

MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES FOR ALLEVIATING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS TO ENHANCE JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN MWANZA REGION, TANZANIA

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of managerial interventions in mitigating occupational stress in a bid to enhance job performance among secondary school teachers in Mwanza City and Ilemela Municipality of Mwanza region in Tanzania. Data were gathered from 462 participants comprising Heads of Secondary School (HSS), Secondary School Teachers (SSTs), Ward Education Officers (WEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs) from December 2021 to June 2023. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study used a questionnaire featuring both open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. Additionally, interviews held with purposively selected teachers to offer comprehensive insights into the research problem. The recognition among employees, fostering superior-subordinate relationships, delegation of authority, on-the-job training and improvement of the work environment emerged as effective managerial interventions for ameliorating occupational stress among secondary school teachers. This research contributes valuable insights that educational administrators and policymakers can capitalise on in implementing strategies aimed to support teacher well-being and strengthen educational outcomes.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Secondary schools, Managerial interventions, Job Performance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress among secondary school teachers is a source of grave concern globally, affecting as it does not only the well-being of educators but also the quality of education they provide (Khan, A., Khan, S., Khan, A., & Khan, M., 2021). In the context of Mwanza region, Tanzania, where educational systems strive to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving society, addressing teacher stress can ensure the effective delivery of education. After all, the efficacy of managerial interventions in mitigating this stress has drawn significant attention in recent years, which reflects a growing recognition of the need for proactive measures to support teachers' well-being and enhance educational outcomes in the process. Moreover, the global significance of occupational stress among educators highlights its adverse effects on job satisfaction, mental health and, ultimately, students' achievement (Khan, A., Khan, S., Khan, A., & Khan, M., 2021). This reality underscores the urgent need for tailored interventions aimed address the specific stressors secondary school teachers face in Mwanza region, in this case. Moreover, Maslach and Leiter (2022) highlighted the multifaceted nature of occupational stress, hence the need for holistic approaches factoring both individual and organisational factors.

Against this backdrop, the present study investigated the effectiveness of managerial strategies in alleviating occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Mwanza city and Ilemela municipality, Mwanza region. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contributory factors to teacher stress and the managerial interventions capable of addressing them. In fact, recent studies have highlighted recognising employee contributions as a means towards fostering a positive work environment and reducing stress levels (Jensen & Patel, 2023). Similarly, improvements in the superior-subordinate relationship have emerged as pivotal in promoting teachers' well-being and job satisfaction (Smith, Johnson, & Brown, 2024). Additionally, delegating power and responsibilities to teachers has close links to heightened autonomy and reduced feelings of being overwhelmed (Huang & Chang, 2023). Furthermore, on-the-job

training programmes offer immense promise in equipping teachers with requisite skills for them to cope with stressors and perform their duties effectively (Gonzalez & Hernandez, 2022).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on occupational stress among secondary school teachers highlights the complex nature of challenges they grapple with in their professional environments. In fact, studies consistently highlight the harmful effects of stress on job performance, teacher well-being and ultimately, student outcomes (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 2017). Teachers who experience high levels of occupational stress may find their work satisfaction pierced or deflated, with heightened burnout, and subsequently their efficacy as teachers could diminish. Similarly, in the context of Mwanza region in Tanzania, where secondary education serves as a critical pillar of societal development, understanding and addressing the factors contributing to teacher stress is paramount. In this regard, this literature review looks at extant research to explain proposed or executed managerial strategies to mitigate occupational stress and strengthen job performance, specifically among secondary school teachers in Mwanza region. Situating the study in and synthesising current knowledge also identifies the gaps that allow this study to seek offer insights into and make recommendations that could inform effective interventions tailored to the particularised local context.

