Mental Health Management as a Mediator between Job Stress and Job Performance Among Malaysian Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract.
Research aims: This study investigates the effect of job stress on teachers' job performance and examines the mediating role of mental health management among Malaysian secondary school teachers.
Design/Methodology/Approach: A quantitative research approach was utilized, and data were gathered from 537 teachers through a self-administered questionnaire. This study used AMOS 23.0 to test the measurement and structural models by applying structural equation modeling (SEM) to look at the data.
Research findings: The results show that stress at work hurts both mental health management and job performance. On the other hand, mental health management helps job performance and partially mediates the link between stress and performance.
Theoretical contribution/Originality: This research synthesizes the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, the Stress Response System Theory, and the Job Demands Resources Theory to elucidate how teachers' mental health management alleviates the detrimental impacts of stress on performance.
Practical implications: The results help school leaders and legislators design better stress management and mental health initiatives that will help teachers feel better and do better at their jobs.
Keywords: Job stress, mental health management, job performance, SEM, Malaysian teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is widely recognised as one of the most demanding professions, characterised by heavy workloads, emotional exhaustion, and increasing administrative pressures. Numerous studies have identified teaching as a high-stress occupation due to factors such as student misbehaviour, time constraints, and role ambiguity (Travers & Cooper, 1993; Agyapong et al., 2022; Hascher & Waber, 2021). In Malaysia, teachers are frequently exposed to long working hours, large class sizes, and additional non-teaching responsibilities, which heighten occupational stress and affect their psychological well-being (Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Amzat et al., 2021). The persistence of stress in the teaching profession has been shown to contribute to burnout, reduced performance, and lower job

satisfaction (Benevene et al., 2020; Leow et al., 2020). The World Health Organization (2023) defined stress as a state of anxiety or mental tension caused by difficult situations, and pointed out that chronic stress would damage physical and mental functions, emphasizing the need for effective management of stress in professional situations.

At present, the mental health status of teachers is getting more and more attention, which also highlights the importance of mental health management-mental health itself is the key component of occupational health. Mental health management covers the individual's ability to regulate emotions, maintain psychological balance and ensure physical health, and is a part of the overall coping system (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Corrente et al., 2022). Specific to teachers, their mental health management includes three interrelated dimensions: first, emotional intelligence, which provides support for effective adjustment of emotions; The second is psychological resilience, who helps individuals to maintain inner stability and clear goals in difficulties; The third is physical health management, which promotes the overall psychological balance through healthy lifestyle. Practice shows that teachers who actively carry out mental health management often have stronger emotional stability and psychological awareness, and higher professional input, which can ultimately promote the improvement of work performance (White, 2020; Maung et al., 2022). In 2020, the World Health Organization also emphasized that mental health management is the core link to maintain mental health, and it is considered that it is embodied in individuals' ability to experience life and cope with stress through specific ways of thinking, feeling and behavior. As the final embodiment of teachers' professional ability, job performance is closely related to stress level and mental health (Glazzard & Rose, 2020; Madigan et al., 2023). Effective teaching performance involves not only the quality of education, but also emotional stability, work motivation and cognitive engagement. When teachers are in a state of high stress, these dimensions will be affected, and then there may be problems such as absenteeism, emotional exhaustion and decreased work efficiency (Yang et al., 2019; Gosnell et al., 2021). Conversely, educators who are adept at maintaining their mental health are more capable of maintaining their performance during periods of duress. This indicates that mental health management may serve as a significant connection between occupational stress and job performance (Galderisi et al., 2015; Oken et al., 2015). Empirical data substantiates the premise that educators with superior coping skills and psychological equilibrium attain elevated degrees of work efficiency, satisfaction, and classroom effectiveness (Pohl et al., 2021; Ratanasiripong et al., 2022).

Although research on teacher stress, burnout, and mental health has become increasingly extensive, most studies have focused on identifying specific coping strategies, such as improving sleep habits, practising relaxation, or increasing physical exercise, rather than conceptualising the construct of mental health management itself (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021; Glazzard & Rose, 2020; Capone & Petrillo, 2020). To date, few empirical models have systematically examined mental health management as a mediating mechanism linking job stress and performance, and there remains no established framework that captures its multidimensional nature (Thomas et al., 2024; Kaur et al., 2022; Kush et al., 2022). Moreover, most prior studies were conducted in Western contexts, where cultural expectations, work environments, and support systems differ significantly from those in Malaysian secondary schools (Baker et al., 2021; Jakubowski & Sitko-Dominik, 2021). Given Malaysia's unique educational and cultural environment, there is a pressing need to

explore how teachers manage stress and sustain performance through integrated mental health management practices (Zin et al., 2023; Chan et al., 2021).

