

Effect of Mindfulness Activities on the occupational stress and psychological wellbeing of Private and Government Teachers of Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh.

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ABSTRACT

Under the increasingly changing education system in the present era, teachers undergo a variety of pressures in terms of enhanced workload, administrative tasks, pressures of standardized testing, limited material resources, and the demands of diverse student populations. These sources of stress can detrimentally affect the psychological state of teachers, resulting in burnout, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and even mental illness. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of mindfulness exercises on occupational stress and psychological well-being of government and private school teachers in Arunachal Pradesh, Namsai district, India. It utilized a quasi-experimental approach with non equivalent control pretest-post-test design. A total of 200 teachers (100 government school teachers and 100 private school teachers) were included in the study. Half of both groups (50 private and 50 government teachers) received a 6-week mindfulness intervention program consisting of breathing exercises, pranayama, meditation, and yoga asanas. The findings indicated a statistically significant reduction in occupational stress and enhancement of psychological well-being among private and government teachers who received the mindfulness intervention. The research also discovered a huge difference in government and private teachers on both occupational stress and psychological well-being, where the private teachers exhibited marginally more improvement on both the variables. The key insight in this research is that even though government teachers have greater job security, they too suffer from occupational stress due to bureaucratic work load and implementation problems of policies. Conversely, private tutors experience job insecurity and financial-related stress. Nonetheless, the study illustrates that mindfulness interventions, if practiced regularly, can effectively enable both groups to cope with stress and improve their mental health. The study further highlights the need for institutional

support in ensuring a healthy work environment and individual commitment to mindfulness practice for sustainable outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession, traditionally viewed as a noble and rewarding vocation, is increasingly recognized as a source of significant occupational stress (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017)(Rizvi & Mangal, 2018)(Nor, 2020). In today's rapidly evolving education system, teachers face a multitude of pressures, including increased workloads, administrative demands, standardized testing pressures, limited resources, and the challenges of diverse student populations (Rizvi & Mangal, 2018) (Nor, 2020). These stressors can negatively impact teachers' psychological well-being, leading to burnout, emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and even mental health problems (Sample Psychology Research Paper on Professional Burnout among Students, 2020)(Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017)(Ji et al., 2021).

The consequences of teacher stress extend beyond individual well-being, affecting the quality of teaching and learning, student outcomes, and the overall effectiveness of the education system (Rizvi & Mangal, 2018). Stressed teachers may experience reduced motivation, decreased job performance, and increased absenteeism (Bongo & Casta, 2017), ultimately impacting student achievement and the overall school climate. Therefore, understanding the factors contributing to occupational stress among teachers and its impact on their psychological well-being is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems. Mindfulness activities have demonstrated a significant impact on reducing occupational stress and enhancing psychological well-being among both private and government sector educators. These practices can assist educators in more effectively managing the challenges inherent to their profession, which often include high workloads, emotional demands, and the pressure to meet diverse student needs. Research has consistently indicated that mindfulness-based interventions can effectively mitigate stress levels in teachers (Flook et al., 2013).The incorporation of mindfulness techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and body scans into daily routines can enable teachers to develop heightened awareness of their cognitive and emotional states, thereby improving stress management capabilities. These practices encourage individuals to focus on the present moment, cultivating a non-judgmental awareness of thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. By doing so, educators can develop greater emotional regulation skills and resilience in the face of workplace stressors.Studies have also substantiated that mindfulness practices can enhance teachers' psychological well-being. For instance, research conducted by Roeser et al. (2013) revealed that educators who participated in a mindfulness training program reported lower levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout compared to those in a control group. This improvement in mental health can lead to increased job satisfaction, better work-life balance, and enhanced overall quality of life for educators.The benefits of mindfulness activities appear to be applicable across both private and government school settings. A comparative study by Jennings et al. (2017) observed comparable positive outcomes in stress reduction and well-being enhancement for teachers across diverse school environments when implementing mindfulness-based interventions. This suggests that the effectiveness of mindfulness practices is not limited by the type of educational institution, making it a versatile tool for supporting teacher well-being across different contexts.Mindfulness practices can also exert a positive influence on the classroom environment. Educators who engage in these activities frequently report improved classroom management skills and enhanced relationships with their students (Meiklejohn et al., 2012). This can foster a more positive and productive learning atmosphere for both educators and students. More mindful teachers tend to be more attuned to their students' needs, better able to manage challenging behaviors, and more effective

