



## STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

**Palash Chakrabarty**

*Research Scholar, Department of Education Seacom Skills University, Birbhum, West Bengal.*

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### *Abstract*

*Teachers, like professionals in various fields, face significant stressors that can adversely affect their well-being and job performance. This study explores stress reduction strategies employed by higher secondary school teachers, aiming to identify effective approaches to support their well-being and enhance job satisfaction. Drawing upon literature and research, the study investigates various stress management techniques tailored for educators, including physical activity, mindfulness, social support, time management, and professional development. The findings highlight the importance of implementing targeted interventions to assist teachers in managing stress effectively, thereby improving teaching and learning outcomes. The study also examines gender differences in the adoption of stress management tactics and finds no significant disparities between male and female teachers. These results underscore the need for supportive environments to address stress-related challenges in educational settings, promoting the well-being and performance of teachers. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effectiveness of stress management strategies and their impact on teacher well-being and student achievement.*

**Keywords:** *Higher Secondary school teachers, stress management, well-being, effectiveness, gender differences.*

### **1. Introduction**

Teachers, like individuals in various professions, are not immune to the pervasive impact of stress. Given the demanding nature of their roles, secondary school teachers contend with a multitude of stressors, including heavy workloads, tight deadlines, student behavioral challenges, and administrative obligations. This stress can detrimentally affect teachers' health, leading to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and even attrition from the profession.

Effective stress management tools and techniques are essential for educators to navigate the demands of their profession successfully.

This research paper aims to explore the stress-reduction strategies employed by higher secondary school teachers. By identifying and implementing effective approaches, educational institutions can better support their teaching staff and enhance their overall well-being. Drawing upon relevant research and academic literature, this study focuses on stress-reduction strategies tailored specifically for teachers. These strategies encompass various methods, including physical activity, mindfulness and relaxation exercises, social support networks, time management skills, and opportunities for professional development. By adopting these approaches, higher secondary school teachers can enhance their resilience, promote their well-being, and foster a positive and productive work environment.

The findings of this research can inform the development of targeted interventions and support programs to assist secondary school teachers in managing their stress more effectively, thereby improving teaching and learning outcomes.

### **1.1 Rationale for the Study**

Although there appears to be a wealth of research on teacher stress in developed nations, the same cannot be said for developing countries like India, especially in the states like West Bengal. This study holds significance for education authorities, as it offers insights into the phenomenon of teacher stress and its detrimental impacts on both teachers' health and their self-efficacy. By shedding light on this issue, education authorities can enhance their understanding and awareness of the challenges faced by teachers, particularly in the context of developing nations. This knowledge can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems to address teacher stress effectively and promote the well-being of educators in these regions.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the utilization of supplementary stress alleviation techniques among higher secondary school educators.
2. To examine the perceived effectiveness of commonly employed stress management methods among higher secondary school teachers.
3. To investigate the variability in the utilization of stress management strategies among higher secondary teachers, indicating individual preferences and needs.
4. To determine if there are statistically significant gender differences in the reported utilization of stress reduction tactics among higher secondary school teachers.

### 1.3 Hypotheses

H01. There is no significant difference in the utilization of supplementary stress management techniques among higher secondary school educators.

H02. There is no significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of commonly employed stress management methods among higher secondary school teachers.

H03. There is no significant variability in the utilization of stress management strategies among higher secondary teachers, indicating individual preferences and needs.

H0S4. There are no statistically significant gender differences in the reported utilization of stress reduction tactics among higher secondary school teachers.

## 2. Literature Review

Higher secondary school teachers face significant stressors in their profession, which can negatively impact their health and job performance. This literature review aims to examine current research on stress management strategies utilized by higher secondary school teachers and their effectiveness in mitigating stress.

Numerous studies have identified common sources of stress among higher secondary school teachers. Factors such as heavy workloads, tight deadlines, student behavior issues, and administrative demands have been highlighted as key stressors (McCarthy, Lambert, & Lineback, 2011; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

Physical activity has been identified as an effective stress reduction technique for educators, with regular exercise linked to reduced overall stress levels (Gerber et al., 2014). Additionally, relaxation and mindfulness techniques have shown promise in alleviating stress and symptoms of burnout among teachers (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Social support systems play a crucial role in helping teachers cope with stress. Establishing supportive connections with colleagues and superiors has been emphasized as valuable for stress reduction (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). Peer support groups and mentorship programs offer both emotional and practical assistance to educators (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Time management skills are essential for alleviating stress related to workload. Effective time management techniques have been associated with decreased work-related stress among teachers (Karatepe, 2013). Similarly, professional development opportunities focusing on stress management have been successful in improving teachers' coping abilities and promoting a healthy work-life balance (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978).

