

A Descriptive Study of Work Life Balance, Perceived Stress and Coping Styles in Male and Female Educators

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Work-Life Balance (WLB), Perceived Stress, and Coping Styles among Male and Female Educators. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from a sample of educators through self-report questionnaires assessing WLB, perceived stress levels, and preferred coping mechanisms. The study aims to explore potential gender differences in these variables. The findings provide insights into the challenges educators face in managing their professional and personal lives, the stress they experience, and the strategies they employ to cope with these demands. This research contributes to the existing literature by providing a comparative analysis of WLB, stress, and coping styles within the context of the education profession, highlighting the unique experiences of male and female educators in Kolkata.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Perceived Stress, Coping Styles, Male, Female, Educators*

The teaching profession, while rewarding, is widely recognized as demanding and stressful. Educators face numerous challenges, including heavy workloads, diverse student needs, administrative pressures, and evolving educational policies. These demands can significantly impact their well-being, leading to stress, burnout, and difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Work-life balance (WLB), defined as the equilibrium between an individual's professional and personal life, is crucial for overall health, job satisfaction, and productivity. When this balance is disrupted, it can lead to increased stress levels, impacting both personal and professional effectiveness. Perceived stress, the subjective interpretation of stressful events, varies among individuals and is influenced by factors such as coping mechanisms, personality traits, and available support systems. Effective coping strategies are essential for managing stress and maintaining well-being. These strategies can be broadly categorized as problem-focused (addressing the source of stress) or emotion-focused (managing the emotional response to stress).

The present study focuses on educators, a population particularly vulnerable to work-related stress due to the multifaceted nature of their roles. They are not only responsible for delivering instruction but also for managing classroom dynamics, providing emotional support to students, communicating with parents, and fulfilling administrative duties. These

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diverse responsibilities can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, making it challenging to achieve a healthy WLB. Furthermore, gender roles and societal expectations can influence how male and female educators experience and cope with stress. For instance, traditional gender roles may place additional domestic responsibilities on female educators, potentially exacerbating work-life conflict.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate WLB, perceived stress, and coping styles among male and female educators. By examining these variables, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by educators in balancing their professional and personal lives and how these challenges might differ based on gender. This understanding can inform the development of targeted interventions and support programs aimed at promoting educator well-being and fostering a healthier work environment. This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing a descriptive analysis of the current state of WLB, perceived stress, and coping styles among educators, specifically considering gender as a key differentiating factor.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study by *Abayon M. (2024)* explored teachers' experiences of burnout in the classroom, focusing on their perceptions of burnout and the coping mechanisms they employ to address emerging challenges. Ten female teachers from Panibasan Elementary School in the Philippines participated in semi-structured online interviews, and data were analyzed using coding techniques. The study identified several key themes. Regarding teachers' experiences of burnout, prevalent themes included excessive workload, student-related challenges, inadequate compensation, and a lack of incentives. In terms of coping strategies, self-care and time management emerged as dominant themes perceived as effective in preventing workplace burnout. These findings underscore the importance of holistic approaches to teacher well-being. The study suggests that educational institutions and policymakers can foster a more resilient and satisfied teaching workforce by prioritizing work-life balance, supporting self-care practices, and providing tools for effective time management. Recognizing the importance of setting boundaries, prioritizing tasks, and managing workload effectively is crucial for preventing burnout among educators. The study recommends professional development opportunities focused on time management techniques and providing resources that facilitate task streamlining, planning, and goal-setting to promote a more sustainable workload for teachers.

The teaching profession is characterized by high demands and distinct emotional challenges arising from instruction and student interaction, often leading to compromised occupational well-being and elevated stress levels that contribute to burnout. This novel empirical study by *Bidi S.B. et. al. (2024)* investigated the mediating and moderating effects of positive psychology on the relationship between perceived stress and occupational well-being among teachers. Using a quantitative research design and analyzing data from 388 teachers with Smart PLS 4, the study found that teachers experience various challenges and stressors that negatively affect their occupational well-being. Psychological capital was found to partially mediate this relationship, while coping strategies did not directly mediate the link between perceived stress and occupational well-being. However, coping strategies did partially mediate the relationship between psychological capital and occupational well-being. Importantly, psychological capital significantly and positively moderated the relationship between stress and occupational well-being. These findings offer practical guidance for

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organizations seeking to implement positive psychology interventions to foster teacher satisfaction and enhance performance.

