

# The Study on Job Related Stress of the Senior Secondary Teachers

\*Shihana Hussain, RDC Niroshinie

Master of Education Faculty of Education, University of Colombo Colombo Sri Lanka

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the job-related stress among 201 senior secondary teachers from private and international schools in the Colombo Educational Zone, Colombo District in Sri Lanka, recognizing the critical role of teachers in shaping student outcomes and the broader educational environment. This research was guided by the objective to identify the levels of job-related stress experienced by teachers. A quantitative approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data analyzed through descriptive statistics, ANOVA, one-sample t-test, and regression with qualitative insights driven from unstructured interviews and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the majority of teachers experienced moderate stress, with a significant proportion reporting high stress levels. Yet, factors related to relaxation, energy, and emotional balance were notably weaker. It suggests that stress destroys the strength of a person even when professional commitment continues. Qualitative themes reinforced these results by illustrating how stress affects teachers' personal life. It also highlights protective factors such as administrative support and professional flexibility. The study concludes that job-related stress is both statistically measurable and experientially evident in teachers' lives. Finally, it is recommended that schools provide teachers with further independence in their jobs and implement stress reduction initiatives. Counseling services should be made available, workload should be balanced, and teachers' accomplishments should be acknowledged. Additionally, peer support networks must be reinforced, and regular monitoring must be carried out. These findings show that systematic action at the school level is urgently needed to protect teachers.

**Keywords:** Stress, Job Related Stress, Senior Secondary teachers

## INTRODUCTION

The job-related stress of senior secondary teachers is often reported and personally experienced. Stress from the job often leads to mental exhaustion, and this is especially true in teaching, which many people consider one of the most fulfilling yet challenging occupations. Teachers have a considerable impact on the development of future generations, students' social and emotional growth, and intellectual advancement. However, the complexity of educational institutions, changing curriculum requirements, administrative duties, and social expectations have all contributed to a marked increase in the amount of job stress that teachers face globally.

Teaching is a great profession that requires teachers to handle both problems and obligations. The only occupation that develops young people's aptitude for future careers is teaching (Ashok & Rajendran, 2019). A person's attitude towards their work is reflected in their personal measure of job satisfaction. It is affected by numerous factors, such as job stability, pay, working conditions, opportunities for professional development, and acknowledgement. It can happen Not only for teachers but also for non-academic staffs. Both academic (teachers) and non-academic (librarian, lab assistant etc...) are included in educational institutions (Singh & Gautam, 2024). Senior secondary teachers are crucial in influencing students' academic and personal growth during a crucial stage of their lives in the ever-changing field of education (Poonam, 2024). However, these teachers are frequently under huge stress from the growing demands of curriculum delivery, administrative duties, student management, and performance expectations. This study aims to investigate the complex relationships between senior secondary teachers' mental health and stress related to their jobs. The study is designed to provide insights into how occupational stress affects teachers' psychological well-being and general efficacy in the classroom by investigating its causes, severity, and effects. Creating supportive tactics and

regulations that encourage a more sustainable, healthy learning environment requires an understanding of these processes.

When schools were unexpectedly closed at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, many schools started distance learning. With this, many teachers faced more stressors. These stressors included an overwhelming workload, barriers to accessing online learning, low motivation, low student and family participation, technological difficulties, and a lack of organizational preparedness. Especially in developing countries, there is a lack of a structured support mechanism to address teacher wellbeing (Cavallari et al., 2024). "The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the education system in Sri Lanka, similar to many countries in the world" (Ilangarathna et al., 2022). However, present-day school teachers have to play multiple roles in their day-to-day work with children, colleagues and administrators. Therefore, teaching is now considered as stressful profession, resulting in a growing concern among researchers about teachers' mental health during the last few decades (De Silva, 2015).

Teaching is an interesting job yet a challenging profession. Teacher burnout can easily occur due to long hours and a high workload. Teachers run the risk of being overworked and neglecting their own physical and mental health requirements if they do not receive the right support (Jomuad et al., 2021). Teaching has been increasingly difficult over the past two decades due to increased paperwork, bureaucracy, and rowdy students. Teaching students who lack motivation, maintaining classroom discipline, dealing with general time pressures and workload demands, being exposed to a lot of change, being evaluated by others, having difficult relationships with colleagues, administration, and management, being exposed to generally poor working conditions, unsatisfactory working conditions, the ambiguity of the teacher's role, poor relationships with colleagues, students, administrators, and job insecurity are just a few of the many things that teachers think about. Teachers deal with a lot of stress (Jomuad et al., 2021).

Senior secondary teachers' mental health has become a concern due to their huge administrative duties, lengthy teaching hours, difficulties in managing the classroom, problems with student discipline, and high performance standards. This study aims to address these issues by investigating the level of work-related stress experienced by senior secondary teachers in the Colombo Education Zone.