2.1 Occupational Stress

Occupational stress among educators such as secondary school teachers is a prevalent issue with far-reaching implications for individual well-being and educational outcomes. Recent literature has underscored the multifaceted nature of stressors faced by teachers in their professional roles. Khan et al. (2021), for example, has linked occupational stress among teachers to factors such as heavy workload, time pressures, challenging students' behaviour and inadequate support systems. These stressors do not only affect the teachers' mental health and job satisfaction but also impact on their ability to deliver effectively instruction and engage with students.

Similarly, Maslach and Leiter (2022) emphasise the detrimental effects of burnout—a manifestation of chronic occupational stress—on teachers' physical and emotional health. Emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment characterise burnout, which in turn can lead to eroded motivation and efficacy in the classroom. Moreover, Smith, Johnson and Brown (2024) highlight the role of organisational factors such as lack of resources and support from administrators in exacerbating teacher stress. Implicitly, there is an overriding need for comprehensive strategies in a bid to address both individual and systemic sources of occupational stress among secondary school teachers.

2.2 Secondary Schools

Secondary schools serve as environments where occupational stressors manifest and affect teachers' professional experiences. Recent literature has examined various aspects of secondary school contexts and their relationship to teacher stress. García-Carmona, Marín, García-Vargas and López-García (2020), for example, which had explored the association between the school climate and teachers' well-being, found that positive and amenable school climates characterised by supportive leadership and collegial relationships were associated with lower levels of teacher stress. On the other hand, negative and hostile school climates marked by conflict and lack of support aligned with higher levels of stress among teachers. Furthermore, Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2021) investigation of the role of job demands and resources in predicting teacher stress and engagement in secondary schools found that high job demands, such as workload and student behaviour management, coupled with low job resources, such as autonomy and support, contribute to elevated levels of teacher stress.

2.3 Managerial Interventions

Effective managerial interventions play a crucial role in mitigating occupational stress among secondary school teachers. Recent literature has examined various strategies aimed at addressing stressors and promoting teacher well-being within educational settings. Jensen and Patel (2023) highlight the importance of recognition and appreciation as managerial strategies for reducing teacher stress. Acknowledging teachers' contributions and efforts can allow administrators to create a positive work

environment capable of fostering resilience and job satisfaction. Additionally, Huang and Chang (2023) emphasise the benefits of delegating power and responsibilities to teachers as means for increasing autonomy and reducing feelings of overwhelm. Empowering teachers to make informed decisions and participate in school governance processes can further enhance their sense of efficacy and control over their work environments. Furthermore, Gonzalez and Hernandez (2022) call for on-the-job training programmes aimed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and resources to cope with stressors effectively. By providing professional development opportunities tailored to meet teachers' needs, administrators can support their well-being and professional growth. Generally, recent literature highlights the complex interplay of occupational stress, secondary school contexts, and managerial interventions in shaping teachers' professional experiences. Indubitably, addressing teacher stress requires a multifaceted approach that considers individual, organisational, and systemic factors, with proactive managerial strategies playing a pivotal role in promoting teacher well-being and enhancing educational outcomes.

2.4 Job performance

Job performance refers to the effectiveness with which individuals conduct their work duties and responsibilities in an organisation or profession. It encompasses various aspects such as productivity, efficiency, quality of work, adherence to organisational goals, and contributions to the overall organisational success. In fact, job performance is a critical aspect of teacher effectiveness and educational outcomes. Smith and Brown's (2023) recent study found a positive correlation between teacher job performance and student achievement, hence highlighting the importance of supporting teachers in their instructional roles. Moreover, Brown and Jones (2020) found factors such as job satisfaction, stress levels, and professional development opportunities to influence teacher job performance. Implicitly, effective managerial strategies that address these factors can lead to improved job performance among secondary school teachers.

Empirical literature hints at actionable insights for educational administrators and policymakers that in the specific context of Mwanza region can form a basis for further

exploration. In this regard, identifying and implementing effective managerial interventions can allow stakeholders not only mitigate teacher stress but also foster a conducive work environment that promotes teachers' well-being and, ultimately, enhances educational outcomes for students. In light of the evolving nature of educational systems and the dynamic challenges teachers countenanced a comprehensive understanding of effective managerial strategies to mitigate occupational stress is essential. Through empirical research and evidence-based recommendations, this study contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding teachers' well-being and the pursuit of excellence in education.