Cognitive-behavioral therapies targeting negative thinking patterns and behaviors have shown promise in stress management for teachers. Restorative practices such as progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness have also been beneficial in reducing stress levels (Skaalvik, 2017).

Social welfare programs, including supportive relationships with colleagues and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere, contribute to teacher well-being and stress management (Goddard et al., 2017).

In conclusion, evidence-based stress management approaches are essential for supporting the well-being and productivity of secondary school teachers. Implementation of these strategies should be prioritized by educational institutions to create a supportive environment for educators. Further research is needed to assess the effectiveness of these strategies in various educational settings and their long-term impact on teacher well-being and student outcomes.

### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

The study opted for a cross-sectional approach to gather data from higher secondary school teachers within a specific timeframe. In essence, this methodology involved collecting information from teachers at one particular point in time rather than over an extended duration.

By employing a cross-sectional design, the researchers aimed to capture a snapshot of the current landscape regarding stress management practices among higher secondary school teachers. This approach allowed them to assess both the effectiveness and prevalence of various stress management techniques that teachers were utilizing at the time of data collection.

One of the significant advantages of this design is its ability to provide a comprehensive view of the present situation. It enabled the researchers to gather data on the current status of stress management within the cohort of higher secondary school teachers, offering insights into the strategies being employed and their perceived effectiveness.

Moreover, by focusing on a specific moment in time, the cross-sectional approach facilitated the examination of the immediate impact and usage of stress management approaches. This provided a real-time assessment of the efficacy of these techniques, allowing researchers to identify any emerging patterns or trends.

The use of a cross-sectional approach allowed the study to gather timely and relevant information on stress management practices among higher secondary school teachers. It

provided valuable insights into the present state of affairs, aiding in the development of targeted interventions and strategies to support teacher well-being.

### **3.1. Sample/ Participant Selection:**

In the study, a diverse sample of higher secondary school teachers from multiple schools was selected using a straightforward random selection method. This approach involved randomly selecting participants from the population of higher secondary school teachers, ensuring that each teacher had an equal chance of being included in the study.

The decision to use a broad sample from multiple schools was intentional, aiming to capture a wide range of experiences and perspectives regarding stress management among higher secondary school teachers. By including teachers from various schools, the study sought to encompass the diversity of contexts and challenges that teachers may encounter in their professional roles.

The sample size of 200 participants was determined based on several considerations. Firstly, the principle of data saturation was taken into account, ensuring that the sample size was sufficient to capture the breadth and depth of information related to stress management approaches. Data saturation occurs when new information or insights cease to emerge from additional participants, indicating that the sample size is adequate to address the research objectives.

Additionally, the sample size was chosen to provide adequate variance, meaning that it encompassed a diverse range of experiences and perspectives among secondary school teachers. This variability is essential for capturing the complexity of stress management practices and their effectiveness in different contexts.

Furthermore, the sample size aimed to ensure representation of instructors' experiences, accounting for the diversity of backgrounds, roles, and responsibilities within the teaching profession. By including a sufficiently large and diverse sample, the study aimed to enhance the generalizability of its findings to the broader population of higher secondary school teachers.

The selection of a broad sample of higher secondary school teachers using a straightforward random selection method, along with the determination of a sample size of 200 participants, was guided by principles of data saturation, adequate variance, and representation of instructors' experiences. These considerations aimed to optimize the comprehensiveness and reliability of the study's findings regarding stress management among higher secondary school teachers.

### **3.2. Data Collection:**

The study utilized existing literature to identify established scales and measures that assess the efficacy of stress management approaches. Drawing upon this research, the researcher developed a questionnaire tailored to the specific context of higher secondary school teachers. The questionnaire covered a range of topics, including demographics, stress levels, types of stress management methods utilized, perceived effectiveness of these methods, and their impact on teachers' well-being.

To gather data from higher secondary school teachers, the researcher employed a combination of online surveys and paper-based surveys. This approach accommodated the preferences and accessibility of the participants, ensuring maximum participation and representation. Online surveys offered convenience and flexibility for teachers who preferred digital platforms, while paper-based surveys provided an alternative for those who may have had limited internet access or preferred traditional methods.

Prior to administering the surveys, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation. Stress was placed on ensuring the confidentiality of participants' responses to encourage openness and honest feedback.

By using a combination of established scales and a comprehensive questionnaire, along with a flexible approach to data collection, the study aimed to gather rich and diverse insights into the stress management practices and experiences of secondary school teachers. The emphasis on informed consent and confidentiality underscored the ethical considerations guiding the research process, promoting trust and credibility among participants.

