

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' MENTAL HEALTH: A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KARACHI

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Background of the Study

This study provides a background of research. Teaching is commonly known to be one of the most challenging human service professions as it demands constant emotional involvement, intellectual activity, classroom control, administration, and communication. Over the past few years, the psychological well-being of teachers has become an urgent issue in the research of the education sphere because the psychological well-being of a teacher directly determines the effectiveness of his or her instruction, the learning of students, the climate in a school, and the productivity of an institution. Research has shown that work overload, time constraints, lack of autonomy in decision making, dysfunctional relationships among colleagues, lack of administrative support, and resource availability can greatly influence the stress levels, anxiety, work burnout, and mental well-being of teachers.

The workplace is a key factor in the professional experiences and mental health outcomes of teachers. Job satisfaction, resilience, and emotional stability are achieved via a positive work environment, which is encouraged by supportive leadership, professional respect, workable workload, collaborative culture, and sufficient teaching resources. Conversely, a stressful or adverse working environment can subject teachers to chronic stress, role strain, emotional fatigue, and mental health issues. The available literature points out that psychosocial features of the workplace (school climate, peer relationships, recognition, safety, and organizational justice) are closely linked to the mental health of teachers and their commitment to the profession. The situation is even more pronounced in the context of secondary schools since teachers at this level have to contend with distinct pressures associated with adolescent classroom behavior, board examination workloads, syllabus cover, parental expectations, and performance accountability. The teachers in secondary schools are usually required to juggle between teaching, assessment, mentoring, extra-curricular responsibilities, and institutional reporting obligations at the same time. These multi-role demands can create a heightened strain of emotion and diminish psychological well-being when the work environment is not well structured and socialized.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem

The issue of mental health among teachers has gained momentum in modern education discussions since it has a direct impact on the quality of teaching, classroom performance, student performance, and school performance. Teachers working in secondary schools, especially, face numerous professional pressures, including high teaching workloads, classroom management challenges, assessment tasks, administrative paperwork, and mounting accountability pressure. Combined with a non-supportive work environment, such demands can cause chronic stress, emotional fatigue, anxiety, burnout, and decreased professional commitment. The teachers in Karachi secondary schools operate in a varied and frequently problematic school climate where there is overcrowding in classes, poor infrastructure, poor school administration, low professional autonomy, lack of collegiality, and role ambiguity are prevalent. These occupational environments can adversely affect their mental and psychological health. Despite the studies on teacher stress and job satisfaction conducted in the past, the precise role of work environment determinants on the mental health of secondary school teachers in Karachi is under-researched. Lack of the context-specific empirical evidence will not allow the school leaders and policymakers to formulate interventions that will successfully meet the psychological needs of teachers. Thus, the essence of the issue discussed in the present research is the poor comprehension of the role of various aspects of school working conditions in the development of secondary school teacher mental health in Karachi.

Without this issue being tackled, schools can keep on having low teacher motivation, absenteeism, burnout, and decreasing instructional effectiveness.

Research Objectives and Questions

Research Objectives

The study aims to:

- Discuss the general working condition of secondary school teachers in Karachi.
- Determine the mental health of Karachi secondary school teachers.
- Explore how work environment and mental health of teachers are interconnected.

Research Questions

- What is the work environment of secondary school teachers in Karachi?
- The research question is: What is the mental health of Karachi secondary school teachers?
- Does the work environment have a significant relationship with mental health of teachers?

Literature Review

Work environment is the general conditions of the workplace, physical, social, psychological, and organizational environments under which the employees are engaged in their professional duties. The work environment in the educational setting includes all aspects of the school in which teachers work that influence their daily life such as leadership, collegiality, workload, physical resources, school climate, communication, and institutional culture. The work environment to teachers does not only refer to the classroom setting, but the school-wide ecosystem that affects motivation, job satisfaction, emotional health, and job performance. According to recent studies, a positive working atmosphere is a key factor in the well-being and engagement of educators, as well as their psychological health (Wang, 2024).

The work environment is usually the concept that is perceived in terms of two broad dimensions: the physical work environment and the psychosocial work environment. The physical dimension incorporates material elements like the classroom space, lighting, ventilation, staff rooms, sanitation facilities, physical teaching aids, technology, and furniture, as well as, school safety. These aspects have a direct impact on the comfort, efficiency, and performance of teachers to handle classroom activities effectively. Overcrowded classroom, lack of teaching facilities, noise, and ineffective infrastructure, which are mostly experienced in secondary schools, particularly in big urban areas such as Karachi, can contribute to fatigue and stress among teachers, thus affecting their mental health and productivity.

