



## MENTAL HEALTH OF HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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**Abstract:** Work influences a person's mental health and in turn mental health influences job performance and productivity. Mental health is a crucial factor for any professionals and non-professionals to carry out their work effectively and efficiently. Mental health is important for teachers to enhance performance, boost their energy, improve memory, create work-life balance, increase productivity and creativity and to avoid burnout. This empirical research paper focuses on the difference in the mental health between high school and college teachers. The between groups research design was chosen and purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample (N=60). 30 high school teachers and 30 college teachers between the age group of 30-45 years were chosen as the sample. Employees Mental Health Inventory was used to assess the mental health of the sample. Independent samples 't' test was used for statistical analysis. The mean values for mental health indicate that high school teachers have high level of mental health and college teachers have medium level of mental health. The statistical findings revealed that there is no significant difference in mental health between high school and college teachers thereby accepting the null hypothesis.

**Key Words:** Mental Health, High School teachers, College teachers.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Work plays a huge role in determining one's overall health. In addition to the financial benefits, job adds meaning, structure and purpose to life and provides a sense of identity, strengthens the self-esteem and offers a social outlet. Work influences a person's mental health and in turn mental health influences the job performance and productivity.

Employee mental health is a crucial factor for any professionals and non-professionals to carry out their work effectively and efficiently. It is increasingly recognized that the mental health of employees is an important determinant of their overall health and poor mental health of employees could contribute to a wide range of physical illnesses. In addition, poor mental health leads to burn out which seriously affects their contribution to their personal as well as professional lives.

In the context of teaching professionals, mental health is of utmost importance as most of work they involve themselves in would include mental work. Mental health is important for teachers to enhance performance, boost their energy, improve memory, create work-life balance, increase productivity and creativity and to avoid burnout. There are many factors associated with the mental health of teachers. Among them, being non-judgmental, acceptance of self and others, focusing upon the present moment, compassion for self and others, focusing upon experience and performance, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social stimulation, experiencing positive emotions (appreciation in specific) - all these factors help the teachers in boosting their mental health.

Teachers' mental health continues to be of concern in elementary and secondary schools; however, supporting teacher wellbeing is understudied (Parker et al., 2012; Roffey, 2012), particularly from a gender perspective (Bourgeault et al., 2021). Among professionals, teachers exhibit one of the highest levels of job stress and burnout on the job. (Hakanen et al., 2006; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). This scoping review investigates and consolidates the existing research on teacher mental health, leaves of absences, and return-to-work. Work context and personal factors/family context contribute to teacher stress and attrition and by extension may impact temporary leaves of absence (Pressley, 2021). Several articles



report on interventions with moderate success to reduce teacher stress, but no studies evaluated return-to-work interventions (Ebert, 2014; Kwak et al., 2019). The amount of stress teachers are experiencing and the pressure that is causing them to burn out.

Teachers have to give space to many other people in their work space- the students, parents, management, colleagues and also for preparation and planning of the classes. Amongst all these, focusing on their mental health is a task. Lack of support at work place, lack of recognition, job uncertainty, unfair work practices, ambiguous job descriptions, workplace conflict and violence, relationship problems with superiors or colleagues, work-family conflicts, and so on is detrimental to the teachers' mental health. Teachers are an integral part of the learning process. When teachers face stress and other related mental health problems, it may directly or indirectly affect the well-being of their students as well. Hence, it is important for the teachers to maintain and enhance their mental health.

Teachers are the pillars of the education system. They not only educate but also take care of the welfare of the students and take up many responsibilities. When the mental health of the teachers is prioritized, it would have a great impact on the system of education. Therefore, in this direction, the present study highlights the importance of studying the employee mental health with specific reference to school and college teachers

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Ananda (1989) conducted a study on mental health of school teachers using a mental health scale and observed that 59 % of teachers were mentally healthy. The state of working bears no relation to mental health while social values were positively related to mental health of teachers.

Kumar (1992) observed that if a teacher is with bad mental health it not only tends to incapacitate himself for the performance of his multifarious duties in the school but also creates difficulties and problem for his students.

Kaur (2007) investigated occupational stress, mental health and coping resources of high and higher secondary school teachers and their relationship. The results revealed that sometimes teachers feel stressed due to role overload, responsibilities and physical stressors present in school. Whereas, teachers those who are mentally healthy use coping resources to combat the effect of occupational stress. They use recreational activities such as watching T.V., listening music, getting social support from friends to relief from mental tensions, etc. The result also indicated that correlation between occupational stress and mental health is negative. Occupational stress and coping resources also tends to be negative. Correlation between mental health and coping resources is positive and significant.

Srivastava and Khan (2008) conducted a study to know the impact of mental health on the level of burnout of the teachers teaching at different education level. They concluded that teachers with low mental health are more prone to burnouts than the teachers of average and high mental health.

Srivastava (2010) assessed the personality and mental health among primary and secondary teachers. The result indicates that personality types/traits influence the mental health of primary and secondary teachers and extrovert teachers enjoy better mental health as compared to introvert teachers.

Kale (2011) conducted a study on awareness of mental health among newly admitted B.Ed. Students. The researcher has applied survey method for collecting the data. The results reveal that there is great awareness about the mental health among newly admitted B.Ed students.

A study conducted in Netherlands by Houtman and Kompier (1995) mapped skill levels against the pace of work in order to understand about the risk for stress levels and mental ill health for different occupations. Higher stress levels correlated with a higher risk for mental ill health and teaching profession was mapped under highly skilled, fast paced and high risk profession.

## **3. METHODOLOGY:**

### **Problem:**

To study the difference in the mental health between high school and college teachers.



### **Objective:**

To verify the significance of difference in the mental health between high school and college teachers.

### **Hypothesis:**

There will be no significant difference in the mental health between high school and college teachers.