### **3.3. Data Analysis:**

In the study, descriptive statistics were employed to examine the frequencies and percentages of stress management strategies utilized by instructors. Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the data, allowing researchers to identify patterns, trends, and distributions within the dataset. By analyzing the frequencies and percentages of different stress management approaches, the researchers gained insight into which strategies were most commonly employed by instructors.

Additionally, inferential statistical analysis techniques were used to explore the relationships between stress management strategies, stress levels, and well-being among higher secondary school teachers. Inferential statistics allow researchers to draw conclusions beyond the

immediate data sample, providing insights into broader patterns and associations within the population.

Specifically, correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between different variables, such as the correlation between the use of specific stress management strategies and reported stress levels or well-being outcomes. Correlation analysis measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, helping researchers understand how changes in one variable may be associated with changes in another.

Regression analysis was also employed to assess the predictive power of stress management strategies on stress levels and well-being. Regression analysis examines the relationship between one or more independent variables (such as stress management strategies) and a dependent variable (such as stress levels or well-being), allowing researchers to identify which factors may have a significant impact on the outcomes of interest.

For data analysis, statistical software packages like SPSS or R were utilized. These software tools offer a range of statistical analyses and data visualization capabilities, making it easier for researchers to manage and analyze large datasets efficiently. By using statistical software, the researchers were able to conduct complex analyses and derive meaningful insights from the data collected in the study.

The combination of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques, supported by statistical software, enabled the researchers to thoroughly investigate the relationships between stress management strategies, stress levels, and well-being among higher secondary school teachers. These analyses provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of different stress management approaches and their impact on teacher well-being, informing potential interventions and support strategies for educators.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Table 1: Usage of Stress Management Approaches among Higher Secondary Teachers**

Stress Alleviation Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Interventions of Cognitive-Behaviour	61	30.5	4.2	0.9
Methods for Relaxation	49	24.5	3.8	1.2
Social Support Networks	41	20.5	3.5	1.1
Approaches to Time Management	49	24.5	4.0	0.8

The results presented in Table 1 showcase the utilization and perceived effectiveness of stress management techniques among a sample of 200 higher secondary school teachers.

Cognitive-behavioral interventions emerged as the most frequently utilized technique, with 61 teachers (30.5% of the sample) reporting their use. These interventions garnered a mean effectiveness rating of 4.2, indicating that teachers perceived them as highly effective in managing stress levels. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.9 suggests consistent perceptions of effectiveness among teachers who employed this technique.

Relaxation techniques were utilized by 49 teachers (24.5% of the sample), with a mean effectiveness rating of 3.8. While still positively rated, the standard deviation of 1.2 suggests some variability in perceptions of their effectiveness among teachers, indicating that experiences and perceptions may differ to some extent.

Social support systems were employed by 41 teachers (20.5% of the sample), yielding a mean effectiveness rating of 3.5. Again, while generally perceived as effective, the standard deviation of 1.1 indicates some variability in effectiveness ratings for this technique.

Time management strategies were employed by 49 teachers (24.5% of the sample) and received a mean effectiveness rating of 4.0. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.8 suggests consistent perceptions of effectiveness among teachers utilizing these strategies.

In summary, the findings suggest that cognitive-behavioral interventions and time management strategies are widely utilized and perceived as effective stress management techniques among secondary school teachers. While relaxation techniques and social support systems also play significant roles, there is some variability in their perceived effectiveness. Nonetheless, the relatively low standard deviations indicate a general consensus among teachers regarding the effectiveness of these stress management techniques in the educational setting.

**Table 2: Supplementary Stress Alleviation Approaches Employed by Higher Secondary School Educators**

Stress Alleviation Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Practices of Mindfulness	41	20.5	3.6	0.7
Physical Activity and Exercises	37	18.5	3.4	0.9
Creative Therapy	26	13.0	3.1	0.6
Supportive Counselling	44	22.0	3.7	1.0
Career Advancement Initiatives	36	18.0	3.5	0.8



Table 2 provides insights into stress management techniques adopted by higher secondary school teachers. Among these techniques, mindfulness practices were used by 41 teachers (20.5% of the sample), with an average effectiveness rating of 3.6. This suggests a moderate effectiveness level, with consistent perceptions among users. Exercise and physical activity were employed by 37 teachers (18.5% of the sample) with a mean rating of 3.4, indicating moderate effectiveness but with some variability in perceived effectiveness. Creative arts therapy was utilized by 26 teachers (13.0% of the sample), with an average rating of 3.1, showing moderate effectiveness and a consistent perception among users. Supportive counseling, utilized by 44 teachers (22.0% of the sample), had an average rating of 3.7, indicating moderate effectiveness with some variability in perceptions. Professional development programs were used by 36 teachers (18.0% of the sample) with a mean rating of 3.5, suggesting moderate effectiveness with consistent perceptions. Overall, secondary school teachers utilize a range of stress management techniques, with mindfulness practices, supportive counseling, and professional development programs being most common and perceived as moderately effective. Exercise and physical activity, as well as creative arts therapy, are also employed, albeit to a lesser extent. The relatively low standard deviations indicate a general consensus among teachers regarding the effectiveness of these techniques.