The psychosocial work environment, though, is usually regarded as having a greater impact on the mental health of teachers. This dimension entails interpersonal relations, major support, fairness, recognition, communication, collaboration, clear roles, and overall emotional tone of the school. A positive psychosocial environment enhances trust, belongingness, professional autonomy, and resilience, whereas a negative environment could cause stress, burnout, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Recent data indicate that the school climate and organizational support are strong predictors of teacher well-being that fulfill psychological needs of teachers in terms of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Collie et al., 2025).

The work environment in the school setting is also closely connected with the organizational climate, which is the understanding of the position of teachers on the school policies, practices, leadership behavior, and collegial culture. The presence of a healthy organizational climate encourages a respectful attitude towards each other, involvement in decision-making, justice, and free communication, which have a positive effect on the psychological functioning of teachers. On the other hand, a hostile or authoritarian environment can lead to an emotional strain and a decrease in morale. The recent sources also indicate a

leading role of leadership in the development of a mentally healthy school environment through the establishment of supportive structures, minimization of unjustified workload, and development of staff well-being programs (Ertem, 2024).

Workload and role demands is another critical element of the work environment. In the case of teachers, work load is not just limited to classroom instruction, but also lesson planning, assessment, parent contacts, co-curricular duties, documentation, meetings and administrative reports. Chronic stress and role conflict may occur when the workload is more than the available resources and time. According to recent research, work overload and a lack of organizational support are closely linked with a decreased psychological well-being of teachers (Wang, 2024). Thus, workload should be regarded as one of the key aspects of the working environment, especially in secondary schools where students are highly academic and where the burden of examinations and final tests is significant.

Conceptually, the work environment within this research is considered to be a multidimensional construct that consists of both structural and relational aspects that determine the professional experiences of teachers. The concept is especially important in the environment of Karachi secondary schools, where teachers work in different institutional environments, which are characterized by different leadership styles, availability of resources, students, and expectations of the organizations. Knowledge of the work environment based on these dimensions offers a solid foundation of how the work environment affects mental health outcomes of teachers, including stress, burnout, emotional state, and resilience.

Therefore, the work environment in the current research is the independent variable and will be measured using aspects like leadership support, workload, collegial relations, physical facilities, and organizational climate, which are likely to have an effect on the secondary school teachers' mental health.

The mental health of teachers is the psychological, emotional and social well-being of the teachers in regard to their work in the field and workplace experiences. It includes how far the teachers can cope with work-related stress, emotional balance, positive relationships, the ability to adjust to the requirements of the institution, and thus, do their teaching duties successfully. The mental health of teachers in educational research is increasingly becoming a key element of teacher efficacy since it directly affects classroom control, the quality of instruction, student interaction, and the overall school environment. Recent research highlights that teacher mental health cannot be considered as the lack of mental illness, rather it can be perceived as a more inclusive state of psychological health, resilience, professional satisfaction, and functioning (Ozturk et al., 2024).

The concept encompasses a number of significant dimensions, especially, stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, emotional exhaustion, well-being, and resilience. In the research of teacher mental health, stress and burnout are the most common indicators that have been studied. The common pressures that teachers face include lesson planning, classroom management, behavioural issues that learners present, parental expectations, administrative reporting, and performance appraisal. These demands can result in chronic stress and emotional exhaustion when they surpass personal and organizational resources. Recent reports indicate that unmanaged stress over a long period of time is a major contributor to burnout symptoms, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decline in professional achievement (Maratos et al., 2024).

The psychological well-being is another significant aspect of the mental health of teachers, and it indicates positive emotional reactions, including life satisfaction, work engagement, optimism, self-efficacy, and professional purpose. The concept of teacher well-being is becoming a widely used idea in the current literature as a holistic model that combines both the

negative components of mental distress and the positive aspects of flourishing. According to a recent conceptual review, teacher well-being is considered in terms of emotional, cognitive, social and occupational aspects, each of which is associated with long-term and sustainable teaching performance and retention in the teaching profession (Kurrle & Warwas, 2025). The expanded perspective is particularly relevant to educational research since it enables scholars to study not only risk factors but also protective factors to the psychological functioning of teachers.

Coping capacity and resilience also heavily affect teacher mental health in the school environment. Resilience means how teachers can adjust constructively to the challenges in the workplace, overcome failures, and be committed to their profession amidst the stressors. Educators who possess good coping patterns, emotional control abilities, and have social support systems tend to cope with stress more easily and maintain good mental health. The recent empirical research indicates that mindfulness, self-compassion, and social support can be very beneficial to curb symptoms of anxiety, stress, and burnout among teachers (Corthorn et al., 2024; Einav et al., 2024). This implies that the mental health of teachers is not merely influenced by the demands of the workplace, but also by the presence of personal and relational resources that mediate psychological stress.