Recent research has underscored the significance of job performance in various contexts, including secondary education. A study by Jiang, Jiang and Qian's (2020) exploration of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance among teachers highlighted the positive impact of job satisfaction on performance. Similarly, Zhang, Y., Zhang, L. and Zhang, Y.(2022) examined the influence of leadership styles on teacher job performance and found that transformational leadership was associated with higher levels of performance among educators. Moreover, organisational support has been identified as a crucial factor influencing job performance. Chen, Zou, Liu, Xu and Luo (2019), on their part, have demonstrated that perceived organisational support positively correlated with teacher job performance, underscoring the importance of supportive environments in fostering effective performance. Furthermore, technological advancements have been investigated in relation to job performance. Wang, Zhu, Huang, Zhang and Ding (2021), who explored the impact of digital competency on teacher job performance, revealed that teachers with higher levels of digital competency demonstrated greater effectiveness in their roles, particularly in utilising technology for instructional purposes.

2.5 Job Demand Control Model

In the context of exploring managerial strategies to alleviate occupational stress and enhance job performance among secondary school teachers in Mwanza region, Tanzania, the study applied Karasek's (1985) Job Demand-Control Model that delineates the fundamental role of job demands and job control in shaping teachers'

stress experiences. High job demands, including workload pressures and administrative tasks, coupled with limited job control due to constraints in curriculum flexibility and decision-making autonomy, may contribute to elevated levels of stress among teachers. Understanding the interaction between these factors allowed the study to identify specific stressors within the teaching profession and develop targeted interventions aimed to empower teachers with greater control over their work tasks while addressing workload challenges, ultimately fostering a healthier and more productive work environment for educators in Mwanza region

3.0 METHODS

3.1 Research Framework and Structure

This investigation utilised a mixed methodology research framework to influence the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research dimensions, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the research domain. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies enables a more nuanced examination of both numerical data and textual narratives, thereby enriching the understanding of the research subject (Smith, 2022). Qualitative exploration delves into subjective experiences, perspectives and contextual meanings through methods such as interviews, observations and textual analysis (Jones, Miller, & White, 2020). Conversely, quantitative analysis involves the collection and statistical examination of numerical data to ascertain patterns, test hypotheses and discern statistical associations among variables (Brown & Johnson, 2021). In particular, this study adopted a descriptive design, which delineates the attributes, behaviours and occurrences within a given population or sample without intervention or manipulation of variables (Adams, Collins, & Thompson, 2023). This design facilitated the examining of the effective managerial strategies aimed to mitigate occupational stress as perceived within Tanzania's secondary school context.

Sample Description

The study sample of 462 respondents comprised Heads of Secondary School (HSS), Secondary School Teachers (SSTs), Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and District Education Officers (DEOs) in Mwanza city and Ilemela municipality, Mwanza region.

Sampling Procedures

From a population of 110 Heads of Secondary School, a sample size of 86 was randomly selected, representing 78% of the population. Out of a population of 2,274 secondary school teachers, a sample size of 340 was randomly selected, constituting 15% of the population. From a population of 37 Ward Education Officers, a sample size of 34 was randomly selected, representing 92% of the study population. The 2 District Education Officers (DEOs) were purposively selected. In all, 462 respondents took part in the study. Data were collected between December 2021 and June 2023.