Teaching is a demanding profession, both mentally and physically, often leading to stress and burnout. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, forcing teachers to adapt to sudden changes like online teaching and the difficulties of engaging students in virtual classrooms. Research indicates that coping strategies can mitigate the negative impact of stressors on teacher well-being. This study by *Conte E., Avionics V. and Ornaghi V. (2024)* investigated the primary sources of stress affecting Italian teachers' well-being after the pandemic and the coping strategies they employed. Eighty-six teachers from five school institutes in Northern Italy participated in three semi-structured group interviews exploring their perceptions of well-being at school and experiences of occupational stress. They also completed a survey regarding recent stressful life events and coping strategies used in the past month. Thematic analysis identified stressors related to four key areas: adverse work conditions, lack of support (from school administrators and families), job insecurity (precariousness), and a demanding school system. Twenty-two percent of teachers reported experiencing stressful life events in the past month (such as health problems or loss), and 30% reported using coping strategies, predominantly emotion-focused ones. The study suggests that these findings can inform educational policies aimed at enhancing protective factors for teachers' professional well-being by strengthening individual resources and coping strategies to better equip them to manage challenging situations.

Jadhav R. (2024) in this study examines the effects of occupational stress on teaching staff in higher education institutions within Pune City, India. Recognizing the growing demands and complexities of the teaching profession, the research emphasizes the importance of understanding educator stress to improve well-being and effectiveness. Employing a case study approach with both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study explores various facets of occupational stress experienced by teaching staff. Drawing on existing research (Siu, 2002; Winefield et al., 2003), the study acknowledges the significant impact of work stress on teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness, suggesting that similar effects are likely present in Pune, a city known for its educational institutions. The study's objective was to determine the impact of workload on teaching staff in Pune's higher education sector. It investigates the potential relationships between workload and factors such as physical and mental health, job satisfaction, performance, student learning, turnover rates, work-life balance, research quality, institutional reputation, long-term career impact, and organizational outcomes (HSC, 2002). Data were collected using both closed and open-ended questions. The results suggest that institutions can mitigate the negative effects of work stress by implementing support measures such as mental health resources, stress and time management training, promotion of work-life balance, and addressing systemic issues related to workload and administrative support (Siu, 2002; Winefield et al., 2001).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions in the education sector globally, including school closures and a shift to distance learning, which resulted in increased anxiety and decreased well-being among Filipino teachers. This study by *Koçak O., Yavuz K. and Yildirim M. (2024)* investigated the mediating roles of burnout and work-life balance in the relationship between COVID-19-related anxiety and life satisfaction among these teachers. Data were collected via an online survey using self-report questionnaires from 532 teachers (predominantly female, with a mean age of 27.93 years) engaged in remote work. The findings revealed that COVID-19 anxiety had a significant negative impact on life

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satisfaction and also influenced both burnout and work-life balance. A significant positive relationship was found between work-life balance and life satisfaction, with work-life balance acting as a significant mediator in the relationship between COVID-19 anxiety and life satisfaction. These results suggest that COVID-19-induced anxiety disrupts work-life balance and increases burnout, consequently reducing life satisfaction. The study recommends that policymakers and school authorities implement strategies to alleviate teachers' COVID-19-related anxiety to mitigate these negative effects and ultimately improve work-life balance and life satisfaction among educators.

This study by *Koçyiğit S. and Sezer T. (2024)* explored the sources of stress, peak stress periods, and coping mechanisms used by preschool teachers. Employing a phenomenological qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 36 preschool teachers working with children aged 0-6 in both public and private schools. Content analysis revealed that stressors primarily stemmed from interpersonal interactions (specifically, maintaining positive and effective interactions) and organizational factors (such as school management and leadership styles). Teachers reported experiencing heightened stress when managing challenging child behaviors, particularly during sleeping, eating, and hygiene routines. The study confirmed that teachers utilized both active/behavioral and passive/avoidant coping strategies. However, the findings also indicated that preschool teachers held negative perceptions of stress, not viewing it as an opportunity for personal growth. The implications of these findings for preschool education are discussed.

Lt. Raj Y. and Saxena P. (2024) in this paper investigates the relationship between coping abilities, academic self-efficacy, and perceived occupational stress among university faculty. Using a thematic review of recent literature, the study synthesizes findings to identify key patterns and insights into how coping strategies and self-efficacy influence stress levels. The review highlights a significant correlation between strong coping mechanisms and high self-efficacy with lower perceived stress, suggesting that faculty who effectively manage stressors experience improved mental health and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that academic institutions should implement targeted interventions to enhance coping skills and foster self-efficacy among educators. Creating supportive environments and providing resources can help mitigate occupational stress and promote a healthier academic culture. The paper also suggests future research directions, emphasizing the need for longitudinal studies and the exploration of contextual factors that may influence these relationships in different educational settings.