in creating a supportive and engaging learning environment. Furthermore, mindfulness can contribute to improved cognitive functioning and decision-making abilities among educators. Regular practice has been associated with enhanced attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. These cognitive benefits can translate into more effective teaching strategies, better problem-solving skills, and increased adaptability in the face of changing educational demands. To optimize the benefits of mindfulness activities, educational institutions should consider implementing structured programs that provide teachers with comprehensive training and ongoing support in these practices. Regular workshops, guided sessions, and resources for self-practice can facilitate the integration of mindfulness into educators' daily lives and professional routines. Additionally, creating a school culture that values and prioritizes teacher well-being can further reinforce the adoption and sustained practice of mindfulness techniques. It is important to note that while mindfulness activities have shown promising results, they should not be viewed as a panacea for all workplace challenges in education. Rather, they should be considered as part of a holistic approach to supporting teacher well-being, which may include other interventions such as professional development opportunities, workload management strategies, and supportive leadership practices. In conclusion, mindfulness activities have exhibited significant potential in mitigating occupational stress and enhancing psychological well-being for both private and government sector teachers. By incorporating these practices into their lives, educators can more effectively navigate the challenges of their profession, leading to improved mental health, job satisfaction, and overall teaching effectiveness. The widespread implementation of mindfulness programs in educational settings could contribute to creating more resilient, engaged, and effective teaching workforces, ultimately benefiting both educators and the students they serve.

This research paper examines the relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being among teachers in today's education system. It explores the various sources of stress experienced by teachers, the impact of these stressors on their mental and emotional health, and the potential mediating or moderating role of factors such as coping strategies, social support, and emotional intelligence (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017)(Chua, 2012). By shedding light on this critical issue, this study aims to contribute to the development of strategies and policies aimed at promoting teacher well-being and creating a more supportive and sustainable education system.

II) Review of literature

Mindfulness-based interventions have proven to be an effective strategy to manage occupational stress and enhance the psychological well-being of teachers. Various studies have found that such interventions help reduce professional stress, symptoms of burnout, psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation competencies among teachers (Jenaabadi et al., 2017; de Carvalho et al., 2021; Roeser et al., 2013). Teacher stress and general well-being can be particularly affected through MBSR programs. The study on primary school teachers conducted by Gold et al. in 2009 revealed the impact of anxiety, depression, and stress. Furthermore, improved mindfulness skills also contributed to a change in educators, as stated by Frank et al. in 2013. Self-regulation, self-compassion, and other skills related to mindfulness showed considerable increases in participants from an adapted MBSR program. The benefits of mindfulness interventions go far beyond stress reduction. Beshal et al. (2015) established positive associations between mindfulness activities and teacher well-being and self-compassion. In a randomized controlled pilot trial, Flook et al. (2013) observed significant reductions in psychological symptoms and burnout, improvements in classroom organization, and increases in self-compassion among teachers who took part in a modified MBSR course. These interventions have also shown promise in addressing stress among students in health professions. Vogtmann &

Provident (2021) implemented a curriculum-based mindfulness stress reduction program for entry-level occupational therapy students, which showed statistically significant reductions in perceived stress levels. The effects of mindfulness training seem to be long-lasting and impactful on teaching quality. Beuchel et al. (2022) reported that early career teachers who were taught mindfulness exhibited less stress, higher job satisfaction, and more effective classroom control compared to the control group in the long term. Recent studies have also proved the relatedness of these results. A quasi-experimental study in Nigeria (2023) established that MBSR interventions mitigated job stress among primary school teachers. Heredia et al. (2024) found that an 8-week secular mindfulness-based training program for schoolteachers enhanced dispositional mindfulness, self-reported workplace well-being, visuocognitive abilities, and processing speed. Mindfulness affects every aspect of teaching. Kim (2018) examined the mediating effect of teacher mindfulness on the job stress-burnout relationship. Teacher mindfulness was a significant mediator between job stress and burnout. Numerous randomized controlled trials have demonstrated that MBSR programs diminish significantly the stress, burnout, and psychological symptoms of teachers from elementary and high schools at work (Lensen et al., 2024; Roeser et al., 2013; Flook et al., 2013). Besides positively changing mindfulness skills and self-compassion, these interventions also enhance focused attention and teacher self-efficacy and therefore have a beneficial influence on classroom climate quality (Lensen et al., 2024; Roeser et al., 2013). Importantly, these stress-reduction effects of MBSR appear to be retained at follow-up assessments (Lensen et al., 2024; Roeser et al., 2013). The fact that MBSR has been successful in many education settings, for example, with teacher training programs (Bonde et al., 2022), underlines its potential for being an effective approach to the topic of teacher stress and general well-being in educational contexts.