This is important because there is an impact of geographical context and social context have a strong impact on teachers' mental health. Teachers seem to experience frequent job-related stress, burnout, and depressive symptoms almost universally. We found minor variations between the teaching setting (e.g., school features, such as urbanity) and teacher characteristics (Steiner & Woo, 2021).

It is an urgent necessity to understand the specific challenges faced by senior secondary teachers in Sri Lanka, which provide the justification for this study. In addition to being crucial for their personal health and professional satisfaction, their mental health directly affects students' results and the standard of education as a whole. Even while these problems are becoming more widespread and acknowledged, there is still a lack of empirical, locally focused research that may guide focused responses and governmental changes.

This chapter sets the base for the study by providing a detailed overview of the research context and its core components. The chapter starts with an investigation into the background of the problem and continues with an introduction to the specific problem, the significance of the study, the research objective, and limitation and the delimitations.

## Background of the problem

The availability and effective usage of both human and non-human resources are crucial to any organization's success. The institution's ability to function successfully depends heavily on its human resources. Job participation is a component that contributes to the success of human resources (Kumar, 2018). Further job involvement is related to so many other factors, like organizational climate, internal motivation, and above all, the mental health of personnel working in the organization. Therefore, the researcher was compelled to identify the stress level of senior secondary school teachers. Teachers have a significant impact on students' lives by teaching, caring for, and helping them reach their objectives. Teaching is one of the most stressful professions

in the world, despite the common misconception in Sri Lanka that it is a routine and career with less stress (Wickramasinghe et al., 2022). Being a senior secondary school teacher requires high psychological, emotional, and academic engagement. Similarly, the capacity to confront and balance life's realities is a sign of mental health. People with good mental health do not exaggerate or undervalue their skills. They appreciate others and readily accept their own dignity (Ashok & Rajendran, 2019). At this point, teachers are in charge of preparing their students for important academic turning points like the General Certificate Exam and career decisions, in addition to teaching challenging material. Teachers are under a great deal of strain from this dual duty, which frequently results in long-term stress and mental exhaustion. Teaching is one of the most emotionally demanding occupations because of the demands placed on teachers by parents, students, and school administrators (Corrente et al., 2022).

In 2007, the prevalence of burnout, a long-term effect of work-related stress, was 11.56% among primary teachers in Sri Lanka's Southern Province (Bhui, P. K., 2016, as cited in Wickramasinghe et al., 2022). "it has been indicated here that Sri Lanka also has no deviation about occupational stress among teachers. It reveals that in the Sri Lankan Education system, teachers face significant workload challenges, including large class sizes, a lack of resources, and the need to cover multiple subjects and grade levels. These factors contribute to teacher burnout, job classification, and potentially impact the quality of education" (Google Search, n.d.).

This study aims to include the teachers who work in private schools and International schools. According to Liyanage and Etsuyo Arai (2014) "Thus there are several types of schools in Sri Lanka: public (national, provincial, private, and semi-government or assisted schools) and private (autonomous schools and International schools under BOI). The teaching/study medium of language can be Sinhala, Tamil, or English. However, 1.4% students are studying in English, and about one third is in the western province (Liyanage & A, Etsuyo, 2014). Generally, teachers work from 7.30 am to 1.30 pm in Sri Lanka, but it can differ in different schools. Hence, teaching has been regarded as one of the most stressful professions particularly at the senior secondary school level (Travers, 2017). Their mental health may be severely impacted by these stressors, which may result in problems including anxiety, sadness, and burnout. Many studies have demonstrated the close relationship between teachers' mental health and stress at work. For example, a study conducted in 2019 by Garcia-Carmona, Marin, and Aguayo discovered a direct correlation between high occupational stress levels and negative mental health effects, such as increased anxiety and depression. The sudden shift of online education, along with limited support and resources, has highlighted stress levels among teachers (Singh & Gautam, 2024). With increasing proof that the excessive workload, large class sizes, and administrative responsibilities, and limited resources contribute to high levels of occupational strain; teacher stress has emerged as a major concern in the education system around the world. This issue is particularly significant in Sri Lanka, where teachers play a critical role in preparing students for important national exams like GCE O/L. However, teachers often face challenges like insufficient teaching resources, pressure to meet performance and targets, and the responsibility of handling multiple subject areas. A study conducted in Colombo District found that the occupational stress among senior secondary teachers was widespread and had significant implications for their well-being and instructional performance (Wickramasinghe et al., 2022).