The teaching profession is widely recognized as physically and mentally demanding, requiring significant emotional investment and frequently resulting in stress and anxiety. Consequently, understanding teachers' coping mechanisms is crucial for promoting their well-being and professional effectiveness. The study conducted by *Nwoko J.C. et al. (2024)* investigated both personal and school-based well-being initiatives employed by teachers to maintain their occupational well-being and sought to develop a model for enhancing these coping strategies. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research explored the coping strategies of 21 Australian primary school teachers through interviews. Participants identified ten diverse strategies, categorized into five personal initiatives (setting boundaries, exercise and physical health, social support and interactions, mental health and mindfulness, and work-life balance) and five school-based initiatives (supportive leadership, colleague support, flexibility and autonomy, resource availability, and proactive

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problem-solving). Based on these findings, the study proposed a novel "SHIELD" model, encompassing Support, Health, Interaction, Empathy, Leadership, and Development strategies, as a holistic framework for enhancing teacher well-being. The research emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to teacher well-being, integrating both individual coping mechanisms and institutional support systems. The study suggests that schools can improve teacher well-being by cultivating a supportive and empathetic environment, providing adequate resources, and promoting healthy lifestyles. The SHIELD model offers a practical framework for supporting teachers and ultimately improving educational outcomes.

Research indicates that workloads, roles, and demands in rural schools are often more stressful than those in urban settings, negatively impacting the quality of work life for rural school employees. This increased stress makes rural employees more susceptible to mental health problems and psychological distress, particularly in areas with limited access to psychological services. Notably, there is a scarcity of research on the roles of rural community-based psychologists in Nigeria, especially concerning their engagement in clinical and non-clinical services. Therefore, this study by *Ogakwu N.V. et. al. (2024)* investigated the impact of a rational emotive occupational health intervention on the quality of work life and stress management of primary school teachers in rural Nigerian communities. A blinded, randomized controlled design was employed, with 101 rural primary school teachers assigned to either an intervention group (receiving a 12-session program) or a control group (receiving conventional counseling). Participants' quality of work life and occupational stress were assessed using self-report measures (Quality of Work-Life Scale and Occupational Stress Index), and data were analyzed using MANOVA. The results demonstrated that the rational emotive occupational health intervention significantly improved both perceived quality of work life and stress management. The study recommends greater integration of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) into workforce and workplace programs by helping professionals.

This study by *Sangeetha B.K. and Jose A.M. (2024)* investigated how academicians use social media as a coping mechanism for stress, specifically examining strategies like achievement sharing and social relationship maintenance. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected via an online questionnaire (including the Perceived Stress Scale, PSS) from 144 educators at higher education institutions in Bangalore. The study explored both the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using social media for stress management. Results indicated that most respondents experienced moderate stress levels and primarily used social media for leisure-time stress management rather than engaging in physical activity. While academicians felt pressure to use social media for professional development, sharing achievements and maintaining social connections on these platforms were perceived as helpful for managing stress. The study found no significant influence of age, gender, or experience on stress levels. The findings suggest exploring more effective technology-aided coping mechanisms and other stress-reducing activities to promote the holistic well-being of academicians.

Secondary school teachers face numerous challenges, including student misbehavior, curriculum changes, heavy workloads, work-life balance difficulties, and limited professional development opportunities. These issues can contribute to anxiety, stress, depression, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. This study by *Amathulla A.S. and Akuretiya S. (2023)* assessed psychological distress and coping strategies among 164

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secondary school teachers from the Mawanella divisional secretariat in Sri Lanka, selected using convenience and snowball sampling. Participants completed the General Health Questionnaire-30 and the Brief COPE questionnaire, both validated for use in Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed using Spearman correlation and Mann-Whitney U tests. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers (N=162) experienced psychological distress, primarily manifested as social dysfunction (M=6.7), along with anxiety (M=5.6), loss of confidence (M=4.8), depression (M=2.9), and insomnia (M=1.5). While all participants employed all three coping strategies (emotion-focused, problem-focused, and avoidant), avoidant coping was the most commonly used (M=19). Emotion-focused coping strategies were found to reduce psychological distress, but problem-focused ($p=0.056$) and avoidant ($p=0.017$) strategies did not have a significant impact. The Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant gender difference in experiencing psychological distress ($p=0.130$). In summary, the study found that secondary school teachers experienced psychological distress, primarily through social dysfunction, and commonly used emotion-focused coping strategies to address this distress. No significant gender differences were observed in the experience of psychological distress.

Stress is a common concern in education, often linked to teachers' time constraints, heavy workloads, examinations, and administrative duties. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced additional stressors, such as the rapid shift to online teaching and increased technology use, potentially affecting educators' professional well-being. *Ayar Z. (2023)* conducted this study to investigate the coping strategies used by English teachers and instructors to manage perceived stress while teaching online. The research included 83 English teachers from various educational levels and regions in Turkey, along with 96 instructors from foreign language schools. Data were collected through a researcher-developed questionnaire followed by interviews with eight participants. Contrary to expectations, most participants reported experiencing only occasional stress and did not perceive the COVID-19 pandemic as a significant source of strain. The study found that participants primarily employed functional, approach-oriented, and cognitive coping strategies. Analysis based on the brief COPE model revealed a preference for cognitive over behavioral strategies. While seniority did not correlate significantly with stress levels or coping methods, participants' digital experience was a more influential factor. Based on these findings, the study offers suggestions and implications for educators on managing stress in synchronous virtual classes.

