

A Study on Occupational Stress among Teachers Teaching Students with Different Intellectual Capacities

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Abstract: *Teaching is a demanding profession that requires educators to manage curriculum delivery, classroom behaviour, assessment, administrative duties and the diverse learning needs of students. When a classroom includes students with different intellectual capacities, teachers may need to adapt explanations, learning materials, activities and assessment strategies while ensuring that every student receives appropriate support. These responsibilities can contribute to occupational stress, particularly when time, resources, training or institutional support are limited. The present study focuses on occupational stress among teachers teaching students with different intellectual capacities. A descriptive, questionnaire-based approach is proposed, with data collected through a Google Forms questionnaire shared voluntarily with school teachers. The questionnaire covers classroom diversity, workload and time management, emotional and psychological stress, classroom management, and institutional support. The study seeks to understand the stressors teachers experience and the coping and support mechanisms they consider helpful. The findings section in this draft provides a framework for reporting responses and must be completed or checked against the actual Google Forms data before submission. The study may help identify practical measures to promote teacher well-being and inclusive classroom practices.*

Keywords: Occupational stress; teachers; intellectual capacities; classroom diversity; workload; classroom management; coping strategies; institutional support; teacher well-being; inclusive education

1. Introduction

Teachers play a central role in students' academic, social and emotional development. Their work extends beyond teaching subject content to planning lessons, assessing progress, maintaining discipline, communicating with parents, completing records and responding to individual learning needs. The complexity of these tasks may increase in classrooms where students differ in their pace of learning, prior knowledge, attention, confidence, interests and support requirements.

A teacher may need to explain the same concept in several ways, provide additional guidance to some students and offer extension activities to others. Such differentiation is an important part of responsive teaching, but it can be challenging when class sizes are large or preparation time is limited. Teachers may feel pressure to complete the syllabus while also ensuring that students with different learning needs are included and engaged.

1.1 Understanding Occupational Stress

Occupational stress refers to the strain that may arise when a person perceives that work demands exceed the resources, time or support available to meet them. In teaching, stress may be associated with workload, time pressure, classroom behaviour, examination results, role expectations, administrative responsibilities and relationships at work. Stress is not experienced in the same way by every teacher; individual coping skills, experience, school climate and access to support can influence how demands are interpreted and managed.

Teaching students with different intellectual capacities can require flexible instruction, differentiated tasks, frequent feedback and careful monitoring of progress. Teachers may experience difficulty balancing the needs of the whole class

with the needs of individual learners. If teachers do not receive adequate training, teaching materials, planning time or collaboration from colleagues, these demands may feel especially difficult. At the same time, diverse classrooms can provide opportunities for professional growth, creativity, empathy and improved teaching practice when suitable support is available.

1.2 Need and Significance of the Study

Understanding occupational stress among teachers is important because teacher well-being can influence classroom relationships, instructional quality, motivation and professional satisfaction. Persistent stress may be associated with tiredness, irritability, reduced concentration, sleep difficulties or emotional exhaustion. These experiences should not automatically be assumed to occur in every teacher, and a questionnaire study cannot establish that a single classroom factor causes them. However, identifying the demands teachers report can help schools plan relevant support.

The present study gives particular attention to teachers who teach students with different intellectual capacities. It considers both classroom-related challenges and the organisational conditions that may intensify or reduce stress. The study may be useful for teachers, school administrators, counsellors and education planners who wish to strengthen inclusive teaching practices without placing unrealistic demands on individual educators.

2. Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to understand occupational stress experienced by teachers teaching students with different intellectual capacities and to identify the work-related factors and support mechanisms that teachers perceive as important.

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2.1 Objectives

- To identify common sources of occupational stress among teachers working with students of different intellectual capacities.
- To explore the perceived impact of classroom diversity on workload, lesson planning and time management.
- To examine teachers' experiences of emotional strain and classroom-management challenges.
- To identify coping strategies used by teachers to manage work-related stress.
- To understand teachers' perceptions of institutional support, resources and professional training.

3. Review of Conceptual Background

Occupational stress is commonly understood through the relationship between job demands and the resources available to meet them. When demands are high and control or support is limited, employees may experience strain. In schools, demands can include lesson preparation, assessment, behaviour management, parent communication and administrative work. Teachers may also experience emotional demands when they are expected to respond patiently and constructively to students with different academic and behavioural needs.

Classroom diversity requires teachers to make instructional decisions that respond to variation among learners. Differentiated instruction may include modifying explanations, providing varied levels of practice, using visual or hands-on materials, grouping students flexibly and allowing different forms of demonstration of learning. These approaches can support participation, but their implementation requires planning, skill and time. Where resources are limited, teachers may feel caught between individual student needs and whole-class expectations.

Institutional support is therefore an important part of the context. Support may include access to learning materials, manageable class sizes, professional development, collaboration with special educators or counsellors, clear policies, reasonable administrative expectations and supportive leadership. Peer discussion and shared planning can help teachers develop strategies and feel less isolated. Individual coping strategies, such as prioritising tasks, taking brief breaks, seeking advice and maintaining boundaries between work and personal life, may also be useful, although personal coping cannot replace adequate organisational support.