According to Wickramasinghe et al. (2022), the teacher stress inventory for Sri Lankan teachers was validated, and it confirmed that stress is a significant public health concern that calls for systematic assessment and intervention. More recently, studies have shown that government school teachers' psychological distress has increased due to Sri Lanka's extended economic crisis, connecting financial strains to an increase in mental health issues (Senevirathne et al., 2025). These results are supported by international research, which demonstrates that teacher stress is strongly linked to burnout, lower work satisfaction, and decreased teaching efficacy (Garcia Carmona, Marin, & Aguayo, 2019). The post-pandemic setting has further increased these demands, with the move to online learning, technical hurdles, and heightened expectations from parents and institutions adding new layers of stress (Singh & Gautam, 2024). These factors highlight the critical necessity to conduct a thorough investigation of teacher stress levels since they directly impact student learning results and the general quality of education, in addition to having an impact on teachers' welfare. Hence, there is an urgent need for effective interventions and a support system to help teachers manage their stress levels.

## Introduction to the problem

Teaching is a great profession that requires teachers to handle both problems and obligations and it is the only occupation that develops young people's aptitude for future careers is teaching (Ashok & Rajendran, 2019). A person's attitude towards their work is reflected in their personal measure of job satisfaction. Numerous factors impact it, such as job stability, pay, working conditions, opportunities for professional development, and acknowledgement. Both academic (teachers) and non-academic (librarian, lab assistant, etc...) are included in educational institutions (Singh & Gautam, 2024). Senior secondary teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' academic and personal growth during an important stage of their lives, especially within in the ever-changing field of education (Poonam, 2024). However, these teachers are frequently under huge stress from the growing demands of curriculum delivery, administrative duties, student management, and performance expectations. This study aims to investigate the complex relationships between senior secondary teachers' mental health and stress related to their jobs. Creating supportive tactics and regulations that encourage a more sustainable, healthy learning environment requires an understanding of these processes.

Teachers influence all aspects of students' growth and achievement, making the most significant school-based factor in student success. Teachers not only oversee academic education but also foster an atmosphere where students can communicate, work together, and form deep connections (Jones et al., 2021). But according to research, teaching is one of the worst occupations for psychological health, physical health, and job satisfaction, which contributes to high turnover rates. Teaching can be categorized as an occupation with a high work-related stress (Naghieh et al., 2015). Teaching is sometimes considered one of the most stressful jobs, comparatively. Many duties, such as high standards, and frequent interactions with children, parents, and administrators, are some of the reasons for this. One of the main challenges faced by senior secondary teachers is managing teenage students during a crucial academic period, getting them ready for tests, and maintaining a balance between teaching and administrative responsibilities. Teachers in Sri Lanka face a high level of stress due to heavy workloads, students' behavioral issues, and the pressure to achieve academic targets (Wickramasinghe et al., 2022). Among other things, meeting students' holistic needs adds to the rigorous and emotionally taxing character of teaching in the modern day (Braun et al., 2020). Their mental health may be severely impacted by these stresses, and may affect their personal and professional lives. While previous research has explored job stress, limited attention has been given to senior secondary teachers who handle grades 10 and 11 classes. External issues, such as a sense of unfairness brought on by secondary school teachers' often low pay will have an impact on teachers' psychology (Ji et al., 2021). Hence, one of the most emotionally taxing occupations, teaching, affects both teachers' personal life and their effectiveness at work (Oliveira et al., 2021). This study mainly aims to fill a gap in understanding the job stress of senior secondary teachers.

The findings can provide valuable insights for the school administrators to implement targeted interventions that promote a sustainable teaching environment. According to recent studies, teachers commonly suffer from emotional tiredness, empathy fatigue, and burnout as a result of the collective demands of their jobs, highlighting the widespread nature of stress in the educational environment (Mullen et al., 2017). Furthermore, the gap between teachers' education and the realities of their workplaces might make them feel even more frustrated and powerless. Teachers frequently complain that professional training in educating Social and Emotional Learning does not sufficiently prepare them to handle the administrative and emotional difficulties they encounter daily (Mullen et al., 2017). There are chances that educational systems can be upset, which can result in lower job satisfaction and more turnovers because of this difference.

Further, teachers have an influence on every aspect of a student's growth and accomplishment, making them the most significant school-based determinant in students' success. Teachers focus on not only providing academic education but also fostering an atmosphere where students can communicate, work together, and form deep connections (Jones & Ali, 2021). Further, teachers also suffer in another type of distress when they reported having distress on one dimension, such as frequent job-related stress, depressive symptoms, burnout, or coping with their job-related stress (Steiner & Woo, 2021). It is an important and urgent necessity to look into and understand the specific challenges impacting senior secondary teachers in Sri Lanka.

This study aims to provide evidence-based suggestions to improve the teacher support system, encourage mental health, and eventually strengthen the probability of the teaching profession by identifying the main causes of stress and the level of stress. The following discussion is the significance of the study.