Work-related stress (WRS) is a widespread issue with potential consequences for productivity and lecturer well-being. The lecturing profession, like many others, presents stressful situations that can impact quality of work life. This cross-sectional study by *Chukwuemeka U.M. et. al. (2023)* investigated the influence of sex, teaching experience, and academic rank on WRS, coping mechanisms, and quality of work life among 283 lecturers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU). Participants were recruited using proportionate randomization across 101 departments. Data on WRS, quality of work life, and coping mechanisms were collected using the Health and Safety Executive Work Related stress (HSE-WRS), Work-Related Quality of life (WRQL), and Brief-cope Questionnaires (BCQ), respectively. Statistical analysis using Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests (at a significance level of 0.05) revealed that sex, teaching experience, and academic rank significantly influenced 14 subcategories of coping mechanisms. Furthermore, these factors also had a significant impact on lecturers' overall coping strategies. Teaching experience was

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found to significantly influence WRS, with male lecturers demonstrating more effective coping strategies for managing job demands compared to their female counterparts.

Woloshyn V., et. al. (2023) in this study investigated educators' self-reported well-being, perceived stressors, and coping strategies. Data were gathered through an online survey completed by 115 educators and semi-structured focus groups with 18 participants. The findings revealed that educators generally reported poor well-being, low resilience, and high levels of compassion fatigue and emotional exhaustion. Participants identified ongoing stressors related to supporting student learning and well-being, managing classroom environments, navigating limited community resources and support systems, and handling increasing administrative demands. The study concludes with a discussion of the practical implications of these findings.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced novel job stressors and challenges for teachers, with stress coping contingent on how they perceived the unprecedented teaching situation. The effectiveness of coping strategies was further influenced by individual perceptions of pandemic-induced changes to their work. A study conducted by *Ilieva S., Levterova D. and Vitanova V. (2021)* involving 205 teachers explored these perceptions and their impact on stress coping during pandemic teaching. A specifically designed questionnaire assessed perceptions of changes implemented to adapt teaching practices during the pandemic. Five key factors contributing to job challenges during remote teaching were identified: work-life balance, parental social support, organizational requirements and control, changes in job content, and computer/digital skills. Stress coping strategies were measured using Latack's questionnaire, revealing strategies such as increased effort, seeking social support, time management, situational change, confidence in success, avoidance, and acceptance. Correlation analysis indicated positive relationships between job challenge factors and proactive, problem-solving coping strategies, with weaker correlations observed between pandemic-related work changes/challenges and passive or escape-oriented coping. Regression analysis confirmed that perceptions of changes and challenges in teaching significantly influenced effective stress coping. Teachers who effectively navigated new pandemic-related job challenges tended to employ proactive and problem-solving strategies. Perceptions of parental social support, work-life balance, and improved computer/digital skills emerged as key predictors of successful stress coping among teachers.

Lawer T.D. (2021) in this study explored the relationships between job satisfaction, academic workload, perceived stress, and coping strategies among lecturers at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. Using a cross-sectional survey design and descriptive research approach, data were collected via questionnaires from 159 participants selected through proportional stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. The study aimed to determine the correlations between job satisfaction, academic workload, and perceived stress. Data analysis involved means and standard deviations for research questions, while hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression, Pearson's correlation, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. Key findings indicated that teaching large classes was the primary source of stress for lecturers, and the most common coping mechanism was the use of alcohol or stress-reducing drugs. The study also found that academic workload predicted perceived stress levels, was negatively correlated with job satisfaction, and that perceived stress was negatively associated with job satisfaction. However, gender, age, and lecturer status did not significantly influence perceived stress levels. The study recommended increasing the number of lecturers to address the rising

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student-lecturer ratio and providing counseling services to promote healthier stress coping strategies among lecturers.

