

ANALYZING TEACHERS' SELF-AWARENESS IN PREVENTING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS.

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Abstract: Occupational stress is a significant challenge for teachers, affecting their professional performance, well-being, and overall job satisfaction. This study examines the role of self-awareness in preventing occupational stress among educators. By analyzing teachers' perceptions, coping strategies, and self-reflective practices, the research identifies key factors that contribute to stress management and professional resilience. The findings suggest that enhancing self-awareness enables teachers to recognize stress triggers, regulate emotional responses, and implement effective coping mechanisms, ultimately improving both personal well-being and educational outcomes.

Keywords: Occupational stress, teachers, self-awareness, stress prevention, coping strategies, professional development, educational psychology

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is one of the most pressing challenges in the teaching profession, influencing educators' physical health, psychological well-being, and overall effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers frequently face high workloads, emotional demands, time pressures, and diverse student needs, which can contribute to chronic stress if not properly managed. Research has shown that prolonged stress negatively impacts job satisfaction, professional performance, and even student outcomes. Self-awareness, defined as the conscious knowledge of one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in stress prevention. Educators who cultivate self-awareness are better equipped to identify stress triggers, regulate emotional responses, and implement effective coping strategies. Despite its recognized importance, few studies have systematically examined the relationship between teachers' self-awareness and their ability to manage occupational stress. This study aims to analyze how teachers' self-awareness influences their capacity to prevent and cope with occupational stress. By exploring the perceptions, attitudes, and self-reflective practices of educators, the research seeks to provide insights into practical strategies for enhancing teacher resilience and well-being, thereby contributing to more effective and sustainable educational environments.

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of self-awareness in preventing occupational stress among teachers. The research was conducted in the Surxondaryo Regional Center for Pedagogical Mastery, targeting educators from various schools and grade levels. A total of 60 teachers participated in the study, representing diverse teaching experiences and subject areas. Data collection involved two main tools: a self-awareness questionnaire and

semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire assessed participants' levels of self-reflection, emotional recognition, stress perception, and coping strategies, using a five-point Likert scale. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into teachers' personal experiences with stress, their self-awareness practices, and the methods they employ to manage professional challenges. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify relationships between self-awareness and stress levels. Qualitative data from the interviews were examined through thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and strategies used by teachers to prevent occupational stress. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained to ensure honest and accurate responses. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how self-awareness contributes to stress prevention in the teaching profession.

Results

The analysis of quantitative data revealed a significant relationship between teachers' self-awareness and their ability to manage occupational stress. Teachers with higher self-awareness scores reported lower levels of perceived stress and demonstrated more effective coping strategies. Specifically, 72% of participants who regularly engaged in self-reflective practices, such as journaling or mindfulness exercises, indicated that they were able to recognize early signs of stress and take proactive measures to mitigate its impact. Qualitative analysis of the interviews highlighted several key themes. First, teachers emphasized the importance of emotional recognition in preventing burnout. Many participants noted that understanding their own emotional responses allowed them to adjust teaching approaches and maintain classroom harmony. Second, self-reflective practices were linked to better time management and prioritization of professional tasks, reducing feelings of overwhelm. Third, teachers identified peer support and collaborative problem-solving as complementary strategies that enhanced the benefits of self-awareness. Overall, the findings indicate that self-awareness is a critical component in the prevention of occupational stress among educators. By fostering self-reflection, emotional regulation, and proactive coping mechanisms, teachers are better equipped to maintain professional effectiveness and personal well-being.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the vital role of self-awareness in preventing occupational stress among teachers. Quantitative and qualitative analyses consistently demonstrated that educators who actively engage in self-reflective practices experience lower stress levels and exhibit more effective coping strategies. This supports existing literature suggesting that self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence, which directly influences professional resilience and well-being. The study also highlighted the practical implications of fostering self-awareness in educational settings. Teachers who can identify their own stress triggers and emotional responses are better able to implement time management strategies, seek support from colleagues, and maintain a balanced work-life dynamic. Moreover, self-awareness enhances problem-solving abilities and classroom management, contributing to improved student outcomes and a more positive learning environment. However, the research also revealed certain limitations. The sample size was relatively small and limited to a specific region, which may affect the

generalizability of the findings. Additionally, self-reported measures are inherently subjective and may be influenced by social desirability or personal biases. Future studies could expand the sample to include diverse geographic locations and incorporate longitudinal designs to examine changes in self-awareness and stress levels over time. In conclusion, enhancing teachers' self-awareness is a critical strategy for preventing occupational stress and promoting professional sustainability. Educational institutions should consider integrating self-awareness training, mindfulness exercises, and reflective practices into professional development programs to support teacher well-being and optimize educational outcomes.

Conclusion

This study reveals that teachers' self-awareness is not merely a personal attribute but a strategic tool for sustaining professional well-being and preventing occupational stress. Educators who actively engage in understanding their own emotions, cognitive patterns, and behavioral responses are better able to anticipate stressors and respond constructively. Such self-awareness fosters resilience, reduces the risk of burnout, and enhances the overall quality of teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, the findings emphasize that self-awareness extends beyond individual benefits—it positively influences the classroom environment by promoting empathetic interactions, effective communication, and adaptive problem-solving. Educational institutions should therefore embed systematic self-awareness and reflective practices within professional development programs, ensuring that teachers are equipped not only to manage stress but also to cultivate a sustainable, healthy, and dynamic educational ecosystem.

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