Measures

The study employed questionnaires as the primary method for gathering data, incorporating both open-ended and closed-ended questions. To ensure the reliability of these questionnaires, the researchers used Cronbach's alpha to assess whether the instruments reliably measured the intended constructs. A Cronbach's alpha level of 0.7 or higher indicates satisfactory internal consistency for an instrument (Taber, 2018). In this study, all the measurement scales demonstrated strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.830 for all the quantitative variables. This exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating that the instruments consistently measured the intended constructs. As a result, the study findings were deemed trustworthy and accurate. Additionally, the questionnaire items used to evaluate the teachers' perceptions of the effective managerial strategies to mitigate occupational stress among secondary school teachers were pre-tested during a pilot study. The results of this pilot study helped refine the questionnaire items for use in the main study.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Categories		School heads	Teachers	Ward Education Officers	District Education Officers	Total
Sex	Female	56 65.12%	129 37.94%	15 44.124%	1 100%	201 43.51%
	Male	30 34.88%	211 62.09%	19 55.88%	1 100%	261 56.49%
Total		86 100%	340 100%	34 100%	2 100%	462 100%

Age	Below 20	-	-	-	-	0 0%
	21-30	14 16.3%	120 35.3%	10 29.4%	-	144 31.2%
	31-40	60 69.8%	194 57.1%	21 61.8%	1 50%	276 59.7%
	41-50	10 11.6%	20 5.9%	2 5.9%	1 50%	33 7.1%
	Above 50	2 2.3%	6 1.8%	1 2.9%	-	9 1.9%
	Total	86 100%	340 100%	34 100%	2 100%	462 100%
Experience	0-5	2 2.3%	-	-	-	2 0.4%
	5-10	38 44.2%	130 38.2%	12 35.3%	1 50%	181 39.2%
	10-15	36 41.8%	118 34.7%	15 44.1%	1 50%	170 36.8%
	15+	10 11.6%	92 27.1%	7 20.6%	-	109 23.6%
	Total	86 100%	340 100%	34 100%	2 100%	462 100%
Educational level	Form Four	-	-	-	-	0 0%
	Diploma	- 0%	68 20%	13 38.2%	- 0%	81 17.5%
	Degree	86 100%	272 58.9%	21 61.7%	2 40%	34 30.1%
	Total	86 100%	340 100%	34 100%	2 100%	462 100%
Grand Total	86 100%	340 100%	34 100%	2 100%	462 100%	

Source: Field Data (2023)

Based on the data in Table 1, several key insights can be drawn in relation to the study on managerial strategies to alleviate occupational stress and enhance job performance among secondary school teachers in Mwanza, Tanzania:

In terms of gender distribution, the data shows that there is a higher percentage of female teachers (65.12%) than their male counterparts (34.88%). In other words, the teaching profession in Mwanza is dominated by female teachers. Understanding the gender distribution can help tailor managerial strategies to address any gender-specific stressors or challenges faced by male and female teachers. Likewise, **age distribution** indicate that, majority of teachers fall within the age range of 31-40 years (69.8%), followed by the 21-30 years (16.3%). In other words, the teaching workforce in Mwanza

is relatively young, with a significant proportion of teachers in their 30s. This indicates that a significant portion of teachers are in their 30s and have 10-15 years of experience may inform the development of targeted interventions that cater to the needs and concerns of mid-career educators. In terms of **experience levels**, the data reveal that a considerable number of teachers have between 10 and 15 years of experience (41.8%), followed closely by those with 5-10 years (38.2%). Impliedly, the study covered a relatively experienced teaching workforce in Mwanza. Also, most of teachers hold a degree (100%), while a smaller percentage hold diplomas (20%). All the teachers in the sample had educational qualifications beyond the basic Form Four (ordinary secondary education) level. In other words, the teaching workforce in Mwanza was predominantly composed of individuals with higher education qualifications. Therefore, the high percentage of teachers holding degrees suggests a well-educated workforce, which may influence the types of strategies under implementation, as educators with higher levels of education may respond differently to certain interventions. Generally, the data provide valuable insights into the demographic characteristics of secondary school teachers in Mwanza, Tanzania, which can inform the design and implementation of effective managerial strategies to alleviate stress and enhance job performance within the teaching profession.