Teaching is frequently cited as a highly stressful profession, and language teaching presents unique challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shift to online learning introduced numerous new stressors for teachers. *MacIntyre P.D., Gregersen T. and Mercer S. (2020)* in this study examined stress and coping responses in over 600 language teachers worldwide via an online survey conducted in April 2020. The survey assessed stressors and 14 coping strategies, categorized as approach or avoidant. Results revealed substantial stress levels among teachers. Positive psychological outcomes (well-being, health, happiness, resilience, post-traumatic growth) correlated positively with approach coping and negatively with avoidant coping. Conversely, avoidant coping consistently correlated (r s between 0.42 and 0.54) with negative outcomes (stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, loneliness). ANOVA results indicated that while approach coping was consistently used across varying stress levels, avoidant coping increased with rising stress levels, suggesting potential negative consequences associated with its use. Stepwise regression analyses revealed a complex pattern of coping strategies. The study highlights the difficulties faced by language teachers due to the pandemic, including the rapid transition to online teaching, blurred work-life boundaries, and concerns for personal and family health, leading to high stress levels. While teachers employed diverse coping techniques, more active, approach-oriented strategies that addressed the situation and related emotions were associated with more positive psychological outcomes. Critically, increased use of avoidant coping strategies was linked to negative psychological outcomes, particularly increased stress and negative emotions. Within both coping categories, specific strategies yielded results consistent with their respective categories. The study emphasizes the need for multidimensional coping strategies to address multidimensional stressors, while acknowledging that some strategies are more effective than others. The study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of coping strategies used by language teachers during the crisis, offering valuable lessons for supporting teachers during future stressful situations, such as school transitions, educational reforms, or intense work periods. Given the inherent stress of the teaching profession, the study concludes that pre-service and in-service teacher education programs should integrate stress coping skills as a fundamental professional competence.

Opperman V.M. (2020) conducted a longitudinal study conducted in the Vereeniging, Sedibeng East District of Gauteng province, South Africa, examined stress management among 209 teachers from various school types. The study investigated the potential of adaptive coping strategies and a sense of personal control to mitigate teacher stress and enhance psychosocial well-being. Using structural equation modeling and latent profile analysis (LPA) across two data collection points four months apart, the research aimed to: (a) review existing literature on relevant variables; (b) determine statistical relationships between variables; (c) analyze direct and indirect effects; (d) identify stress and personal control profiles; (e) explore the relationship between profile membership and other study variables; (f) investigate predictors of intention to leave the profession; and (g) assess the impact of the four-month interval on variable scores. The study's literature review explored key constructs such as perceived stress, coping strategies, perceived personal control, workplace flourishing, psychosocial well-being, and intention to leave. The findings revealed four distinct teacher stress profiles: stress resisters, those who manage stress, overloaded individuals, and highly stressed individuals. The "stress resisters" and "manage stress" groups exhibited lower scores on maladaptive coping strategies like denial,

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disengagement, and self-blame compared to the “overloaded” and “highly stressed” groups. Two personal control profiles, “doubtful” and “confident,” were also identified. Positive mental health was linked to low negative stress and the use of active coping mechanisms, while low workplace mental health and high negative stress predicted an intention to leave the profession. Notably, the study suggested that experiencing positive stress was associated with improved mental health and higher levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being in the workplace over time.

This descriptive study conducted by *Quintana C.B., Mercado F.M. and Balagtas A.O. (2019)* investigated how Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, and Mathematics (STEAM) teachers in higher education institutions in the Calabarzon region of the Philippines (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) perceived the influence of work-life balance on their well-being and teaching performance. The study considered work-life benefits such as equal access to promotion, training, and sick leave. Quantitative data, analyzed using weighted means and frequencies, revealed that teachers acknowledged their work sometimes encroached upon their personal lives. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews further explored the perceived impact of work-life balance, highlighting effects on physical health, job and family satisfaction, psychological well-being, emotional state and student relationships during teaching, time management, and susceptibility to burnout. The study's findings are intended to inform the development, revision, and implementation of formal work-life balance policies for both teaching and non-teaching staff within educational institutions.

This study by *Rautenbach E. (2019)* investigated the perceived stress, coping self-efficacy, and adaptive coping strategies of teachers in Gauteng, South Africa, examining the statistical relationships between these variables within the context of the stressful South African educational sector. Existing research on South African teachers' stress, coping mechanisms, and self-efficacy was reviewed to formulate the central research question: How do self-efficacy and adaptive coping strategies influence teachers' perceived stress levels? The study employed a quantitative methodology, collecting data from 283 teachers using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Coping Self-efficacy Scale (CSES), and Coping Strategy Inventory (COPE). The research was presented in two manuscripts intended for publication. The first manuscript examined the relationships between perceived stress, coping self-efficacy, and adaptive coping strategies. Using descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, correlations, and structural equation modeling with Mplus 8.1, the study identified direct and indirect pathways between these variables. Bootstrapping revealed that coping self-efficacy indirectly influenced adaptive coping strategies through its effect on perceived stress. The second manuscript used latent profile analysis (LPA) to identify distinct teacher profiles based on perceived stress and adaptive coping strategies. Three profiles emerged: moderately coping (48.6%), non-coping (12%), and coping well (39.4%). Regression analysis indicated that teachers who coped well were more likely to utilize problem-solving coping self-efficacy, while those who did not cope were more likely to rely on emotional coping self-efficacy. No significant difference in coping self-efficacy was found between the moderately coping and coping well groups. The study concluded that both sub-studies successfully addressed their aims and the overall research question, providing valuable insights into the interplay of stress, self-efficacy, and coping strategies among South African teachers. The findings highlight the importance of promoting coping self-efficacy to mitigate stress and encourage the use of adaptive coping strategies within this population.