3.1 Research Gap

Although teacher stress is widely discussed, the pressures associated with teaching students with varied intellectual capacities can differ across school settings and individual experiences. A local questionnaire-based study can provide context-specific information about the factors teachers themselves identify as stressful, the strategies they use and the support they feel they need. The present study is intended to contribute such descriptive information rather than to diagnose teachers or establish causal relationships.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study uses a descriptive survey approach to gather teachers' self-reported experiences of occupational stress. A questionnaire is suitable for collecting responses from several participants in a consistent format and identifying patterns across the main areas of interest.

4.2 Participants and Sampling

The intended participants are school teachers who teach students with different intellectual capacities. Participants are approached through voluntary participation and the questionnaire is shared online. The final report should state the actual number of teachers who completed the form, their relevant demographic characteristics if collected, and the sampling method used. The number of respondents must be taken from the Google Forms response summary rather than estimated or invented.

4.3 Research Tool

Data are collected using a researcher-prepared questionnaire created in Google Forms. The questionnaire includes items about classroom diversity, workload and time management, emotional and psychological stress, classroom management, coping strategies and institutional support. The instrument is intended for this project and should not be described as a standardised or validated psychological scale unless validation evidence is available.

4.4 Procedure

The Google Forms link is shared with teachers along with a short invitation explaining the purpose of the study. Participation is voluntary. Respondents are informed about the nature of the questions and the intended academic use of the responses. No identifying information should be collected unless necessary and clearly explained. Responses are reviewed through Google Forms, and the data are summarised using frequencies, percentages or descriptive summaries, as appropriate to the question format.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Participants should be informed about the study and provide consent before answering. They should be free to decline participation or skip any question they do not wish to answer. Responses should be handled confidentially and reported in aggregate wherever possible. The researcher should avoid including names or details that could identify a teacher or school without permission. Any institutional requirements for research approval should be followed.

5. Findings and Discussion Framework

The final findings must be based on the actual responses collected through Google Forms. The following areas provide a structured framework for presenting and discussing the results; they are not claims that a particular percentage of teachers reported a specific experience.

5.1 Classroom Diversity and Lesson Preparation

Responses in this area can show whether teachers find it challenging to plan lessons for students with different learning speeds and levels of understanding. The report may describe the frequency with which teachers adapt learning materials, provide individual explanations or prepare activities at different levels. In discussion, these responses can be considered in relation to planning time, class size and access to teaching resources.

5.2 Workload and Time Management

This section should summarise responses about syllabus completion, assessment, documentation, additional duties and the time available for individual student support. If respondents identify time pressure as a concern, the discussion may consider whether shared resources, collaborative planning or realistic workload allocation could help.

5.3 Emotional Stress and Classroom Management

Responses may provide insight into teachers' perceived frustration, tiredness, worry or difficulty maintaining classroom engagement. The report should describe the actual response pattern without labelling participants or treating self-reported stress as a clinical diagnosis. Classroom-management concerns should be discussed alongside the resources and support available to teachers.

5.4 Coping Strategies and Institutional Support

Teachers may report strategies such as planning ahead, prioritising tasks, discussing challenges with colleagues, using differentiated materials, taking breaks or seeking guidance from school leaders. The analysis should identify which strategies were actually selected or described. It should also note whether respondents perceive professional training, teaching resources, leadership support and collaboration as adequate.

6. Implications of the Study

The study may help schools identify practical ways to reduce avoidable occupational stress while supporting inclusive teaching. Where teachers report limited preparation time, schools could consider common lesson-resource banks, shared planning and realistic timelines. Where classroom diversity is experienced as challenging, relevant professional development on differentiated instruction, inclusive classroom management and assessment adaptations may be helpful.

School leadership can also support teacher well-being by encouraging open communication, providing access to appropriate resources and recognising the additional planning involved in responding to varied learning needs. Regular collaboration between subject teachers, class teachers, special educators and counsellors may help distribute responsibility and reduce the feeling that teachers must manage every challenge alone. These measures should be tailored to the needs and resources of each school.

7. Limitations

A questionnaire-based study relies on self-reported information, which may be influenced by respondents' willingness to disclose stress, their interpretation of questions and the circumstances at the time of completion. If participants are recruited through convenience or voluntary online sharing, the results may not represent all teachers. The study can describe reported experiences but cannot establish that classroom diversity alone causes occupational stress. If the questionnaire is researcher-developed, its reliability and validity should not be assumed without appropriate testing. The final report should acknowledge the actual sample size and any limits in the data collected.

8. Conclusion

Occupational stress among teachers teaching students with different intellectual capacities is an important area of study because teachers must balance curriculum expectations with diverse learning needs, classroom management, assessment and administrative responsibilities. A descriptive survey using Google Forms can help identify the demands teachers report, the coping strategies they use and the forms of institutional support they consider useful. The value of the study lies in presenting teachers' experiences clearly and using the findings to inform realistic, supportive school practices. The conclusions should be finalised only after the actual responses have been analysed. A balanced approach that combines teacher preparation, shared responsibility, appropriate resources and attention to well-being may support both teachers and students.

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