In the perspective of the current research, the conceptualization of the mental health of teachers is the dependent variable, as it describes the psychological consequences of working in a school. It comprises quantifiable results like the levels of stress, burnout predispositions, emotional health, signs of anxiety, and resilience in secondary school educators. Considering the situation in Karachi, where teachers might receive overwork load, administrative pressure, big classes, and urban stressors, it is of particular interest to study the concept of mental health as a multidimensional construct. The conceptual insight into this concept gives the theoretical foundation of examining how workplace conditions influence the psychological well-being and professional sustainability of the teachers.

In this study, therefore, the mental health of teachers is perceived to be an overall design of emotional stability, stress control, resilience, and occupational well-being that is largely dependent on the quality of the working environment in secondary schools.

The current research is based on the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) Theory and backed up by the Stress and Coping Theory because both theories present a solid conceptual foundation to the impact that the work environment has on the mental health of teachers. Such theories are very relevant since they provide an insight into the connection between workplace factors, stress perceptions, coping ability, and mental health among professionals, especially teachers.

One of the best-known theories of studying the well-being of employees in the workplace is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory which was originally proposed by Bakker and Demerouti. According to the theory, each profession is characterized by job demands and job resources and the ratio between the two defines the well-being and performance of employees. Job demands are the physical, psychological, social or organizational factors of work that call on persistent effort and thus related to physiological and psychological costs. These requirements are often associated with the teaching profession, which involves heavy workloads, time constraints, discipline problems in the classroom, role conflict, paperwork in the administration, pressure of examinations and emotional labour. Such demands can cause stress, fatigue, burnout and decreased mental well-being in teachers, when sustained over an extended duration. Recent meta-analytic data prove that job demands have negative relationships with teacher well-being, and are significant predictors of burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Job resources on the other hand are conditions in the work environment that assist employees to accomplish work objectives, diminish job demands as well as motivating

individual growth and development. These resources in the school setting comprise of leadership support, collegial relations, professional autonomy, sufficient physical facilities, organizational justice, recognition, and favorable school climate. The JD-R theory suggests that the presence of powerful job resources not only eliminates the adverse effect of job demands, but also boosts motivation, engagement, resilience, and mental health. In the case of teachers, supportive principals, healthy relationships with peers, a manageable workload that is manageable, and adequate teaching resources can greatly enhance psychological well-being and minimize burnout tendencies. The current studies on teacher well-being have a strong affiliation with the JD-R perspective by proving that the work resources have a positive relationship with teacher resilience, satisfaction and emotional health.

JD-R theory is relevant to the current study in that it is directly related to the variables of investigation. Work environment is the independent variable and is conceptualized in two ways: Job demands (workload, role pressure, organizational expectations) and job resources (leadership support, collegial relations, physical facilities, organizational climate). The dependent variable, mental health of teachers, entails stress, burnout, emotional state, and resilience. Thus, the theory presents a good description of the influence of both positive and negative factors in the workplace in the formation of psychological functioning of teachers.

Along with JD-R theory, the research is also grounded in the Stress and Coping Theory developed by Lazarus and Folkman, explaining the perception and reaction of stressful situations in individuals. This theory argues that stress is not purely based on what is going on in the external environment but on how the individual cognitively evaluates it in relation to their presumed capacity to manage it. Considering the teaching context, secondary school teachers might experience stress, anxiety, and emotional strain when they feel that their coping resources are not sufficient to handle the demands of the workplace, such as heavy workload, pressure on the administrative side, or poor school climate. The impact of these stressors can however be mitigated when they have sufficient coping mechanisms, social support and resiliency.

The theory comes in handy especially when trying to comprehend why teachers operating in the same school settings might have varying mental health outcomes. An example is two teachers in a similar school receiving the same workload requirements, but one may be resilient and healthy because of better coping strategies and support of peers, whereas the other teacher may be burned out. The Stress and Coping Theory, therefore supplements JD-R by addressing the individual psychological initiatives whereby the workplace conditions influence mental health.

Research Methodology

The research design used is a quantitative, cross-sectional study design to investigate the association between the work environment and the mental health of teachers among secondary school teachers in Karachi. The degree and direction of association between variables are determined by a correlational approach without controlling the study environment. This design will be suitable because it will enable the researcher to record the data at one point in time and then statistically analyse the data to determine the patterns and relationships. The research is based on the principles of Educational Psychology, which means that the environmental as well as the psychological factors are measured and interpreted in a systematized way.