### **Significance of the study**

A senior secondary school teacher's role is an extremely difficult task. These teachers are crucial in supporting students' during an important stage of their academic and emotional development. However, this level of accountability frequently exposes teachers to several stresses, such as demands from the curriculum, expectations for students' achievement, administrative responsibilities, and a lack of institutional support. Long-term exposure to these stressors can result in mental health decline, burnout, emotional tiredness, and decreased job satisfaction (Hossain & Sultana, 2022). As explained above, the situation in international schools and private schools is a unique environment with specific challenges (Wigford & Higgins, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to explore the views regarding the stress levels of those who work within these settings and it is also important because it examines complex nature of the stress that teachers face at work and shows how it affects their mental health.

This study intends to bridge the gap between occupational stress and educational leadership by highlighting the stress factors affecting senior secondary teachers. Through evidence-based findings and international comparisons, it seeks to guide stakeholders in creating an educational ecosystem where stress level is reduced, thereby strengthening the quality of education and the overall health of the teaching profession.

### **Research Objectives**

Following are the specific objectives of this study.

1. Identify the Job related stress level of senior secondary teachers.
2. Identify the organizational factors contributing to job related stress among senior secondary teachers.

### **Limitation of the study**

There are some limitations to this study, and, it is very important to acknowledge them to ensure a clear understanding of the findings. The results have a clear geographical limitation, as the population is composed exclusively of senior secondary teachers from international and private schools within the Colombo educational zone in Sri Lanka. Therefore the findings are specific to this particular group and cannot be generalized to the broader population of teachers in Sri Lanka or in other contexts. Therefore, additional, more diverse studies are needed to determine if these findings hold for a larger teacher population.

The next limitation is data collection. This study was conducted using a cross-sectional study method, and a certain period was chosen to gather the data. This methodology can only provide a picture of the current situation, and it does not account for changes over a longer period, such as many years or one full academic year.

The other limitation in this study is the analysis and future research. The cross-sectional design of this study is a major drawback, as it limits the ability to draw conclusions about the link between cause and effect. The data can't adequately explain the long-term processes that result in problems like teacher burnout since it just records a single instant in time.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The review of literature for this study is carried out with sub topics as follows.

1. Job related stress in teaching,

## 2. Higher levels of job-related stress in senior secondary teachers

### Job-related stress in teaching

Teaching is a very demanding job, as evidenced by the numerous studies that show how common work-related stress is among teachers (Mishra, 2021). Their psychological health may be severely impacted by this ongoing stress, which may also make it more difficult for them to function well in the classroom (Rajesh et al., 2022; Antony & Girija, 2025). According to (Maqsood et al., 2024), these demands include heightened expectations, performance pressures, and a variety of stressors that characterize the modern workplace. Teachers' mental health is frequently deteriorated as a result of this extreme strain, which worsens disorders like anxiety and burnout (Maqsood et al., 2024).

Around 88% of teachers worldwide report feeling stressed out at work. It is a problem that is frequently made worse by a misalignment between the resources that are available and the demands of their jobs (Eze et al., 2023). Because of their complexity, these stresses require a thorough knowledge of their causes and effects, especially in the senior secondary school sector, where academic expectations are increasing day by day (Sharma & Chand, 2025). To illustrate, many studies show that the main reasons for stress among secondary school teachers are things like workload, administrative leadership, and overall working circumstances (Rahim & Mahmud, 2024). To reduce job overload and stress, systematic interventions are necessary to address the considerable stressors associated with non-teaching obligations, such as administrative tasks and adjusting to new technology (Shukri & Taha, 2024). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that demographic factors, including gender, marital status, and institutional affiliations, affect teachers' perception of stress and coping strategies, highlighting the necessity of classy methods to teacher support (Maqsood et al., 2024).

According to Schonfield et al (2017), stress is frequently the first condition that may lead teachers to experience a mental health problem. Burnout and work stress are expressively associated with negative psychological outcomes (Ferguson et al., 2022).

The emphasis now moves from what occurs to why and how these variables interact once the overwhelming empirical evidence supporting the higher levels of job-related stress in senior secondary teachers has been established. The research needs a conceptual framework to organize and comprehend the complicated interaction between employment conditions and teacher psychology. As a result, the following section focuses on creating the Theoretical Framework using well-known models like the Job Demands – Resources (JD-R) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to identify the precise mechanisms, such as the decline in professional independence and self-efficacy, which indicate the high stress levels that have been observed and directly connect them to poor mental health.