Consequently, this research concentrates on middle school educators in Malaysia, seeking to evaluate the mediating function of mental health management in the relationship between job stress with job performance. The research will combine the transaction model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the theory of stress response system (Selye, 1976; McEwen, 1998) and the work demand-resource theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), through the perspective of psychological adjustment, systematically analyze the specific impact of teachers' stress experience on performance results. It is expected that the research results will deepen the theoretical cognition and practical understanding of teacher welfare, provide reference for relevant policy formulation and intervention measures, and then help Malaysia to realize the sustainable development of teacher performance in the field of secondary education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualizing Job Stress

Job stress is a dynamic and multifaceted process that develops via ongoing interactions between environmental pressures and individual responses. There are three parts to it that are all connected: stresses, symptoms, and coping mechanisms.

Stressors

Stressors refer to external or internal demands that exceed an individual's adaptive capacity. Schuler (1980) defined stressors as environmental pressures that elicit strain depending on personal appraisal and available coping resources. Siegrist and Peter (1994) identified job demands, role ambiguity, and organisational constraints as chronic stressors that impose sustained psychological and physical strain on employees. Elfering et al. (2005) further demonstrated that prolonged exposure to such demands can reduce well-being, though supportive working conditions may buffer these effects. Contemporary research highlights that new stressors have emerged in modern workplaces. Rozanov (2023) observed that constant digital connectivity and performance surveillance have created novel challenges that intensify psychological strain and reduce recovery opportunities.

Symptoms

Symptoms are the physiological and psychological indicators that emerge as responses to stressors. They include emotional exhaustion, cognitive overload, and physical tension. Edwards (1992) conceptualised stress symptoms within a feedback system where individuals detect discrepancies between demands and coping resources, leading to adaptive or maladaptive responses. Berjot and Gillet (2011) emphasised that symptoms act as internal cues prompting self-appraisal and coping mobilisation, particularly when individuals experience social pressure or evaluative stress. These indicators therefore function both as outcomes of stress exposure and as regulatory signals that sustain the ongoing cycle of stress and adaptation.

Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms involve the cognitive and behavioural strategies individuals use to manage or reduce stress responses. Gottlieb (1997) described coping as a continuous process of appraisal and adjustment through which people strive to restore balance. Fox

and Spector (2006) explained that coping not only mitigates negative emotions but also shapes workplace behaviour, influencing both productivity and well-being. Rodell and Judge (2009) found that challenge-related stressors may generate positive or negative behaviours depending on emotional regulation. Hence, coping represents the restorative phase that allows employees to recover and adapt effectively.

2.2 Conceptualizing Mental Health Management

Mental health management is a dynamic process by which individuals govern their emotional, spiritual, and physical resources to preserve psychological stability and work performance. It contains three basic dimensions: emotional intelligence, mental ability and physical health management, which are always in interaction. Together, they form a complete system to help people meet their work needs, maintain their health, and then work more efficiently.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the cognitive and emotional basis of mental health regulation, which refers to the ability of individuals to perceive, understand and regulate their own and others' emotions. Tischler, Biberman and McKeage (2002) believe that emotional intelligence (EI) is a set of qualities, which can not only promote interpersonal harmony, but also help people manage psychological stress. Empirical data indicates that elevated levels of emotional intelligence correlate with enhanced emotional well-being and mental health outcomes (Emslie, 2025). Chin and Anantharaman (2011) stated that workers with high emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence are more committed to their jobs and more productive. These results demonstrate that emotional intelligence is fundamental to emotional regulation and proactive coping, aiding individuals in sustaining equilibrium in demanding professional settings.