III) Objectives of the study

To study the effect of mindfulness activities on occupational stress and psychological well-being of private and government teachers

To compare the effect of mindfulness activities on occupational stress and psychological well-being of private and government teachers

IV) Hypotheses of the study

There exists a significant effect of mindfulness activities on occupational stress and psychological well-being of private and government teachers

There exists a significant difference between the occupational stress and psychological well-being of private and government teachers

There exists a significant effect of mindfulness activities on occupational stress and psychological well-being of private and teachers

V) Research Methodology

A quasi-experimental method nonequivalent control pretest and post-test design was used in the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. The total sample for the study was 200. Initially, a Pretest was done on 100 teachers of Government schools and Private Schools in the Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, for the same standardized tool was used. After that two groups were maintained in both government and private schools, as a result total of 100 teachers including 50 from private schools and 50 from government schools were provided

with 6-week mindfulness activities including breathing exercises, pranayama, meditation yoga asanas etc..In the final stage, all 200 participants were administered with the tools as a posttest design.

VI) Results and discussions

1. Effect of Mindfulness Activities on Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-being

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-being

Group	Variable	Mean (Pre-test)	Mean (Post-test)	t-value	p-value	Significance
Private Teachers	Occupational Stress	63.5	56.2	7.89	0.00	Sig
Private Teachers	Psychological Well-being	54.6	59.1	6.34	0.00	Sig
Government Teachers	Occupational Stress	66.4	59.4	5.58	0.00	Sig
Government Teachers	Psychological Well-being	44.9	49.8	5.89	0.00	Sig

The findings reveal a statistically significant decrease in occupational stress and a boost in psychological well-being after six weeks of mindfulness activities. The p-value (< 0.05) verifies that the intervention had a significant impact on both groups. Therefore, the Hypothesis holds true.

2. Difference in Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-being between Private and Government Teachers

Table 2: Comparison of Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-being Between Private and Government Teachers

Group	Variable	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Significance
Occupational Stress	Private Teachers	59.7	6.7	2.31	0.04	sig
Occupational Stress	Government Teacher	62.4	8.6			
Psychological Well-being	Private Teachers	64.3	6.3	2.78	0.01	sig
Psychological Well-being	Government Teachers	57.4	7.2			

The findings reveal that there is a statistically significant variation between government and private teachers along the variables of occupational stress and psychological well-being. Private teachers perceived slightly higher levels of improvement on both the variables than government teachers, possibly influenced by variation in work settings and job expectations. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 holds true.

3. Effect of Mindfulness Activities on Occupational Stress and Psychological Well-being of Private and Government Teachers Combined

Table 3: Repeated Measures ANOVA Results

Source	SS	Df	MS	F Value	P Value	Significance
Mindfulness Activities	1232.5	1	1232.5	19.83	0.00	sig
Error	4673.9	199	25.48			

The findings show a substantial effect of mindfulness activities on occupational stress and psychological well-being in both groups. The F-value (22.37, $p < 0.05$) indicates that mindfulness practices significantly helped to decrease stress and enhance well-being in all teachers. Therefore, the Hypothesis is confirmed. The results of this research concur with the findings of previous studies highlighting the significant benefits of mindfulness-based interventions in mitigating occupational stress and psychological well-being. (Kim, 2018., Lensen et al., 2024;). The marked decrease in the incidence of stress and enhanced well-being noted in private and government teachers indicate that mindfulness exercises, such as breathing techniques, pranayama, meditation, and yoga postures, can be useful methodologies in stress reduction and improving mental well-being in the teaching profession (Flook et al., 2013., Beshai et al. 2015). Further, private teachers had slightly more improvement than government teachers, and it can be considered that this can be due to the work setting of their teaching. Private school teachers have greater job insecurity and workload pressure than government teachers and are therefore more open to receiving stress reduction intervention. These findings underscore the need to incorporate mindfulness programs in government and private schools to improve teachers' mental resilience and overall job satisfaction (Bonde et al., 2022). Future studies can investigate the long-term effects of mindfulness activities and the institutional support in maintaining these gains. The study highlights the significant impact of mindfulness activities on reducing occupational stress and improving the psychological well-being of private and government teachers in Namsai district, Arunachal Pradesh. The findings suggest that teachers who regularly engage in mindfulness practices experience lower stress levels, improved emotional regulation, and greater job satisfaction. One of the key observations is that government teachers, despite having more job security, also experience occupational stress due to administrative workload and policy implementation challenges. Private teachers, on the other hand, face instability in employment and financial concerns, contributing to stress. However, mindfulness practices, when consistently applied, help both groups in managing stress effectively and enhancing their mental well-being. Another important aspect revealed in this study is the role of institutional support. Schools that integrate mindfulness into their policies and encourage teachers to engage in stress-relief activities create a more positive work environment. The presence of structured mindfulness programs leads to better teacher motivation, improved student-teacher relationships, and an overall healthier school atmosphere. The study also underlines the importance of personal commitment to mindfulness practices. While some teachers benefit from guided mindfulness sessions, others require self-motivation to practice consistently. Therefore, incorporating mindfulness into teachers' daily schedules and providing long-term training can further strengthen its impact.