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In today's globalized and competitive environment, the field of education is undergoing rapid transformation, with teachers playing a crucial role as agents of change. This necessitates innovative behaviour from teachers, contributing to the increasing demands and stress associated with the profession and highlighting the importance of teacher well-being. While existing literature often addresses well-being in terms of subjective happiness or eudaemonic fulfillment, this study by *Soni P. and Bakhru K.M. (2019)* argues that eudaemonic well-being (focused on meaning and purpose) is essential for teachers to reach their full potential. Recognizing the established link between innovative behavior and well-being, this research addresses the gap in studies examining these two constructs concurrently within the teaching profession. Through a comprehensive literature review, a preliminary conceptual model was developed, exploring factors identified as determinants of both teachers' eudaemonic well-being and their innovative behavior. These identified factors include personality traits, work-life balance, self-efficacy, and demographic variables.

Occupational stress is prevalent across industries and is increasingly recognized as a significant issue within the teaching profession. Effective workplace policies and practices that support work-life balance are therefore crucial. This study conducted by *Jadega H., Sanghvi A.N. and Verma M. (2018)* aimed to identify key factors that help university teachers cope with stress, with the goal of informing institutional strategies to create a more positive and stress-free environment. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire from 183 university teachers in Gujarat, India, gathering their preferred stress-coping methods. Principal Component Analysis revealed that visiting places of worship, practicing yoga or meditation, engaging in physical activities, frequent eating, listening to music, and taking short breaks were the most preferred stress-reducing activities. Based on these findings, the study recommends regular yoga sessions, meditation programs, games, and other activities as best practices for teacher rejuvenation.

METHODOLOGY

Aim – The aim of the present study is to find out, if any, gender differences exist in work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles of educators.

Objectives of the Study

The objective(s) of the current study is:

- To explore the work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles in male educators.
- To explore the work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles in female educators.
- To draw out a descriptive analysis of the differences and similarities in the males and female work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the current study was limited to men and females employed in Kolkata City of West Bengal. The universe for this correlational investigation consisted of educators and male and female genders.

Sample Design

To gather the participants, a purposive (random) sampling strategy was applied. Purposive sampling is the deliberate selecting of people according to traits, knowledge, experiences, or other standards. It is "on purpose" to choose units. Following an initial interview,

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quantitative (standardised) questionnaires were distributed. Convenience-based purposive sampling, or non-probability-based sample selection, was used. Nonprobability sampling is a research technique in which samples are chosen without guaranteeing that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. Non-probability sampling techniques, on the other hand, depend on the convenience or certain criteria or the researcher's assessment.

Sample Size

The sample consists of one professional category, viz. Education, which includes both male and female educators: There are 75 male and 75 female professionals from the field of Education. There are 150 samples total. These participants resided in West Bengal and Kolkata that made up the group. The educators came from a variety of Kolkata-based universities and colleges, including DPS Management Colleges, MAKAUT, and Calcutta University.

Research Design

This is a non-experimental study using standardized questionnaires to make quantitative and comparative data based on – gender which explores any significant differences on Work-Life Balance, Perceived Stress and Coping Styles.

Procedure

The data from the participants was collected from schools and institutions in Kolkata between October 2023 and May 2024. Participants filled out sociodemographic forms and three standardised questionnaires, either online or in person. Age, work experience, gender, and educational background were among the most important details. The researcher created rapport, maintained secrecy, and assisted with questionnaire items. Participants were urged to offer honest comments and were given enough time to complete the questionnaires, with the guarantee that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research.

Tools

- Work life Balance Scale (Pareek, Purohit & Joshi,2011)- 36 item questionnaire to measure work-life balance of the sample.
- Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1988)- 10 item Likert type questionnaire to measure perceived stress of the sample.
- Brief COPE scale (Carver, 1989)- It is a 28 item, self-report questionnaire to measure the 3 coping strategies- problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidant coping, of the sample.
- SPSS software- for the statistical calculation

Rationale of the Study

Work-life balance has become a critical issue in today's fast-paced and demanding work environments.¹ Imbalance can lead to significant negative consequences for both employees and organizations, including increased stress, burnout, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates.² Understanding how work-life balance, stress, and coping mechanisms differ between male and female employees is crucial. Research suggests potential gender-specific challenges in navigating these aspects of work life. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for organizations to develop and implement effective strategies to improve employee well-being and enhance overall organizational performance.