### Higher levels of job-related stress in senior secondary teachers

Teachers in senior secondary frequently experience high levels of job-related stress, which significantly impacts their mental well-being. Some factors, such as heavy workloads, challenging students' behaviors, and insufficient administrative support, contribute to this stress (Jimenez, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened these issues, with teachers facing the additional challenges of online teaching and hybrid teaching models (Robinson et al., 2022). This stress can lead to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and burnout, affecting both their professional performance and personal lives. This work situation reduces teachers' performance and keeps them from teaching their full potential. Because of the heavy workload, actual teaching tasks are often pushed aside by the many other responsibilities and roles teachers have to handle (David et al, 2019). Addressing these stressors through targeted interventions and support systems is essential for improving the mental well-being of teachers and ensuring a positive educational environment. These findings highlight the need for targeted intervention to reduce stress and enhance the mental well-being of senior secondary teachers, ultimately contributing to a more positive educational environment and to target high performance for both teachers and students. It is commonly known that a significant frequency of work-related stress exists in the teaching profession (Leung et al., 2009). Addressing the holistic needs of students, among other factors, contributes to the stressful and emotionally demanding nature of teaching today (Greenberg et al., 2016).

The challenging aspects of the teaching profession, especially at the secondary level, frequently result in a high level of stress. It is also attributed to increasing responsibilities, changing teaching methods, and greater administrative demands Maqsood et al., 2024). Secondary school teachers often experience greater stress from various factors, in comparison to primary school teachers (Kavita & Hassan, 2018) (Rahim & Mahmud, 2024).

This gap is additionally complicated by the belief among certain secondary teachers that their responsibilities include not only teaching but also considerable non-instructional tasks, like administrative work and technology integration, which significantly add to their overall stress (Shukri & Taha, 2024). Although certain studies suggest that primary school teachers might encounter more stress because of the significant support needed by younger students, other research opposes this view, emphasizing the distinct pressures secondary teachers face, particularly in subjects viewed as challenging, like mathematics (Antony & Girija, 2025) (Tsubono & Mitoku, 2023).

Teachers' occupational stress is, in fact, greatly increased by their time commitment to non-core educational activities, such as administrative and clerical duties. Some studies have revealed that the burden, which teachers have is more than twice as high as the average for other professions (Tsubono & Mitoku, 2023). Furthermore, the increased general stress levels seen in secondary teachers are also significantly influenced by a variety of work-related responsibilities and financial difficulties (Tsubono & Mitoku, 2023). As noted in the literature review, job-related stress is a widespread issue. Globally about 88% of teachers reported experiencing occupational stress. This stress often appears as worry and poor coping skills (Eze et al., 2023); (Rajesh et al., 2022). This indicates that teacher stress is a significant global issue.

In conclusion, senior secondary teachers' increased job-related stress levels represent a significant problem having broad effects. In addition to having an impact on teachers' mental health and professional happiness, administrative responsibilities, long teaching hours, classroom management, and performance expectations all have an impact on student results and the general standard of education. Therefore, it is vital that this issue be addressed since lowering teacher stress would lead to healthier, more productive teachers and, eventually, a stronger educational system overall.

Table 1 Social Cognitive Theory vs. Job Stress

	Component	Description/Variable	Example in Teacher Study
I	Environmental Influences	The external social and physical context.	Job Stress (Workload, deadlines, student behavior, lack of resources). Social Support (from colleagues, administration, family).
		↑	↓
II	Behavioral Factors	The teacher's actions, performance, and coping strategies.	Coping Behaviors (Active problem-solving, avoidance, seeking help). Work Performance (Job satisfaction, engagement).
		↑	↓
III	Personal/Cognitive Factors	Internal factors like beliefs, expectations, and emotional states.	Self-Efficacy (Belief in one's ability to manage class/stress). Mental Well-being (Emotional health, anxiety, depression). Cognitive & Emotional Aspects.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Senior secondary teachers' job-related stress and mental health are best studied using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach. This approach is especially well-suited for this kind of research because of its strengths in measuring and correlating certain variables and giving a snapshot of the present situation, even if it

has limits in showing connections and generalizing to a larger population. Additionally, quantitative methods are thought to be structured, objective, and highly valid and reliable (Schwarz et al., 2023).

A cross-sectional survey provides a valuable insight into the present situation of a particular, well-defined group, despite its limitations in generalization. This method works well for evaluating the immediate well-being of a specific group, such as teachers in a given school district or area, in research on senior secondary teachers. This is very helpful for guiding teachers in a particular area.

For instance, 70% of senior secondary teachers in a certain school district may report a significant level of stress, according to research conducted there. This conclusion gives the district's management vital information to support and execute certain assistance programs, even if it cannot be applied to all teachers in the nation. This method was utilized in a research by Kutsyuruba et al. (2015) published in the Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy to pinpoint the main causes of stress among educators in a specific area, showing that a localized survey may nevertheless produce significant and useful findings.