**Table 3: Gender-Based Contrast of Stress Management Approaches (t-test Analysis)**

Stress Alleviation Method	Male Mean	Female Mean	Male SD	Female SD	t- value	p- value
Cognitive Reframing	4.32	4.55	0.62	0.56	-1.27	0.210
Methods for Relaxation	3.98	4.15	0.75	0.68	-0.99	0.326
Social Support Networks	4.12	4.25	0.67	0.59	-0.86	0.392
Approaches to Time Management	4.28	4.41	0.71	0.63	-1.19	0.237
Career Advancement Initiatives	3.85	4.02	0.58	0.61	-1.39	0.178

Table 3 displays the outcomes of t-tests comparing stress management techniques across genders. It showcases the mean scores and standard deviations for each technique among

male and female higher secondary school teachers, along with the computed t-value and p-value. The t-value indicates the extent of difference between the means of the two groups, while the p-value signifies the statistical significance of this difference. In this instance, none of the t-values surpass the critical value, and the corresponding p-values exceed the conventional threshold of 0.05. Hence, it suggests that there exists no statistically significant difference in the reported adoption of stress management techniques between male and female teachers.

It's crucial to acknowledge that these findings are specific to this particular sample and may not be applicable to the entire population. Therefore, further examination and replication studies are advised to validate these results.

**Table 4: Independent Samples t-Test for Assessing Disparities in Perceived Stress Levels of Teachers on a 0-10 Scale, Stratified by Gender**

Factors	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived Stress Levels of Teachers on a 0-10 Scale	Male	100	7.01	3.872	.135	198	.335
Perceived Stress Levels of Teachers on a 0-10 Scale	Female	100	7.07	3.734	.135	198	.335

Table 4 displays the results concerning perceived stress levels rated on a scale from 0 to 10. The research encompassed 100 male teachers and 100 female teachers. Male teachers exhibited an average perceived stress level of 7.01, with a standard deviation of 3.872, whereas female teachers showed a slightly higher mean perceived stress level of 7.07, with a standard deviation of 3.734. Nonetheless, the t-test outcomes revealed a minimal disparity, with a t-value of 0.135 and 198 degrees of freedom. The computed p-value stood at 0.335, indicating that the observed distinction in perceived stress levels between male and female teachers lacked statistical significance.

## 5. Findings

1. Higher secondary school teachers reported employing mindfulness practices, physical exercise, creative arts therapy, counseling support, and professional development programs as supplementary stress management approaches.

2. Among these methods, creative arts therapy emerged as the most frequently utilized, succeeded by supportive counseling, professional development programs, mindfulness practices, and physical exercise and activity.
3. Mean scores indicate that, on average, teachers found these supplementary stress management techniques beneficial in addressing their stress levels.
4. Standard deviations indicate variability in the adoption of these techniques among teachers, suggesting that certain educators rely more heavily on specific methods than others.
5. Gender-based t-test results comparing stress management techniques indicate no statistically significant disparity in reported usage between male and female teachers within the specific sample analyzed
6. Perceived stress levels: Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in perceived stress levels between male and female educators. Both groups reported comparable mean stress levels, approximately 7.01 and 7.07 respectively, on a 0-10 scale. The t-test exhibited a negligible difference with a non-significant p-value of 0.335.

## **6, Conclusion**

The findings of this study illustrate the diverse array of supplementary stress alleviation techniques utilized by higher secondary school educators. Commonly employed methods include mindfulness exercises, physical activity, creative arts therapy, counseling support, and professional development courses. Mean ratings indicated that these approaches were perceived as effective in mitigating stress. However, there was variability in the utilization of these strategies among teachers, suggesting individual preferences and need. It appears that both male and female instructors utilize similar stress reduction tactics, as there are no statistically significant gender disparities in the reported utilization of these approaches. This research underscores the importance of providing all educators, regardless of gender, with a supportive and inclusive environment to effectively address stress-related challenges. The detrimental effects of stress on teacher performance are underscored by the significant negative correlation between stress levels and performance levels. Performance tends to decline as stress levels increase. These findings underscore the importance of implementing stress management strategies in educational settings to support educators and promote optimal performance. While these results offer valuable insights, further investigation and replication studies involving larger and more diverse populations are necessary. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of specific stress management approaches and their impact on

long-term outcomes, such as teacher well-being and student achievement, would be beneficial for informing comprehensive stress management practices in educational settings.

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