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This research area has not been explored much in West Bengal or Kolkata. This study aims to provide an insight into the gender differences of male and female educators on work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles so that they can be better equipped to cope with situations handle stress and enhance the several aspects of work-life balance. It will also help organisations in formulating strategies in order to make the professional area better for educators.

INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (Work-Life Balance, Perceived Stress and Coping Styles)

VARIABLES	MALE	FEMALE
	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)
Fulfilment of Social Needs	10.175 (5.537)	11.009 (5.554)
Fulfilment of Personal Needs	12.291 (5.270)	13.310 (4.848)
Time Management	5.322 (6.037)	6.894 (6.838)
Teamwork at Workplace	12.955 (5.064)	14.456 (4.407)
Compensation & Benefits	8.785 (6.415)	9.563 (6.161)
Capabilities to Work under Stress	14.122 (4.542)	14.790 (3.896)
Perceived Stress	19.333 (5.624)	20.027 (4.377)
Problem-focused Coping	22.667 (5.456)	21.480 (5.371)
Emotion-focused Coping	27.747 (5.448)	26.933 (5.871)
Avoidant Coping	14.933 (4.683)	13.907 (4.097)

MALE S.D. and FEMALE S.D.

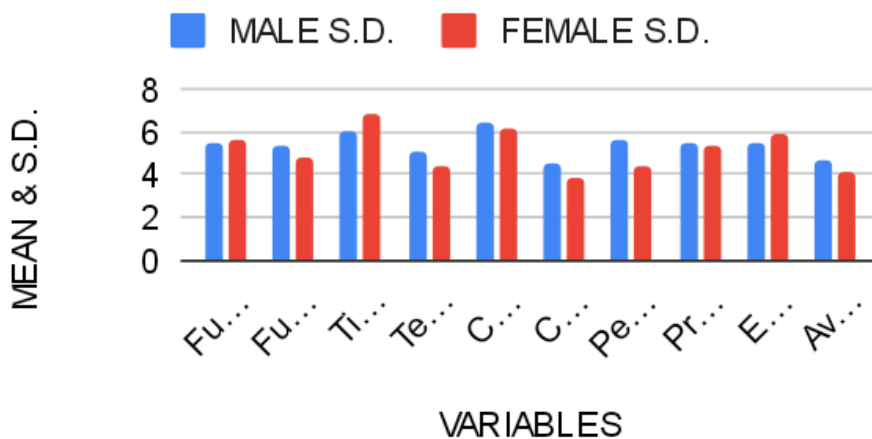


Figure 1. Mean and S.D. of Male and Female Educators

The table and figure above presents a comparative analysis of male and female educators across work-life balance, perceived stress and coping styles.

Female educators exhibit higher mean scores in several key areas, including:

- **Fulfilment of Social Needs:** 8.2% higher than male educators.
- **Fulfilment of Personal Needs:** 8.3% higher than male educators.
- **Time Management:** 29.5% higher than male educators.
- **Teamwork at Workplace:** 11.6% higher than male educators.
- **Compensation & Benefits:** 8.9% higher than male educators.

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- **Capabilities to Work under Stress:** 4.7% higher than male educators.
- **Perceived Stress:** 3.6% higher than male educators.

Conversely, male educators report higher means in:

- **Problem-focused Coping:** 5.2% greater than female educators.
- **Emotion-focused Coping:** 2.9% greater than female educators.
- **Avoidant Coping:** 6.9% greater than female educators.

DISCUSSION

Opperman (2020) identified stress profiles and coping strategies but did *not* find significant gender differences in perceived stress. This suggests that while teachers experience stress differently (leading to different profiles), the overall level of stress may not vary significantly by gender in his sample. **Chukwuemeka et al. (2023)** found a gender difference in *coping*, with male lecturers demonstrating more effective coping strategies for managing job demands compared to female lecturers. This suggests that while stress levels might be similar, the *ways* men and women cope might differ, with men potentially employing more effective strategies in this context. This is the most direct comparison of male and female educators among all the literature reviews. **Other studies (Ilieva et al., 2021; Nwoko et al., 2024; Lawer, 2021; Rautenbach, 2019; Quintana et al., 2019; Bidi et al., 2024; Jadhav, 20; Ogakwu et al., 2024; Koçak et al., 2024; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Abayon, 2024; Koçyiğit and Sezer, 2024; Ayar, 2023; Conte et al., 2024; Lt. Raj and Saxena, 20; Sangeetha and Jose, 2024; Jadege et al., 2018)** focused on sources of stress, coping strategies, and well-being among teachers as a whole, without explicitly comparing male and female educators. They identify various stressors (workload, student behaviour, administrative demands, pandemic-related challenges, lack of support), coping mechanisms (approach/avoidant, problem-focused/emotion-focused, self-care, time management, social media use), and the importance of factors like self-efficacy, psychological capital, and work-life balance. While gender is not a primary focus, these studies provide valuable context for understanding the stressors faced by *all* educators, which can then be considered in light of the potential gender differences suggested by Chukwuemeka et al. (2023).