Therefore, this study employed a quantitative survey design approach in cooperative triangulation to provide a comprehensive understanding of job-related stress and mental well-being of senior secondary teachers. Its primary goal was to determine the influence of teachers' stress levels on mental wellness. To analyze and understand the connection between teachers' stress levels and mental health, this study employed a quantitative research design. This quantitative study used a virtual focus group to gather teacher perceptions of the impact of work and network demands on their stress. The inclusion criteria for participation included: a senior secondary teacher who currently teaches in private schools or International schools. This methodology is especially well-suited for educational research because numerical measurements are necessary for complex human experiences, such as emotional strain and coping methods, which can be quantified. The study intends to capture the prevalence of stress-related issues as well as the complex personal experiences of teachers by combining survey data with in-depth interviews. This will increase the validity and application of the findings (Zhou et al., 2023). Standardized measures of stress levels will be used in the study's quantitative phase, and unstructured interviews will be used in the qualitative phase to examine teachers' actual experiences.

## **Population and Sample**

The population of this study is chosen from senior secondary teachers of private schools and international schools in Sri Lanka.

This group was selected for several reasons, such as, in addition to handling demanding workloads, administrative duties, and a variety of classroom obstacles, they play a crucial role in preparing students for national exams and further education. Senior secondary teachers in Sri Lanka are a ideal group to study job-related stress, as they frequently experience high level of stress due to demanding curricula, test pressure, and limited resources.

The targeted population for this study is senior secondary teachers of private schools and international schools who teach the local syllabus in the Colombo Educational Zone. The list of private schools has been collected from the Zonal Office, and the list of International schools has been collected from the Divisional Office database. Thereby, the total target population is 410 teachers from 27 schools. The sample size is determined according to Morgan's Table and, it is approximately 201. This representative sample ensures a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of about 5%. Further, the random sample method was used to pick 201 teachers in the target group. In this method, every teacher in the target group has an equal chance of getting chosen. Categories like gender, age and years of experience were not taken into consideration. This helped in obtaining a sample that is representative of the entire target population, reducing selection bias.

Table 2      Type of Schools

Sample	size
International School	17

Private School	10
Total	27

Table 3 Sample Size of Teachers in Selected School

Sample	size
International School	120
Private School	81
Total	201

### Data Collection Instruments

In this particular study, the researcher developed an instrument to measure the stress level of teachers and examine its impact on their mental health. The job stress scale employed in this study was created especially to evaluate senior secondary school teachers' occupational stress levels and causes. The scale was created and validated by several methodical steps.

The questionnaires were piloted with ten teachers (all currently employed within an international school and in the senior secondary). All questionnaire items consisted of a five-point rating scale, from 1 (negative response) to 5 (positive response), and based on the feedback received, amendments were made as appropriate to ensure the effectiveness of the measure in supporting the collection of data. These were minor changes to wording to assist clarity or to the response format. Further, the content faced validity was established by a professional, qualified counselor. Initially, a pilot interview was conducted with two teachers who are also currently employed within the sector. Again, amendments were minimal, and so the data collected were included in the final analysis.

#### ;The Data Collecting Instruments and Administration.

An Online survey platform was used to distribute the survey and collect responses. In July 2025, the questionnaire was sent electronically to the respective teachers in private schools and International schools in the Colombo Educational Zone. Responses were received up to September 2025, when the survey was closed; 206 forms were returned.

Similar to the questionnaire, the interview also comprises 05 questions that investigate the diverse needs of teachers in senior secondary. The interview was used to gain more in-depth information about what teachers' expectation on reducing their job stress level. After the material was transcribed, it was coded and examined to identify the themes.

Since the scale was initially created in English medium and the target population was also in English medium, the original English Items were utilized without any linguistic changes. The clarity and relevance of the items were confirmed by a pilot test conducted with a small group of teachers (10). Before full-scale deployment, the test's internal consistency and reliability was determined to be satisfactory.

### Research Ethics

The following ethical considerations were measured during this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, procedure, risks, and benefits. Participation in the study was confirmed to be voluntary, and privacy of all the participants was assured. No personal information was disclosed without explicit consent, and data remained confidential. Furthermore, this study was designed to minimize any psychological distress and mental health concerns, ensuring that no harm would come to the participants. Study does not cause any harm to participants. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any

negative consequences. The approval for this study was obtained from the review committee by presenting the proposal beforehand.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Identify the Job-Related Stress Level of Senior Secondary Teachers.

The objective focuses on evaluating the overall feelings of stress and emotional symptoms that may indicate a high stress level. The table below directly assesses it. This table presents a statistical view of seven items assessing work-related stress among 201 participants.

