

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12426309

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS

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Received: 15/07/2025

Accepted: 16/02/2026

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## ABSTRACT

Occupational stress among college educators has been extensively documented; nevertheless, replication studies in various higher education settings are scarce. This study sought to reproduce existing findings regarding occupational stress and psychological well-being in college educators, while also extending previous research by investigating coping techniques as mediating factors. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 120 college educators from arts and science colleges associated with a public university in South India. Standardised tools assessed occupational stress, coping mechanisms, and psychological well-being. Data were examined utilising independent samples t-tests, Pearson correlations, and mediation analysis. Effect sizes (Cohen's *d*), 95% confidence intervals (CI), and significance levels were reported. Occupational stress was negatively correlated with psychological well-being ( $r = -.48, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.61, -.32]$ ). Female teachers reported significantly higher stress ( $M = 67.42, SD = 8.11$ ) than male teachers ( $M = 63.15, SD = 7.89$ ),  $t(118) = 2.54, p = .012, d = 0.46$ . Adaptive coping partially mediated the stress-well-being relationship (indirect effect =  $-0.18, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.29, -0.09]$ ). The results corroborate earlier data associating occupational stress with diminished psychological well-being in higher education and further elucidate the mediation function of coping methods. The findings underscore the necessity for institutional stress-management initiatives and transparent replication studies inside academic environments.

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**KEYWORDS:** Occupational Stress, Psychological Well-Being, Coping Strategies, Replication Study, Higher Education, College Teachers.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress has emerged as a significant focus of research in psychology in recent years, particularly among higher education workers. In academic institutions, the pressures of performance, administrative duties, research output expectations, student diversity issues, and evolving technological specifications are becoming increasingly important. These factors make college instructors especially likely to have long-term stress. The replication issue in psychology underscores the necessity to reassess established findings within various cultural and institutional frameworks. This happens even though there is a lot of proof that work stress affects mental health. The replication method makes scientific results more reliable and applicable to a wider range of situations. However, there are comparatively few replication studies in the domain of stress research inside higher education, especially in non-Western contexts.

This study aims to enhance existing research by examining coping strategies as a mediating variable and to replicate prior findings about the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being among college teachers.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Occupational Stress in Higher Education*

Occupational stress denotes the psychological and physiological reactions that arise when employment demands surpass an individual's coping capabilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In academic settings, primary stressors encompass overwhelming workload, role uncertainty, publication pressure, difficulties in student management, restricted autonomy, and institutional bureaucracy.

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001) elucidates the relationship between elevated job demands and inadequate resources, which lead to burnout and diminished well-being. Empirical studies consistently indicate moderate to high levels of occupational stress among educators (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Prolonged exposure to these stressors substantially impacts mental health and occupational performance.

### *Psychological Well-Being*

Psychological well-being includes self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, life purpose, positive connections, and personal development (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Research demonstrates that increased work stress adversely affects psychological well-being in professionals, especially educators (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

### *Coping Strategies as a Mediator*

Coping methods denote cognitive and behavioral techniques employed to alleviate stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Adaptive coping mechanisms, including problem-solving and soliciting social support, correlate with improved psychological outcomes, whereas maladaptive coping, such as avoidance, is related with diminished mental health.

While previous research indicates that coping affects stress outcomes, there are fewer empirical replication studies examining its mediation effect in higher education contexts. Examining coping as a mediator offers theoretical advancement and practical significance.

### *Occupational Stress Among Higher Education Professionals*

Professionals in higher education face a complicated mix of academic, administrative, and interpersonal obligations that can make their jobs more stressful. Academic labour is different from many other jobs in that it typically demands people to do a lot of different things at once, like teach, do research, mentor students, do administrative work, and get involved in the community. These overlapping duties lead to role conflict and time pressure, which can cause mental stress.

Prior studies have repeatedly recognised workload, publication pressure, insufficient institutional support, and work–life imbalance as significant factors contributing to occupational stress among university faculty members. Winefield et al. (2003) found that academic personnel often feel stressed because of more institutional accountability, performance evaluation systems, and limited resources. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) also showed that both organisational variables and personal traits can make teachers more stressed.