Recommendations

1. Adopt Mindfulness Training Programs

Schools can implement mindfulness training programs for teachers. The training programs can involve breathing exercises, meditation, and mindful movement to enable teachers to cope with stress. Studies indicate that mindfulness practice enhances emotional resilience, decreases anxiety, and promotes overall psychological well-being.

2. Promote Short Mindfulness Breaks

Instructors can be encouraged to take brief mindfulness breaks between periods. Simple methods like deep breathing, body scan, or mindful walking for a few minutes can reduce tension and enhance concentration, ultimately enhancing job performance.

3. Provide Supportive School Environment

School officials must develop a support system where teachers are made to feel appreciated and listened to. Creating peer support groups, open forums, and mental health awareness programs can assist teachers to put across their issues and get assistance when necessary.

4. Incorporate Mindfulness into Regular Teaching Routine

Teachers can integrate mindfulness activities into daily teaching practice. For instance, beginning a class with a short mindfulness exercise or asking students to listen mindfully can establish a peaceful and productive learning environment that is beneficial for both teachers and students.

5. Encourage Work-Life Balance

Schools must ensure that teachers have reasonable workloads and adequate breaks. Getting teachers to establish boundaries between work and home life, e.g., not taking work home or restricting work-related communication outside school hours, can go a long way in minimizing stress.

6. Provide Professional Development on Mindfulness

Giving professional development workshops on mindfulness strategies to teachers can make them proficient in stress-management skills. Experts in mindfulness and well-being can be hired to run training programs for proper guidance.

7. Utilize Technology for Mindfulness Support

Schools can implement mindfulness apps or websites from which teachers can access guided meditation, relaxation routines, and stress-reduction techniques. These can be easily incorporated into their routine and utilized as required.

8. Promote Physical Activities and Healthy Lifestyle

Adequate physical activity, like yoga or stretching exercises, along with a healthy diet, proper sleep, and proper hydration, can enhance the mental and physical well-being of teachers. Schools may arrange wellness programs to encourage teachers to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

9. Monitor and Evaluate the Effectiveness of Mindfulness Programs

Schools should regularly assess the impact of mindfulness activities on teachers' stress levels and well-being. Surveys, feedback sessions, and informal discussions can help refine mindfulness initiatives to make them more effective.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Cross-regional comparative study

Future research can make a comparison of mindfulness interventions in urban and rural settings to identify whether geographical and cultural variations influence stress levels and coping strategies among teachers.

2. Longitudinal study of the effectiveness of mindfulness

A longitudinal study following the long-term effects of mindfulness on occupational stress and well-being over a number of years would give greater insight into its long-term effect

3. Effect on student outcomes

Studies can investigate whether decreased teacher stress through mindfulness has a direct effect on student academic achievement, classroom participation, and overall learning experience.

4. Mindfulness and gender differences

Exploring whether male and female teachers respond to mindfulness differently in stress management would assist in developing more specific interventions.

5. Efficacy of online mindfulness programs

As technology becomes an integral component of education, examining the contribution of mobile apps and online mindfulness programs to stress reduction may be useful.

6. Combining with other well-being strategies

Research can assess the impact of mindfulness, combined with physical fitness, counseling, and work-life balance techniques, on overall well-being among teachers.

7. Policy changes within the institution

Research can be conducted to find out how modifications in school policies, such as workload diminution or provision of flexible work hours, can engage with practices of mindfulness in developing an overarching stress-reducing system. Through examining these areas, future studies can make the world a better place by furthering an understanding of mindfulness as a means of enhancing teacher well-being and creating a healthier education system.

Conclusion

This is a very new area of research; qualitative and quantitative evidence that is available so far suggests benefits in self-compassion, perceived stress, cognitive skill use, mindfulness, creating coping mechanisms, and greater awareness of emotions and feelings. There is a need for more targeted research on mindfulness interventions for teachers, particularly longitudinal studies and randomized controlled trials (Yogeswaran & Morr, 2021). Future studies should look into the specific components of mindfulness practices that are most effective in addressing occupational stress in teachers and enhancing their psychological well-being. Further, research could be conducted regarding the possibility of online mindfulness-based interventions for teachers, considering other fields have achieved promising results so far (Trowbridge & Lawson, 2016; Yogeswaran & Morr, 2021).

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