Table 4 Mean SD and Variance Computed According to Job Related Stress of the Teachers

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation(SD)	Variance
[I feel overwhelmed by my workload]	201	3.14	.994	.988
[I feel stressed by the increased number of meetings at school]	201	3.33	1.219	1.487
[I feel pressured to meet the academic standards]	201	2.55	1.038	1.078
[I feel stressed because of the increased administrative work]	201	3.41	1.178	1.389
[I feel that I am over-worked]	201	3.31	1.150	1.322
[I feel that my work drains so much of my energy that it has a negative impact on my private life]	201	3.12	1.118	1.249
[I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day]	201	3.18	1.153	1.330
Valid N (list wise)	201			

According to the descriptive statistics, senior secondary teachers often bear a modest amount of stress at work. On a probable 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores of each of the seven variables examined range from 2.55 to 3.41, indicating that stress is present but not in an excessive degree. The statement “I feel stressed because of the increased administrative work” had the highest mean score of 3.41. It suggests that administrative duties are the main cause of stress for educators. This is closely followed by feelings of overwork (3.31) and tension from the increasing number of meetings (mean = 3.33), all of which indicate pressures related to the workload.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score, 2.55 for “I feel pressured to meet the academic standards,” indicates that workload and administrative obligations are seen as more stressful than academic expectations. Overall, the results suggest that the teachers experience moderate levels of stress, especially as a result of non-teaching duties that increase their burden and drain their energy. Although stress levels differ among teachers, the moderate standard deviations, which range from roughly 0.99 to 1.22, also show that respondents generally exhibit a moderate level of stress. In line with the objective, it can be said that senior secondary teachers endure a moderate amount of stress at work, mostly from the administrative burden, regular meetings, and general work pressure. This implies that to assist teachers in better managing their stress, school administration should examine administrative procedures, simplify workloads, and provide a sufficient support system.

Table 5 Comparison of the Mean Job Related Stress of the Teachers

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
over all mean	201	3.1478	.88840	.06266

Table 6 Test Table- One sample t - Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
over all mean	2.359	200	.019	.14783	.0243	.2714

### Hypothesis

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the mean job-related stress score of senior secondary teachers and the test value of 3 (moderate level of stress).

$H_1$ : There is a significant difference between the mean job-related stress of senior secondary teachers and the test value of 3 (moderate level of stress).

A one-way sample t-test was conducted to compare the observed mean job-related stress with the test value 3, representing the moderate or neutral point on the 5-point Likert scale. The aim was to determine whether the average stress level among teachers deviates significantly from this midpoint. The 95% confidence interval (0.0243 to 0.2714) does not include zero between and it is a positive value. Therefore, it confirms that the difference is statistically significant. Further, the results show that the mean ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) value of the job-related stress score of the respondents were significantly higher than the value of 3,  $t (200) = 2.359$ ,  $p = 0.019$ .

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted because the p-value is 0.019 and it is less than the alpha of 0.05. This indicates that the mean job-related stress level of senior secondary teachers differs significantly from the moderate level, and the positive mean difference shows that the overall stress level is above average. Although the mean difference (0.15) appears numerically small, the statistical significance suggests that teachers experience a consistently elevated level of occupational stress is compared with the neutral standard. This finding implies that stress is a meaningful and measurable concern among senior secondary teachers, possibly resulting from heavy workloads, administrative duties, curriculum pressure, and a limited support system.

The results of the one-sample t-test demonstrate that senior secondary teachers experience job-related stress levels that are significantly higher than the moderate level. This finding underscores the need for targeted institutional policies and stress management problems to improve teachers' work environments and promote their mental well-being. The one-sample t- test revealed a statistically significant difference between the observed mean job stress score and the test value of 3,  $t (200) = 2.359$ ,  $p = 0.019$ , indicating that senior secondary teachers experience a slightly but significantly higher level of job related stress than the moderate level.

Table 6 Job Stress Level Categorization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low	16	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Moderate	129	64.2	64.2	72.1
	High	56	27.9	27.9	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0	

According to the data presented, Job-Related Stress Levels among senior secondary teachers shows that there is a concerning effect in occupational stress. Only 8% (16 teachers) reported experiencing low levels of job stress out of a total sample of 201 teachers. This indicates that a very small fraction of the teaching workplace feels relatively unstressed in their professional roles. The majority of respondents (129 teachers) fell into the moderate stress level category. That is 64.2%. It suggests that while their stress may not be overwhelming, it is still a determined and significant part of the work experience. The majority of teachers are affected by the systematic issues in the teaching environment, such as workload, administrative pressure, or demands for classroom management, which are indicated by a common moderate stress level.

Remarkably, 27.9% (56 teachers) of participants reported high levels of job stress. This result is alarming, especially given the potential consequences of chronic stress. It includes burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and negative impacts on mental health. The relatively high proportion of teachers in this category underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions, such as stress management programs, mental health support, and organizational changes to reduce the stressors. Overall, the data highlights that job stress is a prevalent issue among senior secondary teachers. It is with only a small minority experiencing low stress and a significant portion facing moderate to high stress levels that could impair their well-being and professional effectiveness.

The purposive sample interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and several recurring themes (Annex A) emerged that illustrate how job-related stress influences the mental well-being of senior secondary teachers. Workload and exhaustion were the most prominent themes. Teachers consistently described fatigue from heavy marking, lesson preparation, and administrative demands, often noting that 'there is no energy left after school'. This resonates with the quantitative finding that higher stress scores significantly predicted lower well-being, particularly in indicators related to relaxation and energy.