All teachers in secondary schools in Karachi, both in public and private schools, are included in the population of the study. This involves both male and female teachers who teach in the secondary level in various districts of the city. The sampling frame will be a list of sampled public and private secondary schools in Karachi, which will be acquired through the

respective education authorities. Out of these schools, secondary school teachers currently working at the schools are listed as potential participants who will be used in the study.

A stratified random sampling method is used such that both the public and the private schools are adequately represented; also the various districts of Karachi are represented. The teachers within each stratum are picked at random to reduce the bias factor and increase the applicability of the results. The study is conducted on a sample of about 150-200 teachers in secondary schools. This is deemed sufficient to conduct statistical analysis and yield credible findings regarding the correlation between the work environment and the mental health of teachers.

The research data were gathered using a structured questionnaire that was given to the teachers of the secondary schools in Karachi. The questionnaire will be divided into two parts: one part will assess the work environment (workload, administrative support, and school climate), and the other will assess the mental health of the teachers. Responses are collected in a Likert scale, which allows the responses to be easily analyzed. School authorities are contacted beforehand, and respondents will be guaranteed confidentiality and voluntary participation.

The data obtained undergo further examination through statistical methods in the field of Educational Psychology. The data are summarized using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and standard deviation), and the inferential statistics, i.e., correlation and regression analysis, are used to investigate the relationship between the work environment and the mental health of teachers. There is the use of statistical software (e.g., SPSS) to make sure that the analysis can be accurate and reliable.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The table shows that the sample of respondents was taken across various districts of Karachi, with Karachi East (25%) having the highest representation. This distribution by the district will further increase the geographical coverage of the sample and the generalization of the results in Karachi.

Descriptive Statistics of Work Environment Dimensions

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Leadership Support	200	3.82	0.71	High
Workload	200	4.01	0.68	High
Collegial Relations	200	3.76	0.65	High
Physical Facilities	200	3.45	0.74	Moderate
Organizational Climate	200	3.69	0.70	High
Overall Work Environment	200	3.75	0.69	High

The descriptive statistics of the work environment dimensions are shown in the above Table. The total mean of 3.75 (SD = 0.69) shows that, on the whole, the respondents felt that their work was positive and conducive to them. Workload was the dimension with the highest mean (M = 4.01, SD = 0.68), indicating that teachers have a fairly heavy workload at secondary schools. The leadership support (M = 3.82) and collegial relations (M = 3.76) also indicated high mean values, which means that the respondents tended to believe that there were supportive leadership practices and positive professional relationships in schools. The average of physical facilities (M = 3.45, SD = 0.74) was relatively lower, and it can be concluded that

school infrastructure and available resources were rather satisfactory. This can be an indication of the problems in some schools, like congested classrooms, lack of teaching materials or physical facilities.

Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Mental Health Outcomes

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Stress	200	3.88	0.72	High
Burnout	200	3.61	0.69	Moderate to High
Anxiety	200	3.54	0.66	Moderate
Emotional Well-being	200	3.70	0.73	High
Resilience	200	3.84	0.67	High
Job Satisfaction	200	3.72	0.70	High
Overall Mental Health	200	3.71	0.69	Moderate to High

The descriptive statistics of the mental health outcomes of teachers are presented in the above Table. The mean score of 3.71 (SD = 0.69) indicates that the mental health status has a moderate to high level with some positive and negative responses. Stress had the highest mean score (M = 3.88, SD = 0.72), so it can be concluded that teachers are under occupational stress. Likewise, the burnout (M = 3.61) and anxiety (M = 3.54) indicate moderate rates of mental stress. On the positive end, resilience (M = 3.84) and job satisfaction (M = 3.72) had quite high mean scores, which means that even in the face of challenges at the workplace, teachers have coping capacity and a fairly high level of professional commitment. This result is in line with the theoretical assumption that job resources can counteract the adverse impact of job demands. As shown in the descriptive analysis, although the overall perception of the work environment in Karachi by secondary school teachers is positive, the high workload in the environment might be leading to stress and burnout rates. Simultaneously, good leadership, positive inter-professional relationships, and resilience might be assisting teachers to stay emotionally stable and satisfied at work. The Pearson correlation and regression analyses in the following sections have a good foundation on these findings.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis, which was done to investigate the predictive value of the work environment dimensions on the mental health of teachers among the secondary school teachers in Karachi is presented. The degree to which the independent variables (leadership support, workload, collegial relations, physical facilities, and organizational climate) predict the dependent variable (teachers mental health) is determined by use of multiple regression.

