitoring Evaluation Assistants. Hence, they are more likely to experience job stress as compared to ESTs and SSTs.

Furthermore, qualification was not found to be a significant factor for job stress as the highly qualified teachers as well as the teachers with less qualifications equally undergo job stress when they are under the pressure of unexpected and irrelevant duties like the performance of anti-dengue activities, etc. and find themselves unable to meet the demands of their employer, i.e., SED due to technological or other similar reasons. The results of the current study were found in conformity with the results of the study conducted by Bharathi (2013) and Check & Okwo (2012), who also concluded that qualification had no significant effect on job stress perceptions of school teachers, whereas the results are contrary to the findings of the study of Aftab & Khatoon (2012) who concluded that qualification is a significant demographic indicator for workplace stress.

In a nutshell, most of the results of the study were found in congruence with the results of already published studies. It also endorsed that job stress at the workplace is a significant problem faced especially by teachers and other professionals in their respective fields and negatively affects their performance, physical and mental well-being, and overall quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers have low-level stress at their workplace; they are mostly affected by their low authority against high responsibilities, lack of appreciation for their performances, and lower control over their working life reflects that they have stress. However, this level of teachers' stress was low, and it was believed that teachers have the capabilities to deal with this stress. All male and female school teachers have the same opinions that they are exposed to job stress irrespective of their gender. Similarly, all school teachers, i.e., PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs are facing job stress, but PST teachers are facing more job stress due to their designation. Likewise, the opinions of highly qualified and less qualified teachers are similar as far as job stress is concerned.

The conclusions showed that teachers have low-level job stress at the workplace. Therefore, it is recommended that the school heads of the sample group may arrange capacity-building sessions for the teachers to identify the background reasons responsible for the workplace stress of the teachers and eradicate them before the situation worsens. It was also recommended that the monitoring policies, suspension of casual leaves, and other such policies that lead to teachers' job stress may be re-considered because job stress will never let the teachers to deliver their best which will negatively contribute towards students' development and achievement. Teachers were not satisfied with the existing work acknowledgment mechanism. Therefore, it is recommended that should be a proper mechanism of acknowledgment and reward for the best-performing teachers to enhance their motivation level. Job stress has an inverse correlation with the quality of teachers' life; hence with the increase in their job stress, their quality of life will automatically be declined. Therefore, it is essential that necessary arrangements to mitigate the job stress of teachers may be made. So, a three-dimension approach may be useful in this context, i.e., School teachers by their collegiality, head teachers by means of their leadership, whereas policy makers from their standpoints may work collectively to cope with the teachers' psychological problems effectively at the very early stage. It is strongly recommended for the prospective researchers that they may take up the same problem for investigation at the university level as well as in public and privately managed institutes.

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