## CONCLUSION

### Discussion

The analysis of teacher stress levels revealed a mean score of 3.14 (SD = 0.89), which is slightly above the neutral test value of 3, indicating a moderately elevated level of stress among the respondents. The one-sample t-test confirmed that this difference is significant ( $t = 2.359$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ), suggesting that teachers in this sample experience higher stress than might be expected under normal conditions. These findings align with previous research in Asian contexts, including studies conducted in Sri Lanka, which have reported similarly elevated levels of teacher stress resulting from factors such as high workloads, classroom management challenges, and limited institutional support e.g. (Von Der Embse et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020).

Despite this, one-sample t-test results show that teachers generally maintain positive mental health traits, such as confidence, clarity of thought, emotional connection, and self-worth. These strengths suggest a degree of resilience and professional commitment even under pressure. However, the data also highlights areas of concern. Teachers reported feelings less relaxed than neutral, and their responses to having energy to spare were not significantly different from the midpoint. So it is indicating signs of fatigue and emotional strain. These findings suggest that while many teachers are coping, the cumulative effects of stress may be ruining their physical vitality and emotional ease. The high stress group, in particular, is likely to experience diminished well-being in these domains, which could affect their long-term health, job satisfaction, and classroom performance.

### Conclusion

The objective of this study is to investigate the stress level of senior secondary teachers. Findings revealed that most teachers experienced moderate stress, with a significant proportion reporting high stress. According to the above discussion it is confirmed that occupational stress is a universal issue in the teaching profession. Teachers exhibit favorable mental health traits, according to the one-sample t-test results. These include a strong feeling of self-worth, clear thinking, and emotional connectedness. These qualities, which demonstrate resiliency and a dedication to professional responsibility in trying circumstances, might be seen as assets. But there are numbers also raise warning signals. Teachers reported being less relaxed than neutral, feeling not energized, workers were not significantly different from neutral, indicating feelings of fatigue, and psychological distress. These

findings suggest that even as many teachers are treading water, the tide of stress may be eroding their physical vitality and emotional ease. The intensely stressed category, for example, few of whom are engaged in meaningful coping, probably will experience decreased health. This reduction could adversely impact their health from a long-term perspective, decrease job satisfaction, and affect classroom performance.

It also highlights that stress explains a meaningful proportion of variance in mental health. The results emphasize the importance of addressing occupational stress as an important component of teacher happiness initiatives. Even though teachers demonstrated resilience in areas such as confidence, emotional connection, and clarity of thought, the regression analysis confirms that stress exerts a measurable and negative influence on overall health. Providing interventions to reduce stress, such as workload adjustment, stress management training, and access to counseling services, is suggested to produce significant improvements in teachers' mental health. As a whole, these findings conclude that job-related stress is both quantitatively measurable and experientially evident in teachers' lives. Stress affects the comfort of the teachers by reducing relaxation, energy, and personal balance. On the other hand, flexibility and administrative support act as protective factors to reduce stress levels.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several recommendations are proposed based on the findings of this study to address the job-related stress among senior secondary teachers. It may increase teacher well-being and reduce occupational stress. In order to help teachers with practical tools for managing daily pressures, interventions should be considered at institutional, peer-based, and individual levels.

Schools should implement structured stress management programs such as relaxation techniques, workshops on mindfulness, and coping strategies. Workload should be rebalanced by reviewing and redistributing administrative and teaching responsibilities, particularly for those experiencing high stress, in order to reduce excessive demands, teachers should be given more authority in decision-making, curriculum delivery, and classroom management. The professional autonomy of teachers must be strengthened. Thereby, their frustration in forcing their energy would be reduced. Access to confidential counseling and psychological support services within schools should be made available to support teachers in their stress management.

It is very important to introduce mentoring systems and the peer support networks to encourage fostering teamwork, cooperation, and emotional support among staff. Providing peer support through teacher support groups, cooperative teaching methods, and a mentorship program may help increase resilience and lesson isolation, while fostering a healthy school atmosphere which can boost confidence.

Celebrating teacher achievements and involving teachers in school-level decision-making are also important for reinforcing professional self-worth and motivation as empowerment and recognition initiatives. It can be concluded that regular monitoring methods through periodic assessments of stress and mental health can be used to maintain stress. This can ensure early detection of those who are at risk and direct timely interventions. When taken as a whole, these measures provide a comprehensive framework for safeguarding teacher well-being and sustaining educational quality. These recommendations aim not only to reduce stress but also to reinforce the positive aspects of teacher well-being. By supporting teachers emotionally, holistically, cognitively, and professionally, schools can foster a healthier, more sustainable teaching environment that benefits both teachers and students.

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