The literature suggests that while overall stress levels may not differ significantly between male and female educators (as indicated by Opperman, 2020 and some other studies focusing on stress levels), there is evidence that *coping strategies* can differ by gender (Chukwuemeka et al., 2023), with some research suggesting men may employ more effective strategies in certain contexts. The majority of the reviewed literature focuses on general stressors and coping mechanisms within the teaching profession, providing a backdrop against which further investigation into gender differences can be conducted.

The findings from the present study suggest that female educators might experience their profession differently than male educators in several key aspects. Female educators report significantly greater fulfillment of both social and personal needs within their roles. This could indicate that they find more intrinsic value and satisfaction in their work. Female educators might find more fulfillment in social interactions with students and colleagues due to inherent personality traits or societal expectations. Research suggests that women tend to prioritize social connections and find fulfillment in relationships, which could translate to their interactions with students and colleagues in the teaching profession. They might derive greater personal satisfaction from teaching due to a stronger sense of purpose or a greater

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alignment with their values. Studies have shown that women are often more motivated by intrinsic rewards such as making a difference in others' lives, which could explain their higher levels of personal fulfillment in teaching. Female educators demonstrate better time management skills, potentially leading to increased efficiency and reduced stress levels. This might be due to the fact that they possess better organizational skills or are more adept at prioritizing tasks, leading to improved time management. Research on gender differences in cognitive abilities suggests that women may excel in certain areas like multitasking and organization, which could translate to better time management skills in the teaching profession. Female educators also appear to have stronger teamwork skills, fostering more collaborative and supportive work environments. This might be because females are more inclined towards collaborative approaches and effective communication, facilitating better teamwork. Studies on communication styles have shown that women tend to be more empathetic and collaborative in their communication, which could contribute to their stronger teamwork skills in the teaching profession. The perception of compensation and benefits could be influenced by factors like societal expectations, career aspirations, and personal financial situations. Female educators might possess better stress management skills or be more resilient in the face of challenges. Research on gender differences in stress responses suggests that women may be more adept at coping with stress through emotional regulation and social support, which could translate to better capabilities to work under stress in the teaching profession. Female educators might experience higher perceived stress levels due to factors like workload, societal expectations, and work-life balance issues. Studies on work-life balance and gender have shown that women often bear a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities, which could contribute to higher perceived stress levels in the teaching profession.

Male educators, on the other hand, exhibit higher levels of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, suggesting that they might employ more proactive and emotionally expressive strategies to manage stress. As found in the present study, male educators are more likely to adopt problem-solving strategies and seek direct solutions to challenges. Research on gender differences in coping mechanisms suggests that men tend to favour problem-focused coping strategies, while women may be more likely to adopt emotion-focused coping strategies. Research on gender roles and emotional expression also suggests that men may face societal pressures to suppress emotions, which could explain their lower levels of emotion-focused coping in the teaching profession. This is consistent with the research findings that have been mentioned.

Conversely, female educators show lower levels of avoidant coping, indicating a preference for more direct and constructive approaches to challenges. Female educators might be less likely to avoid or deny problems, preferring to address them directly. Research on gender differences in coping mechanisms suggests that women may be more likely to adopt active coping strategies, such as seeking information and support, rather than avoidant coping strategies.

CONCLUSION

This review of literature highlights the multifaceted nature of stress and coping among educators. While Opperman (2020) found no significant gender differences in perceived stress levels, Chukwuemeka et al. (2023) demonstrated distinct gender differences in coping strategies, with male lecturers exhibiting more effective coping mechanisms. This suggests

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that while the overall experience of stress may be similar across genders, the ways in which educators manage these stressors can vary significantly.

Further research by Ilieva et al. (2021), Nwoko et al. (2024), and others, while not explicitly examining gender differences, provides valuable insights into the diverse stressors faced by educators, including workload, student behavior, and administrative demands. These stressors, coupled with the potential for gender-specific coping mechanisms, emphasize the need for a nuanced understanding of educator well-being.

The present study's findings further support this notion, revealing that female educators experience higher fulfillment in both social and personal aspects of their roles, potentially driven by intrinsic motivations and a stronger emphasis on social connections. Additionally, female educators demonstrate superior time management and teamwork skills, likely attributed to inherent strengths in organization, prioritization, and collaborative communication. However, they also report higher perceived stress levels, potentially linked to factors like work-life balance and societal expectations. In contrast, male educators exhibit higher levels of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, while female educators demonstrate lower levels of avoidant coping. These findings, while preliminary, suggest that gender plays a significant role in shaping the experiences and responses of educators to the challenges they face.

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Conflict of Interest

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