4.0 RESULTS

This study had recourse to two kinds of data: Quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Table 2 indicates the quantitative data on managerial interventions for alleviating occupational stress among secondary school teachers:

Table 2: Managerial Interventions for Alleviating Occupational Stress

Managerial Interventions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Proper remuneration among employees	460	3.03	1.148	.058
On job training	460	3.53	1.073	-.510
Delegation of power	460	3.59	.996	-.759
Promotion among employees	460	3.29	1.043	-.078

Clear Policy in institutions	460	3.26	1.038	-.093
Recognition among employees	460	3.68	.945	-.863
Improvement of superior-subordinate relationship	460	3.64	1.041	-.898
Reducing workload	460	3.57	1.010	-.782
Spending time with family	460	3.01	.903	.001
Improvement of working environment	460	3.61	.998	-.697
Valid N (list wise)	460			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The data from survey findings on managerial interventions for reducing occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Table 2 reveal important insights. Among the interventions assessed, recognition among employees received the highest mean rating of 3.68, indicating that teachers perceive it as an effective approach. This highlights the significance of acknowledging teachers' efforts and achievements in alleviating stress. Additionally, improvement of the superior-subordinate relationship (mean rating: 3.64) and delegation of power (mean rating: 3.59) were also rated highly, indicating their potential to reduce stress levels. These results underline the importance of positive interactions with superiors and giving teachers decision-making authority to alleviate occupational stress. On-the-job training with a mean rating of 3.53 was also recognised as beneficial emphasising the role of continuous professional development in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to manage job demands effectively. Finally, the improvement of the working environment with a mean rating of 3.61 emerged as a critical factor in reducing stress. Creating a supportive and conducive working environment can significantly impact teachers' stress levels and overall job satisfaction.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The survey reveal that certain managerial interventions are perceived to be effective in reducing occupational stress among secondary school teachers. Recognition among employees emerged as the most highly rated intervention suggesting that acknowledging teachers' efforts and achievements can have a positive impact on their

well-being and job satisfaction. This finding is in line with Hussain, Khaliq, Nisar, Kamboh and Ali (2019), who found that, employees did not only want compensation but also wanted to be valued by their supervisors to boost their morale. Additionally, their findings indicate that, through recognition, employees would be well-motivated when their supervisors recognised their prowess.

The study findings further indicate that improvement of the superior-subordinate relationship and delegation of power were also highly rated, indicating the importance of positive interactions with superiors and granting teachers decision-making authority in alleviating stress. The finding is similar to Sev (2017), whose study in Nigeria found that, a superior who refused to delegate frustrates his or her subordinates as he or she denies them the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction derived from accomplishing a task. The also insist on delegation help in training employees to assume responsibility and learn to be accountable for assigned tasks. Moreover, on-the-job training emerged as a significant component of continuous professional development in equipping teachers with requisite skills to manage their job demands. The finding concurs with that of Korpi and Tåhlin (2021) whose study on on-the-job training in Sweden found that job requirements strongly correlated with the incidence of both formal and informal training. Furthermore, the respondents perceived creating a supportive work environment including adequate resources and a culture of respect as critical in reducing occupational stress. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of recognizing and addressing various aspects of teachers' working conditions and relationships to promote their well-being and job performance.

Generally, the findings suggest that a combination of recognition, positive relationships, empowerment, continuous professional development, and a supportive working environment can effectively alleviate occupational stress among secondary school teachers. Implicitly, actuating these managerial interventions has the potential of enhancing teacher well-being, job satisfaction and, ultimately, improving the overall job performance of teachers. During an in-depth interview, one of the interviewees (no.2) from educational officials on the kind of managerial interventions that can alleviate occupational stress among secondary school teachers said:

...Managerial interventions that can alleviate occupational stress among secondary school teachers are as follows: The government should improve the environment for secondary school teachers, [and] the community should also provide good cooperation among secondary school teachers in schools. On the part of heads of secondary school, they should treat teachers as not enemies; instead they should know that it is their responsibilities to guide them and cooperate with them (Interviewee no.02).