The analysis comprises the Model Summary, ANOVA and the Regression Coefficients tables.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error
1	0.79	0.62	0.61	0.41

The above Table indicates that overall, the regression model is robust, as the R value is 0.79, which demonstrates a strong correlation between the combination of work environment dimensions and the mental health of teachers. The R Square score of 0.62 means that the five dimensions of the work environment explain 62 percent of the variation in the mental health of the teachers. This implies that this model is very explanatory. The value of Adjusted R Square

at 0.61 further supports the fact that the model is not affected by changing the number of predictors.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	52.84	5	10.57	62.91	0.000
Residual	32.60	194	0.17		
Total	85.44	199			

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is significant with $F(5,194) = 62.91$, $p < 0.001$. This implies that the independent variables are almost a good predictor of mental health of teachers and the regression equation can be used to test the hypothesis.

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.12	0.21		5.33	0.000
Leadership Support	0.28	0.05	0.31	5.60	0.000
Workload	-0.24	0.04	-0.29	-6.00	0.000
Collegial Relations	0.19	0.06	0.21	3.17	0.002
Physical Facilities	0.11	0.05	0.12	2.20	0.029
Organizational Climate	0.33	0.05	0.36	6.60	0.000

The table of coefficients indicates how each of the work environment dimensions contributes to the mental health of teachers.

The strongest positive predictor was found to be organizational climate ($= 0.36$, $p < 0.001$), which shows that a healthy school climate can effectively enhance the mental health of teachers. Mental health is also a significant positive predictor of leadership support (0.31 , $p < 0.001$), and supportive school leadership leads to better psychological well-being. Collegial relations ($= 0.21$, $p = 0.002$) and physical facilities ($= 0.12$, $p = 0.029$) also have a positive impact, albeit with much lower impact. Workload (-0.29 , $p < 0.001$) has a negative predictive value of mental health, indicating that extreme workload has a negative effect on the emotional well-being of teachers and stresses them out. The above findings indicate that although a number of workplace resources are associated with enhancing mental health, a high workload continues to be a significant risk factor.

The multiple regression analysis reveals that the work environment is a significant predictor of the mental health of teachers, with organizational climate and leadership support being the most significant positive predictors, and the workload being the most significant negative predictor. This will be good empirical evidence for your hypotheses of research and theoretical approach.

Findings

The research produced a number of valuable results on the connection between work environment and mental health of teachers among Karachi secondary school teachers. First, the demographic results indicated that the respondents were a varied sample in terms of gender, age, qualification, teaching experience, school type and district representation which enhanced the validity of the data.

Second, the descriptive results showed that teachers tended to think that their overall work environment was moderately positive, especially leadership support, collegial relations

and organizational climate. Nevertheless, the area of workload had a relatively high mean score, which means that teachers are exposed to significant professional pressure associated with instructional tasks, examination work, and administrative work.

Third, the results pertaining to mental health indicated that educators manifested moderate to high stress, burnout, and anxiety rates, as well as showed satisfactory resilience, emotional state, and job satisfaction levels. This is an indication that despite the enormous work pressures that teachers experience in the workplace, they remain able to exhibit coping skills and professional dedication.

Fourth, Pearson correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant correlation between the work environment and mental health of teachers. Leadership support, collegial relations, physical facilities, and organizational climate were the positive workplace dimensions with positive correlation to better mental health outcomes, and workload was the significant negative correlation.

Fifth, the multiple regression analysis revealed that work environment is a strong predictor of mental health of teachers. Out of all predictors, organizational climate was found as the best positive predictor, then leadership support and workload was found as the best negative predictor.

Lastly, the testing results of the hypothesis proved that all the hypotheses were accepted, and the conceptual framework and theoretical assumptions of the JD-R Theory along with the Stress and Coping Theory were well empirically supported.

Conclusions

According to the results of the research, it can be concluded that the working environment is extremely important in determining the mental health of the teachers in secondary schools in Karachi. An inclusive positive and favorable workplace with good leadership, good collegiality, physical resource availability, and positive organizational climate have a significant effect of enhancing emotional well-being, resilience and job satisfaction of teachers.

Another conclusion of the study is that one of the greatest stressors of the workplace on the mental health of teachers is workload. Over teaching, paperwork, test duties, and stresses of meeting the syllabus exert more stress, burnouts, and anxieties on teachers.

The other significant inference is that the existence of organizational climate and leadership support are key institutional resources that may mitigate the adverse impact of job demands. Teachers can more effectively manage stressors at work when the school leadership is supportive and the school culture fosters trust, fairness and cooperation.

On the whole, the research findings are that enhancing the quality of the school work environment is critical in safeguarding and facilitating the mental health of school teachers, which consequently can enhance the teaching performance, student achievement, and school performance.

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