Spiritual Competency

Spiritual competency refers to the capacity to extract meaning, purpose, and a sense of interconnectedness in both professional and personal domains. Paloutzian and Emmons (2010) assert that spiritual intelligence promotes psychological equilibrium by harmonizing values, beliefs, and life objectives. Vasconcelos (2020) defined spiritual intelligence as an elevated state of consciousness and compassion that fosters ethical discernment and inner tranquility. Likewise, Mónico et al. (2016) revealed that workplace spirituality modulates the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological capital, enhancing optimism and resilience. Cultivating spiritual competency enables individuals to navigate stress by promoting moral clarity and the construction of meaning, which are vital elements of mental health care.

Physical Health Management

Physical health management includes both behavioral and physiological techniques that help people stay mentally strong. Akbari and Hossaini (2018) discovered that spiritual health serves as a good predictor of mental health and life satisfaction via emotional regulation, highlighting the relationship between the mind and body. Pradhan et al. (2023) contended that mindfulness, yoga, and workplace wellness efforts improve both physical vitality and emotional management. These findings demonstrate that sustaining physical health contributes to overall mental stability by promoting stress resistance and energy restoration.

2.3 Conceptualizing Job Performance

Job performance is usually regarded as a multi-dimensional concept, which includes two main dimensions: Task performance (TP) and Contextual performance (CP). This paradigm was first proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993).

Task Performance (TP)

Task performance refers to the behavior pattern of individuals when they perform their formal job responsibilities and help organize the core technical processes. It requires individuals to have the ability to perform their duties required by specific roles, covering product production, service provision and the achievement of quantitative or quality goals. Motowidlo and Van scott (1994) show that TP is a quantifiable and result-oriented part of job performance, and its performance mainly depends on employees' knowledge, skills and talents.

Contextual Performance (CP)

Contextual performance includes actions that can make the workplace a better place to work, like helping coworkers, taking the lead, and displaying dedication to the company's goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Motowidlo (2000) emphasized that situational performance (CP) is conceptually consistent with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which is reflected in employees' initiative to make contributions beyond the scope of formal duties. The recent empirical study by Çalışkan and Köroğlu (2022) also verified the two-dimensional framework of job performance and confirmed that TP and CP are complementary although they are independent, and both of them are essential for a complete performance evaluation.

3. UNDERPINNING THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

The stress and coping transaction model proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) holds that stress is a dynamic and continuous interaction process between individuals and their environment. When the perceived needs of individuals exceed their available coping resources, stress will arise, which will prompt individuals to constantly evaluate and adjust their coping responses. This process-centered view recognizes the dynamic nature of stress rather than treating it as a fixed state, which includes the evaluation of stressors, emotional and physiological reactions, and adaptive coping strategies. In the educational scene, existing studies have shown that teachers often bear different degrees of pressure, which mainly comes from workload, administrative responsibilities and emotional labor (Agyapong et al., 2022； ; Amzat et al., 2021). With the help of this model, this study interprets job stress as a periodic phenomenon with three interrelated dimensions, namely stressors, symptoms and coping skills, which correspond to the evaluation, strain and adaptation stages in the model respectively. By applying this theoretical framework, this study clearly shows how teacher stress evolves dynamically through the continuous interaction between situational stress and personal coping mechanism, which lays a conceptual foundation for discussing the stress problem of middle school teachers in Malaysia.

3.2 Stress Response System Theory

Stress Response System Theory, first proposed by Selye (1976) and subsequently developed by McEwen (1998), elucidates the body's and mind's reactions to environmental stresses via biological and psychological mechanisms. Selye's concept of alert, resistance, and exhaustion demonstrates that extended stress can result in emotional depletion and physical malfunction. McEwen created the term "allostatic load" to refer to the cumulative physiological stress that comes from being exposed to stress for a long time. Empirical evidence from teachers indicates that sustained occupational stress leads to emotional weariness, burnout, and psychological suffering (Baker et al., 2021; Capone & Petrillo, 2020). In this context, the current study defines mental health management as a multifaceted process encompassing emotional intelligence, spiritual competence, and physical health management. These aspects signify the processes by which individuals sustain balance among emotional, cognitive, and physical realms. In line with the research of Akbari and Hossaini (2018), this connection of mind and body fosters resilience and alleviates the detrimental effects of chronic stress, hence ensuring ongoing well-being and professional efficacy among educators.

3.3 Job Demands-Resources Theory

Bakker and Demerouti (2001,2017) put forward the job demand-resource (JD-R) theory that employees' happiness and performance depend on the balance between job demand and available resources. