



Evaluating the effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy on occupational stress among educators in Bengaluru: A gender and domicile based analysis of intervention outcomes

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Abstract

Focusing on gender and domicile, this study analyses how well Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT) reduces occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Bengaluru, India. Eighty teachers with high levels of occupational stress were chosen from a screened sample of 200, who then participated in a four-week BRT intervention using a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design. Following a standardized audio protocol, participants practiced guided relaxation at home every night, and their progress was tracked every day. The Teacher's Occupational Stress Scale (TOSS), which covered five domains including workload, student misbehavior, professional recognition, classroom resources, and colleague relations was used to measure occupational stress. The overall effectiveness of BRT was confirmed by an ANOVA that showed significant reductions in all stress domains after the intervention. Gender differences were significant only in the area of "Lack of Professional Recognition," where male teachers demonstrated more progress than females. The type of school had no discernible effects. However, for "Students' Misbehavior" and "Lack of Classroom Resources," significant three-way interactions (Gender × School Type × Time) surfaced, suggesting that the effects of intervention were context-sensitive. While female private school teachers made the biggest progress in managing classroom resource stress, male teachers demonstrated the biggest decrease in student misbehavior stress. These findings suggest that while BRT is broadly effective, outcomes may vary depending on gender and work setting. This highlights the importance of tailoring stress interventions to demographic and institutional contexts to maximize impact.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Benson's relaxation therapy (BRT), Educators, Gender, Domicile.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is widely considered as one of the most mentally and emotionally demanding professions. Educators often juggle with constant pressure of handling multiple roles such as managing unending workloads, administrative duties and meeting expectations. These ongoing challenges can lead to serious issues such as stress, job dissatisfaction, increased absenteeism, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression [1, 2]. Research has shown a strong connection between long-term occupational stress and the development of mood disorders in educators, highlighting how chronic stress can affect their well-being [3, 2].

Given the impact of stress on teachers' lives, finding effective means to manage it is important. One promising method is by introducing one of the most effective relaxation therapies, Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT). It is a simple and low-cost technique designed to calm the body and mind through deep

breathing, calming thoughts, and relaxation. It helps trigger what is known as the "relaxation response" a physical state that counters stress [4]. Studies in the field of healthcare and other high-stress fields have shown that relaxation techniques like BRT can reduce stress [5]. However, there is still limited research on how well these methods work specifically for educators [5, 3].

It's also important to consider that factors like gender and place of residence can influence both how teachers experience or perceive stress and how they respond to relaxation techniques. For instance, female teachers often report higher stress levels than males, possibly due to responsibilities at home and societal expectations [6, 3]. Teachers working in remote, rural areas may have no access to mental health support, which can worsen their stress levels [7, 8].

The emotional demands of teaching can result in stress and burnout due to everyday issues like classroom management, excessive workloads, and administrative duties [9, 10]. Teachers may find it difficult to control their emotions as demands increase, which can lead to fatigue, disengagement, and poor decision-making [11, 12]. Techniques like cognitive reappraisal can prevent burnout, but emotional suppression exacerbates stress and impairs work performance [13]. Additionally detrimental to school environments is unmanaged stress, which lowers staff retention, student engagement, and teaching quality [14].

Large class sizes, disruptive students, excessive workloads, and a lack of institutional support are just a few of the many obstacles Indian educators must overcome to maintain their mental and physical well-being [15]. Overwork is a serious issue, particularly in urban schools where educators put in long hours of instruction, grading, and administrative work for little pay or recognition [16]. Due to additional demands like performance goals, staff conflicts, and parental expectations, stress levels are frequently high in private schools [17].

In order to preserve a positive classroom atmosphere, teachers must control their emotions while teaching. They frequently conceal their stress in order to come across as composed and encouraging [18]. Burnout is exacerbated in India by this emotional strain, particularly when educators are expected to maintain their objectivity in the face of challenging circumstances. Another significant source of stress is role ambiguity, which refers to unclear or conflicting responsibilities. The situation is exacerbated in rural areas by a lack of support, inadequate infrastructure, and scarce resources. Teachers who lack emotional intelligence face more obstacles in their daily lives, which has an impact on their general well-being and academic achievement [19].

Location and gender have an impact on occupational stress. Due to emotional exhaustion and the "double burden" of juggling work and household responsibilities, female teachers frequently experience higher levels of stress [20, 21]. Location is also important because rural educators frequently do not have access to resources, training, or mental health support, which raises stress levels. When support was scarce, Karnataka teachers with lower emotional intelligence in rural areas experienced greater stress [19].

Gender and living area can change how effective stress-reduction methods are. For example, a female teacher with caregiving responsibilities may not have time to practice relaxation techniques unless they are flexible. Similarly, rural teachers without internet or support may not be able to participate in digital or structured programs. Recognizing these differences is of utmost importance when designing mental health programs. By tailoring interventions like BRT to account for gender and residential factors, we can create more accessible and inclusive support systems for educators from all backgrounds.

Gap in Research

Even though occupational stress among teaching population is a well-known issue, surprisingly very few studies have tested structured relaxation techniques like Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT) in educational settings. Most of the existing research has focused on its benefits for healthcare workers [22, 23, 24].

For instance, a study of 65 hospital midwives who practiced BRT twice daily over four weeks found significantly reduced work-related stress [22]. Another clinical trial involving intensive care nurses during the COVID-19 outbreak reported notable stress reduction in the BRT group compared to those who did not participate [25]. Similarly, an eight-week BRT program for operating room nurses showed significant improvements in their quality of life [26]. Despite these encouraging results, there is a lack of parallel

research focused on teachers. By assessing BRT's overall impact and how outcomes may differ by gender and residential setting, this study fills that gap.

Problem statement

The study evaluates the effectiveness of Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT) in reducing occupational stress among educators in Bengaluru. It also seeks to explore how gender and domicile (urban vs. rural) influence the outcomes of this intervention.

Objectives of the study

1. To find the effectiveness of Benson's relaxation therapy on level of stress among teachers
2. To find the influence of Benson's relaxation therapy on stress among teachers across genders and demographic variables

METHODS

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference in the level of stress among teachers on pre and post test.

H2: There is no significant influence of Benson's relaxation therapy on stress among teachers across gender and demographic variables.

Variables

Occupational stress: Occupational stress is defined as the psychological and physiological response to perceived imbalances between job demands and an individual's ability to cope, measured using a standardized scale such as the Occupational Stress Index (OSI), which assesses factors like role overload, role ambiguity, and work environment [27].

Benson's Relaxation Therapy: Benson's Relaxation Therapy is a mind-body intervention technique aimed at eliciting the relaxation response through the use of repetitive focus (e.g., on a word or sound) and passive disregard of intrusive thoughts, typically administered over 10–20 minutes daily and guided by Benson's standardized protocol [28].

Sample

This study adopts a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test approach to assess how effective Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT) is in managing stress among secondary school teachers. Using purposive sampling, 300 teachers from Private and Government schools located in urban and rural areas of Bengaluru were screened for levels of occupational stress. Those who scored high on the scale and showed willingness to participate were chosen for the intervention phase. Eighty participants scored high in the occupational stress scale and fulfilling the inclusion criteria were eligible to participate in the intervention phase. Control group was absent as the effectiveness of BRT is well-established and withholding the intervention from a control group was deemed unnecessary. It could also raise ethical issues, as it might deny participants a helpful treatment.

Tools

Teacher's Occupational Stress Scale (TOSS) developed by Sajid Jamal and Abdul Raheem is a self-administered scale. It is a 30 items Likert type scale in English and Hindi based on 5 dimensions namely work load, students' misbehavior, lack of professional recognition, lack of classroom resources and poor colleague relations. All yielded high correlation coefficients ranging from 0.54 to 0.88. The reliability by obtaining the value of Cronbach Alpha yielded as 0.89 whereas Guttman Split half reliability coefficient was found to be 0.74. The scale is found to be highly valid as it is highly correlated with the standardized scales, the coefficients of correlation being ranged from 0.71 to 0.89 [33].

Intervention used in the study

The intervention applied in this study was Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT), a well-established technique designed to activate the body's relaxation response and reduce physiological stress. The

intervention includes several key components: Breath awareness and initial mental centering, Progressive relaxation of various muscle groups, Positive affirmations and guided imagery, Hypnotic cues aimed at promoting deep relaxation and restful sleep [28].

Data collection and Intervention

The study was conducted in 3 different phases

Pre-intervention

The Teacher's Occupational Stress Scale (TOSS) was used to conduct a baseline assessment with 200 teachers. Clear instructions were provided, and responses were scored per standard guidelines. From these, 80 teachers with high stress levels and willingness to participate were selected for the intervention phase. Data collection for the eight-month study took place in both urban and rural government and private schools. The appointments were made beforehand. While most teachers were cooperative, some especially from private schools, were hesitant due to concerns about job security. They were reassured that all responses would remain confidential and not be shared with school management.

Intervention Phase

Eighty carefully chosen educators took part in a four-week intervention that was modelled after Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT). In order to explain the advantages of BRT, give a live demonstration, and make sure participants were prepared for self-practice, an orientation session was conducted prior to the start of the program. Any questions were answered in a supervised session. Similar to the orientation, participants received an 18-minute audio guide in both Kannada and English. They were told to use headphones to practice every night between 9 and 10 PM, ideally after dinner, in a peaceful, distraction-free environment. Affirmations, muscle relaxation, breath awareness, and suggestions for improving sleep were all part of the session. Daily WhatsApp reminders were sent to participants individually (no group was formed to preserve privacy) to encourage adherence, and they replied with a "yes" or thumbs up. The following morning, missed sessions could be marked. An Excel sheet was used to track each response. Additionally, participants kept a personal practice journal and were supported by weekly check-ins via message or phone call. Participants were asked to restart and finish four full weeks from the missed day if they missed more than four days; this applied to 14 teachers. No personal identifiers were gathered, and confidentiality was rigorously maintained. Participation was entirely voluntary, and withdrawal was possible at any moment. The study evaluated the efficacy of BRT in this high-stress teacher group using a single-group pre-post design.

Post-Intervention Phase

To maintain consistency and minimize bias, a post-assessment was carried out at the conclusion of the four-week intervention using the same instrument as the baseline. Similar conditions were used for assessments, and data were scored in accordance with the tool's manual. To assess the effectiveness of the intervention, the data was statistically analysed using the Paired Sample t-test, Chi-square Test of Independence, and Repeated Measures ANOVA. Although no negative effects were reported, the researcher stayed in constant communication to provide support and keep an eye out for any. In order to maintain the relationship, some schools asked for motivational speeches and stress-reduction advice, which were given. All of the participants' informal feedback was positive, and the study ended with a quick debriefing to thank them for their time and contributions.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, the Institutional Ethics Committee granted ethical clearance for the study. Every procedure complied with ethical guidelines for studies involving human subjects. Participation was completely voluntary and subject to withdrawal at any time, with informed consent obtained. Confidentiality and privacy were rigorously upheld. No personally identifiable information was gathered, and the information was only utilized for scholarly research. Teachers were permitted to use initials rather than full names in schools where confidentiality was a concern. The study placed a strong emphasis on

respect for participant autonomy, voluntarism, and transparency. Support was offered for any emotional distress, but none materialized.

RESULTS

Table 1 Crosstabulation of gender by type of school

Table 1 Crosstabulation of gender

Type of school	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Govt.	F 20	20	40
	% 50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Private	F 20	20	40
	% 50.0%	50.0%	50.0%

Table 1 shows that in both government and private schools, there were equal numbers of males and females each with 20 males and 20 females, making up 50% each in both school types. Overall, the gender distribution was perfectly balanced in both government and private schools.

Table 2 Independent sample t-test results of educators only for pre-intervention

Table 2 t-test results

Independent Samples Test (Pre-intervention)

Variables	Between gender (Male vs. Female)			Between type of school (Govt.. vs. Private)		
	t	Df	p-value	t	df	p-value
Work Load	-.479	78	.634	1.130	78	.136
Students' Misbehavior	-1.465	78	.147	.570	78	.570
Lack of Professional Recognition	-1.961	78	.053	-.147	78	.883
Lack of Classroom Resources	-.167	78	.867	-.587	78	.559
Poor Colleague Relations	.219	78	.828	.219	78	.828
Overall Occupational Stress	-1.046	78	.299	-.945	78	.348

Table no. 2 depicts that for gender comparisons (male vs. female), no significant differences were found in work load, students' misbehavior, classroom resources, colleague relations, or overall stress (all $p > 0.05$). A marginal difference in "Lack of Professional Recognition" ($p = 0.053$) approached significance but did not meet the standard threshold. For school type (government vs. private), all variables also showed no significant differences ($p > 0.05$). These results suggest that before the intervention, stress levels and workplace challenges of educators were statistically similar across genders and school types, providing a balanced baseline for further analysis.

Table 3 Repeated measure ANOVA analysis of the variables with respect to gender and type of school

Table 3 repeated measure ANOVA

Change in time	Gender	Type of school	Work load		Students' Misbehavior	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pre-Intervention	Male	Govt.	24.50	2.14	20.70	2.64
		Private	25.95	1.96	21.75	2.05
		Total	25.23	2.15	21.23	2.39
	Female	Govt.	25.20	2.19	22.90	2.47

Post-intervention	Total	Private	25.70	1.92	21.20	2.59
		Total	25.45	2.05	22.05	2.64
		Govt.	24.85	2.17	21.80	2.76
	Male	Private	25.83	1.92	21.48	2.32
		Total	25.34	2.09	21.64	2.54
		Govt.	16.05	4.06	12.95	3.58
	Female	Private	16.35	4.91	11.20	3.02
		Total	16.20	4.45	12.08	3.38
		Govt.	17.50	4.49	13.05	3.38
	Total	Private	16.50	4.42	13.50	3.76
		Total	17.00	4.43	13.28	3.54
		Govt.	16.78	4.29	13.00	3.43
	Total	Private	16.43	4.61	12.35	3.56
		Total	16.60	4.43	12.68	3.49
		F-value (time)		F = 455.44; p= .001		F = 396.59; p= .001
F-value (time*gender)		F = .493; p= .485		F = .174; p= .678		
F-value (time*type of school)		F = 2.618; p= .110		F = .130; p= .719		
F-value (time*gender*type of school)		F = .046; p= .831		F = 7.561; p= .007		

Table no. 3 shows that both work load and students' misbehavior scores significantly decreased from pre- to post-intervention for all groups ($F = 455.44, p = .001$ and $396.59, p = .001$), indicating the intervention was effective. There were no significant differences in how scores changed over time based on gender or type of school alone (all $p > .05$). However, for students' misbehavior, there was a significant three-way interaction ($F = 7.561, p = .007$), suggesting that male educators from private schools had the highest reduction while female private had the lowest.

Table 3(cont.) shows the repeated measure ANOVA analysis of the variables with respect to gender and type of school

Change in time	Gender	Type of school	Lack of Professional Recognition		Lack of Classroom Resources	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pre-Intervention	Male	Govt.	24.50	1.73	21.45	3.14
		Private	23.80	3.00	22.20	3.09
		Total	24.15	2.44	21.83	3.10
	Female	Govt.	24.70	2.13	21.95	2.37
		Private	25.55	1.76	21.90	2.00
		Total	25.13	1.98	21.93	2.16
	Total	Govt.	24.60	1.92	21.70	2.76
		Private	24.68	2.59	22.05	2.57
		Total	24.64	2.26	21.88	2.65
Post-intervention	Male	Govt.	13.75	3.02	14.45	2.98
		Private	13.05	3.20	14.40	2.04
		Total	13.40	3.10	14.43	2.52
	Female	Govt.	13.35	3.39	13.65	1.69
		Private	11.85	1.53	13.60	1.70
		Total	12.60	2.71	13.63	1.67
	Total	Govt.	13.55	3.18	14.05	2.43
		Private	12.45	2.55	14.00	1.89
		Total	13.00	2.92	14.03	2.16
F-value (time)			F = 717.11; p= .001		F = 593.19; p= .001	
F-value (time*gender)			F = 4.171; p= .045		F = 1.949; p= .167	
F-value (time*type of school)			F = 1.828; p= .180		F = .385; p= .537	
F-value (time*gender*type of school)			F = 1.828; p= .180		F = 7.561; p= .007	

The table no.3 shows that both "Lack of Professional Recognition" and "Lack of Classroom Resources" scores dropped significantly from pre- to post-intervention for all groups, indicating the intervention was effective ($F = 717.11, p = .001$ and $593.19, p = .001$). For "Lack of Professional Recognition," there was a small but significant difference in how scores changed over time between males and females ($F = 4.171, p = .045$), suggesting male teachers had better reduction than female teachers. However, there were no significant differences based on school type, or the combination of gender and school type. For "Lack of

Classroom Resources," no significant differences were found based on gender or school type alone, but there was a significant three-way interaction ($F = 7.561$, $p = .007$) indicating that female educators in private schools had the highest reduction in scores while male educators in Government schools had lowest reduction in scores.

Table 3(cont.) shows the repeated measure ANOVA analysis of the variables with respect to gender and type of school

Change in time	Gen der	Type of school	Poor Colleague Relations		Overall Occupational Stress	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pre- Intervention	Male	Govt.	18.75	2.43	109.90	6.50
		Private	19.10	2.29	113.70	7.55
		Total	18.93	2.34	111.80	7.22
	Fem ale	Govt.	19.10	1.68	113.85	7.04
		Private	18.55	1.73	112.90	5.41
		Total	18.83	1.71	113.38	6.22
	Tota l	Govt.	18.93	2.07	111.88	6.98
		Private	18.83	2.02	113.30	6.49
		Total	18.88	2.03	112.59	6.74
Post- intervention	Male	Govt.	10.50	2.16	67.70	6.62
		Private	10.75	1.80	65.75	10.55
		Total	10.63	1.97	66.73	8.75
	Fem ale	Govt.	11.75	2.75	69.30	8.83
		Private	11.10	1.65	66.55	6.77
		Total	11.43	2.26	67.93	7.89
	Tota l	Govt.	11.13	2.52	68.50	7.74
		Private	10.93	1.72	66.15	8.76
		Total	11.03	2.15	67.33	8.30
F-value (time)			F = 768.07; p= .001		F = 1660.885; p= .001	
F-value (time*gender)			F = 2.524; p= .116		F = .029; p= .866	
F-value (time*type of school)			F = .031; p= .860		F = 2.888; p= .093	
F-value (time*gender*type of school)			F = .000; p= 1.00		F = .791; p= .377	

The table shows that both "Poor Colleague Relations" and "Overall Occupational Stress" scores decreased significantly from pre- to post-intervention for all groups, as indicated by very high F-values and $p = .001$ for both variables. This means the intervention was highly effective in reducing these stress factors among educators. There were no significant differences in how scores changed over time based on gender, type of school, or their combination (all interaction p-values $> .05$). In summary, the intervention led to substantial improvements in colleague relations and overall occupational stress for all educators, regardless of their gender or type of school.

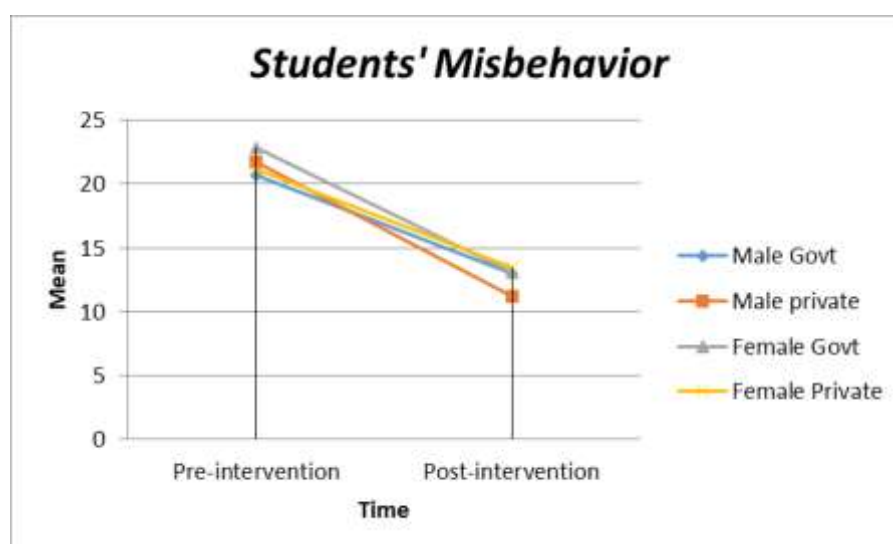


Fig.1

Graphical representation of Student misbehavior with respect to time, gender and type of school interaction

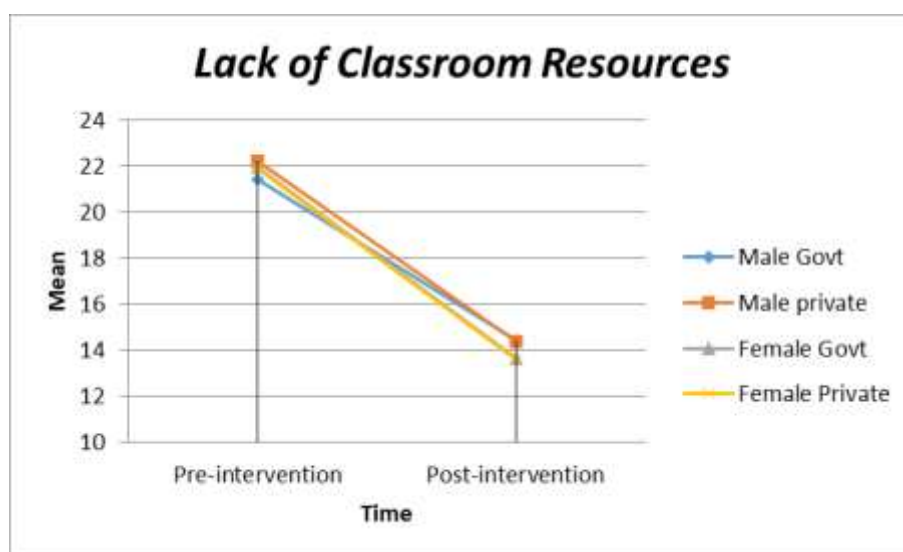


Fig.2

Graphical representation of Lack of classroom resources with respect to time, gender and type of school interaction

DISCUSSIONS

The intervention was highly effective, leading to significant reductions in all measured occupational stress factors including work load, students' misbehavior, lack of professional recognition, lack of classroom resources, poor colleague relations, and overall occupational stress across all groups from pre- to post-intervention.