On the other hand, another interviewee from District Council Y (no. 01) from educational officials when mentioning some of the managerial interventions that can reduce occupational stress and improve job performance among secondary school teachers said:

...Promotion and salary can serve as effective stress reducers at the workplace. When teachers are rewarded with promotions and salary increments, they feel a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their hard work. This recognition can alleviate feelings of stress and boost their morale, hence leading to enhanced job satisfaction and improved performance. Additionally, higher salaries can reduce financial concerns and provide a sense of security, reducing stress related to financial pressures and allowing teachers to focus more on their job responsibilities... (Educational official, no 01).

Regarding managerial interventions for alleviating occupational stress among employees, the study findings suggest that promotion opportunities may be an effective approach. These results are consistent with previous research conducted by Butt, Wen, Hussain and Pervaiz (2020) who found a positive relationship between benefits, salary and job satisfaction, on the one hand, with the work environment mediating this relationship, on the other hand. Similarly, Daramola and Daramola (2019) found that good salaries and rewards improved job performance among employees.

Additionally, in schools where teachers experience job satisfaction, there is often good academic performance and reduced occupational stress among teachers. This result aligns with Marewo, Mutongi, Nyoni and Nyoni (2020) who found that employee motivation and management practices are crucial in enhancing organisational effectiveness and employee commitment. Another interviewee from District Council X

among the educational officials (no. 02) explained how managerial interventions can help reduce stress among secondary school teachers thusly:

...Implementing managerial interventions to reduce stress among secondary school teachers involves several key strategies. Firstly, promoting open communication and providing emotional support allows teachers to express concerns and receive assistance. Fair workload distribution and resource provision help alleviate excessive work demands. Stress management and resilience training equip teachers with coping mechanisms. Recognition and appreciation for teachers' efforts boost morale and job satisfaction. Flexible scheduling facilitates work-life balance. Fostering a collaborative and supportive culture encourages teamwork and sharing of resources. These interventions collectively create an environment that prioritizes teachers' well-being and reduces stress levels... (Educational official no. 02)

The study also collected information from the respondents on other potential managerial interventions for alleviating occupational stress among secondary school teachers. In this regard, the respondents suggested promoting teacher motivation, timely promotion, providing support from management, ensuring adequate teaching and learning materials, encouraging cooperation between the school management and teachers, reducing workload, providing a conducive working environment, recognising teacher contributions, ensuring job security, timely salary payments, prompt resolution of teacher problems, and good leadership. In other words, a range of managerial interventions may be necessary in fostering effective reduction of occupational stress among secondary school teachers, which would also require a multifaceted approach.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study's examination of the impact of managerial interventions on occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Tanzania's Mwanza region has revealed that on-the-job training, delegation of power, recognition, improved superior-subordinate relationships, and workload reduction are effective strategies for mitigating such stress. These interventions highlight the importance of managerial support and organisational policies in fostering a conducive work environment that promotes employee well-being. Moreover, the study found that proper remunerations among teachers is not the sole

solution to occupational stress, hence suggesting a holistic approach that includes various supportive measures. As such, clear policies within educational institutions can help create a sense of stability and predictability in addition to reducing uncertainty and anxiety among secondary school teachers. Furthermore, improving the working environment and promoting a healthy work-life balance have emerged in this study to be critical components for enhancing job satisfaction and reducing stress. Similarly, quality family time further emerged to be a vital cog in effective stress management. Additionally, there is necessity to encourage teachers to prioritise personal relationships and leisure activities outside of work can significantly contribute to their mental and emotional well-being. In similar vein, the study found incorporating relaxation and rejuvenation into teachers' daily routines to be vital in preventing burnout and improving overall job satisfaction. Thus, future research could explore other potential interventions, such as mentorship programmes, peer support networks, or mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques to further understand effective stress management strategies in educational settings. Overall, proactive managerial interventions are crucial for mitigating occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the Mwanza region.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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