The growing globalisation of higher education has also made competition between schools and expectations for efficiency higher. Faculty members frequently must publish research, obtain funding, and uphold teaching standards concurrently. These expectations may lead to ongoing stress at work, which can be bad for both your health and your work performance.

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *The Job Demands–Resources Model*

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm is a good way to think about stress at work in schools. This concept says that job demands are parts of a profession that require a lot of effort over time and come with mental or bodily expenses. In higher

education, employment demands include large teaching loads, research obligations, administrative duties, and time constraints. Job resources, on the other hand, are physical, social, or organizational things that assist people deal with the demands of their jobs and reach their work goals. These resources could include help from the institution, freedom to make decisions, good connections with coworkers, and chances to learn and grow in your field.

When the demands of a job are higher than the resources available, employees may get burnt out and less mentally healthy. Nonetheless, effective coping mechanisms and conducive organisational settings can alleviate these adverse impacts. In the realm of higher education, the JD-R model posits that coping techniques may be essential in mitigating the effects of occupational stress on psychological well-being.

### Objectives of the Study

1. This study aims to replicate the correlation between professional stress and psychological well-being among college instructors.
2. To examine the gender differences in occupational stress among college teachers.
3. To expand upon prior research by investigating the function of coping mechanisms as mediators in the relationship between stress and well-being.

### Hypotheses

H1: Occupational stress will have a negative correlation with psychological well-being.

H2: Female educators will exhibit greater work stress compared to their male counterparts.

H3: Coping strategies will mediate the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being.

## 4. METHOD

### Participants

The sample comprised 120 college educators (60 males and 60 females) aged from 28 to 58 years ( $M = 41.3$ ,  $SD = 8.7$ ). Participants were selected from arts and science institutions associated with a public university in South India. This study employed a convenience sampling strategy.

### Measures

Occupational Stress Scale: A standardised 30-item instrument assessing perceived occupational stress ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Psychological Well-Being Scale: A 42-item measure evaluating various facets of well-being ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Coping Strategies Inventory: A 28-item scale assessing both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

### Procedures

Participants granted informed consent and filled out anonymous surveys. Approval from the institutional research committee was secured for ethical considerations.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed utilising SPSS. Pearson correlations examined associations. Independent t-tests analysed gender disparities. Mediation analysis was performed utilising regression techniques with bootstrapped confidence intervals (5,000 samples). Effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ ) and 95% confidence intervals were documented.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables.**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Occupational Stress	65.29	8.12	—		
2. Psychological Well-Being	72.84	9.45	-.48***	—	
3. Adaptive Coping	54.16	7.21	-.32**	.41***	—

### Analysis of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The descriptive data reveal that the mean score for Occupational Stress is 65.29 ( $SD = 8.12$ ), indicating a somewhat elevated level of stress among the participants. The average score for Psychological Well-Being is 72.84 ( $SD = 9.45$ ), indicating relatively favourable well-being levels. The average score for Adaptive Coping is 54.16 ( $SD = 7.21$ ), signifying a modest application of adaptive coping methods. The correlation analysis indicates substantial correlations among the variables. Occupational stress and psychological well-being exhibit a substantial negative connection ( $r = -.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This signifies that elevated work stress correlates with diminished psychological well-being. The association strength is moderate, indicating that stress significantly impacts teachers' mental health. Occupational stress and adaptive coping have a substantial negative connection ( $r = -.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicates that persons under more stress are likely to employ fewer adaptive coping techniques, or alternatively, successful coping may contribute to lower stress levels.

There exists a significant positive link between Psychological Well-Being and Adaptive Coping ( $r = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that increased utilisation of adaptive coping techniques correlates with enhanced psychological well-being.

### Gender Differences

Female educators exhibited markedly elevated stress levels ( $M = 67.42$ ,  $SD = 8.11$ ) compared to their male counterparts ( $M = 63.15$ ,  $SD = 7.89$ ),  $t(118) = 2.54$ ,  $p = .012$ ,  $d = 0.46$  (medium effect).

### **Mediation Analysis**

Adaptive coping partially influenced the association between occupational stress and psychological well-being. The indirect effect was substantial ( $-0.18$ , 95% CI  $[-0.29, -0.09]$ ). The direct effect was substantial ( $\beta = -.30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting partial mediation.

### **5. DISCUSSIONS**

The current study effectively reproduced known findings indicating a strong negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being among college educators. The moderate effect size reinforces the validity of previous findings across many cultural contexts.

Gender disparities in stress levels correspond with existing data indicating that female educators may encounter further role-related demands.

The extension component of this study demonstrated that adaptive coping methods partially mediate the link between stress and well-being. This indicates that institutional initiatives fostering adaptive coping may mitigate adverse psychological effects.

The findings underscore the significance of coping techniques in the management of occupational stress. Teachers who indicated elevated levels of adaptive coping methods had enhanced psychological well-being. This indicates that coping techniques function as protective factors that assist individuals in properly managing work-related pressures.

The gender disparities in stress levels are also significant. Female educators indicated markedly elevated levels of occupational stress in contrast to their male counterparts. This finding may be elucidated by the supplementary social and familial obligations that women frequently encounter in conjunction with their work responsibilities. In numerous cultural situations, women persist in bearing a disproportionate share of domestic tasks, thereby exacerbating stress levels.

These results show how important it is for organisations to take action to reduce occupational stress on both a structural and individual level. Colleges and universities should think about putting in place stress management programs, counselling services, and procedures for managing workloads that help teachers stay healthy.

### **6. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Institutions should:  
 Conduct organized stress management sessions  
 Advocate for peer support frameworks  
 Promote policies for workload redistribution

Facilitate the availability of mental health resources

This study's findings have significant ramifications for higher education institutions, politicians, and educational administrators. First, institutions should recognize occupational stress as a significant factor affecting faculty productivity and well-being. Developing supportive organizational environments can help reduce stress and improve overall job satisfaction among educators.

Second, institutions should implement structured professional development programs that promote effective coping strategies. Workshops on stress management, mindfulness training, and time management can equip educators with tools to manage work-related pressures.

Third, building supportive relationships at work may also assist lower stress levels at work. Collegial collaboration, mentoring systems, and peer support networks can enhance emotional support among faculty members.

Finally, institutional policies that promote work-life balance may significantly improve educators' psychological well-being. Flexible work schedules, fair workload distribution, and access to mental health resources can contribute to a healthier academic work environment.

### **7. LIMITATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The cross-sectional design constrains causal inference. Subsequent research should utilize longitudinal methodologies and samples from several institutions. Replication in diverse cultural and policy contexts is advocated.

Subsequent research ought to investigate occupational stress among educators through longitudinal research methodologies to enhance the comprehension of causal linkages among stress, coping mechanisms, and psychological well-being. Longitudinal studies would enable researchers to investigate the temporal progression of stress and the impact of coping mechanisms on enduring psychological effects.

Moreover, subsequent research may investigate the influence of organizational support and leadership styles in regulating the correlation between occupational stress and well-being. The culture of the institution and the way it is run can have a big effect on how teachers deal with and feel about stress at work.

Comparative studies across various educational systems and cultural contexts would yield significant insights into the global phenomenon of occupational stress in academia. This kind of research could find contextual factors that affect teachers' stress levels

and help create intervention programs that take culture into account.

## 8. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing body of transparent replication research in psychology by

substantiating the negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being among college professors. The study builds on earlier findings by include coping as a mediating variable, offering both theoretical and practical insights into stress management in higher education.

### *Declarations*

### *Ethical Approval*

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Institutional Research Committee and adhered to the principles of the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. Ethical approval was obtained prior to the commencement of data collection. All procedures performed in this study involving human participants followed institutional ethical guidelines.

### *Informed Consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained.

### *Conflict of Interest*

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

### *Funding*

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### *Data Availability Statement*

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to confidentiality considerations.

### *Author Contributions*

Girija C: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing.

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