Prior studies have frequently concentrated on how difficult it is to alter outside stressors like class size or student behavior. Benson's Relaxation Therapy and other programs that teach relaxation and reframing techniques, however, can assist educators in reinterpreting these stressors so that they feel less overwhelming. Study's findings support research demonstrating that, in a variety of work environments, relaxation-based interventions increase psychological resilience in addition to reducing outward manifestations of stress [5, 31]. This implies that enhancing one's inner strengths, such as coping mechanisms, might be more crucial for reducing stress than altering outside influences.

Other factors probably contributed in addition to relaxation. While structured practice could have given teachers more confidence in managing everyday stressors a crucial aspect of occupational health group discussions might have offered emotional support and a sense of community [32]. Current research suggests three potential explanations for why BRT was effective for this group: Peer support during sessions probably increased morale and a sense of belonging; (1) regular practice triggered a relaxation response, reducing physical symptoms and preventing overthinking; and (3) mastering relaxation gave teachers a stronger sense of control the kind of confidence that helps manage stress more effectively.

Influence of Gender on Change: Gender had a significant influence on the change in "Lack of Professional Recognition," with males and females showing different levels of improvement after the intervention.

For other factors, gender did not significantly affect the amount of change. Since previous studies have often shown that women in the teaching profession feel less acknowledged and frequently bear a greater emotional burden than men, this finding adds depth to the body of knowledge already in existence [33, 34]. Findings from this study imply that, even in the presence of unchanging external work-related pressures,

gender can affect how well interventions improve perceptions of recognition. Prior research indicates that women frequently receive less recognition for their contributions, particularly when working in teams. This trend is observed in a variety of professional domains, not only in education [33]. This could help to explain why, following the intervention, female teachers reported higher increases in their sense of worth. They had more opportunity to improve since they began with a lower baseline of professional recognition. Women may feel undervalued and gain more from support centered on communication, assertiveness, and personal development, which could explain gender disparities. They may have felt more connected and validated as a result of peer support and shared experiences.

These results support Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of the role of personal perception in stress by demonstrating that improving internal coping and self-perception is just as important as altering external circumstances. Additionally, age and career stage are important; younger female teachers might be more receptive to support, whereas more seasoned male teachers might feel more at ease and unaffected.

Influence of Type of School on Change: The type of school (government vs. private) did not significantly influence the degree of improvement in any of the occupational stress variables; both school types benefited similarly from the intervention.

The results of this study demonstrate that the amount of occupational stress that teachers experienced following the intervention was not significantly impacted by whether they were employed by the government or private schools. In every aspect of stress, including workload, student conduct, workplace recognition, and relationships with coworkers, teachers from the two kinds of schools demonstrated comparable gains. This implies that the intervention was just as successful in lowering stress levels of teachers in both settings.

This calls into question the widely held notion that teachers in various educational environments deal with a wide range of stressors and, as a result, react differently to stress-reduction initiatives. According to earlier studies, teachers in government schools frequently deal with problems like overcrowding in the classroom and bureaucratic delays, whereas teachers in private schools are typically under pressure to perform well and may experience job insecurity [35]. Our findings imply that, in spite of these variations, responses of teachers to stress and the advantages of support services might be more comparable than previously thought.

Similar stressors, such as fatigue and a lack of support, probably affected both groups. Echoing Jennings et al. (2017), the intervention reduced stress by utilizing mindfulness, emotional regulation, and relaxation techniques. Through support and shared experiences, the group format might have further reduced stress. In general, characteristics such as social connection, resilience, and self-awareness may be more important than school type, confirming theories about internal coping [32]. Regardless of the resources available, these interventions can be successful in a variety of educational contexts.

Three-Way Interaction (Gender × Type of School × Time): There was a significant three-way interaction for "Students' Misbehavior" and "Lack of Classroom Resources," indicating that the pattern of improvement in these areas varied depending on the combination of gender and type of school.

This suggests that the intervention's effect on these specific stressors was influenced by both the educator's gender and their school type together. The findings imply that depending on the combination of gender and school type, the intervention had varying effects on stress related to "students' misbehavior" and "lack of classroom resources." Findings demonstrate distinct differences from the education literature, which frequently treats teacher stress as being the same in all contexts. For instance, female teachers in private schools demonstrated greater gains in controlling student behavior, while male teachers in government schools demonstrated greater gains in handling insufficient resources [37]. This suggests that stress management differs not only by setting but also by gender in that setting. This complexity is supported by research, which shows that teachers in underfunded schools gain more from focused skill development, especially when gender-related biases are present [36, 38].

Echoing the Stress and Coping theory, it appears that internal empowerment such as coping mechanisms and resilience matters more than altering external circumstances [32]. These patterns could be explained by a number of factors: male teachers in government schools might have profited from support networks

bolstered by resource-focused tactics; female private school teachers might have felt more pressure to maintain classroom control, which would have increased the impact of better coping; and different beginning stress levels allowed for greater room for growth. These dynamics imply that rather than being implemented consistently, stress-reduction initiatives might be more successful when customized to teachers' gender and work environment.

Implications

Educational institutions may wish to implement BRT as a component of their teacher wellness programs. Because BRT is inexpensive and easy to use, it could be included in teacher training or continuing professional development courses. Interventions should be tailored to the demographics of teachers. For example, private schools may need to give female teachers more opportunities to receive feedback or recognition, while government schools may focus more on resource coping strategies for male teachers. The findings demonstrate that teachers' mental health can be improved by both enacting systemic changes and providing them with stress-reduction strategies. This promotes a two-pronged approach that combines structural improvements with individual-focused interventions.

Conclusions

The study clearly shows that Benson's Relaxation Therapy (BRT) is a potent and successful strategy for lowering occupational stress among Bengaluru secondary school teachers. After completing the intervention, participants reported significant reductions in all six major stress areas and overall stress. These gains demonstrated the general efficacy of BRT and were consistent for both genders and school types. The findings did, however, also highlight some significant context and gender-specific differences. Stress related to professional recognition was lower for male teachers, which may be a result of gender-related experiences or deeper workplace expectations that affect how stress is viewed and handled. This implies that social and individual factors could influence how various groups react to stress-reduction strategies.

Additionally, there was a significant three-way interaction between time, school type, and gender in areas such as classroom resources and student misbehavior. According to the data, these factors affected how effective BRT was. For instance, female teachers in private settings demonstrated the greatest progress in managing stress related to resources, while male teachers in private schools reported the greatest improvement in controlling student behavior. These results highlight how important it is to take into account the particular dynamics of various educational settings and populations when planning and carrying out interventions.

All things considered, the study backs BRT as an affordable and non-intrusive method of lowering teacher stress. However, it also emphasizes how crucial it is to modify interventions to meet the unique requirements of various groups rather than using a standard strategy. The relevance and impact of such mental health programs in educational settings can be significantly increased by taking into account elements like gender and institutional context.

Limitations

- 14 out of 80 participants restarted the program after missing sessions. This may have led to uneven results due to differences in practice time.
- Participants knew they were receiving a therapeutic intervention aimed at reducing stress. Without blinding, expectancy bias may have inflated self-reported improvements especially in domains like Professional Recognition
- BRT was delivered via pre-recorded audio. While this standardizes delivery, it does not allow real-time therapeutic interaction or individual customization.

- While daily responses and thumbs-ups were recorded, the study lacked a formal process evaluation like quality of practice which could have enriched interpretation of outcomes and improved replication fidelity.

Suggestions for Future Research

- Integrate qualitative interviews or focus groups post-intervention to explore participant experience, perceived changes, and contextual factors.
- Add 3-month and 6-month follow-ups to assess the durability of BRT effects and understand if benefits fade, plateau, or grow over time.
- Analyze outcomes based on adherence levels or the number of days practiced. This can help determine the optimal dosage for future implementation.
- Compare self-guided vs. facilitated BRT to examine whether direct therapist interaction enhances outcomes or boosts adherence for certain subgroups

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