### **Variables:**

- Independent Variable: Teaching- High School level and College level.
- Dependent Variable: Mental health.

### **Research Design:**

Between groups design was used for the study.

**Sample:** Purposive sampling technique was used and a total of 60 teachers were selected as the sample. Among them, 30 were high school teachers (teaching exclusively for high school students) and 30 were college teachers (teaching exclusively for degree course) between the age group of 30-45 years.

### **Inclusion criteria:**

- Teachers aged between 30-45 years were included.
- Teachers teaching high school students and degree students were included.
- Only full-time teachers were included.

### **Exclusion criteria:**

- Teachers teaching Primary school students and PUC students were excluded.
- Part-time teachers were excluded.

### **Research Tools:**

- Demographic data sheet.
- Employee's Mental Health Inventory (Dr. Jagdish, 2001).

### **Procedure:**

The high school and college teachers aged between 30-45 years were approached for consent to be participants for the present study. The demographic data sheet was administered to obtain the required demographic details of the sample. Based on the demographic details obtained by the sample, they were categorized into two groups: High school teachers and College teachers. The subjects were also screened keeping in view the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Rapport was established with the subjects before the administration of the questionnaire. Subsequently, Employee's Mental Health Inventory which consists of 24 items was administered to them with appropriate instructions. After the completion of the task, the questionnaire was collected from the sample and the obtained data was statistically analyzed considering the objective of the study. To arrive at the key findings of the study, Independent sample 't' test was used.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

Teachers interact with a wide variety of students everyday whose personalities are unique and hence have to face many challenges. In addition to the daily pressures of the job, several factors can affect the mental health of teachers such as too much of workload and large sized classes, lack of support from the administration, job insecurity and so on create a lot of stress in them. The present study highlights the importance of measuring the mental health between high school and college teachers whose mental health would be influenced by multiple factors. But, here it was examined whether teaching high school students or college students would determine the mental health of the teachers. Statistical analysis of the study has been presented below.



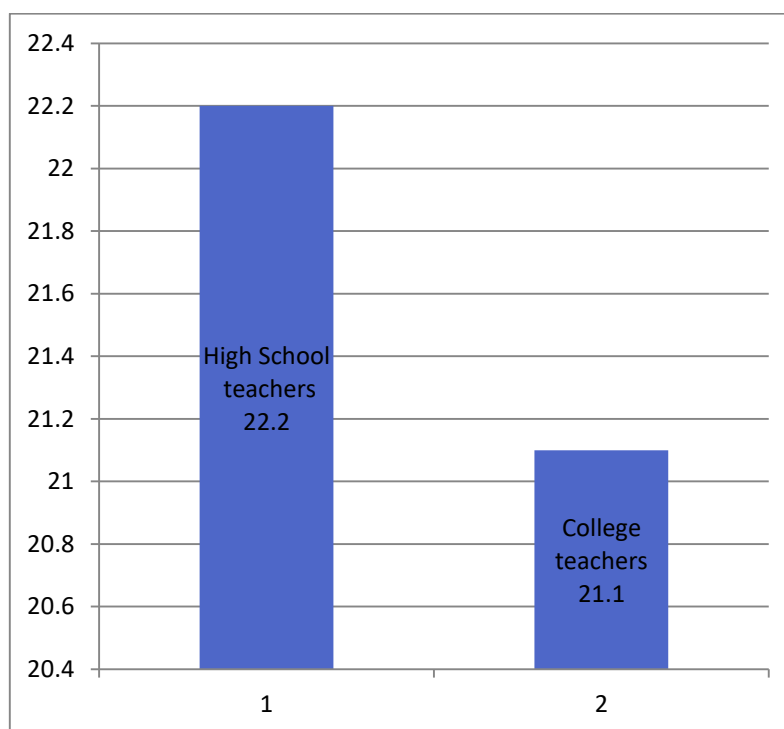
Table showing scores for the mental health of high school and college teachers.

Variable	Sample	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
Mental Health	High School teachers	30	21.10	2.48	1.86
	College teachers	30	22.20	2.05	

- Not significant.

The above table shows the difference in mental health between high school and college teachers. As per the table, the mean is 21.10 and 22.20 with the standard deviation being 2.48 and 2.05 for mental health of high school and college teachers respectively. The obtained 't' value is 1.86 indicating no significant difference in mental health between high school and college teachers. Hence, the study accepts the null hypothesis stating "There will be no significant difference in mental health between high school and college teachers."

Graph depicting the mental health of high school and college teachers.



The graphical representation of mean values for mental health indicate that, high school teachers have high level of mental health and college teachers have medium level of mental health. According to WHO, more than half the world's population are currently in work and 15% of working-age adults live with a mental disorder. Without effective support, mental disorders and other mental health conditions can affect a person's confidence and identity at work, capacity to work productively, absences and the ease with which to retain or gain work. Kumar (1992) observed that if a teacher is with bad mental health it not only tends to incapacitate himself for the performance of his multifarious duties in the school but also creates difficulties and problem for his students. Kaur (2007) investigated occupational stress, mental health and coping resources of high and higher secondary school teachers and their relationship. The results revealed that sometimes teachers feel stressed due to role overload, responsibilities and physical stressors present in school. Whereas, teachers those who are mentally healthy use coping resources to combat the effect of occupational stress. They use recreational activities such as watching T.V., listening music, getting social support from friends to relief from mental tensions, etc. The result also indicated that correlation between occupational stress and mental health is negative.



Occupational stress and coping resources also tends to be negative. Correlation between mental health and coping resources is positive and significant. These studies support the findings of the present study.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS:**

The result of the present study shows that there is no significant difference in mental health between high school and college teachers. The study proposes to work on the several other factors that influence the mental health of high school and college teachers in future.

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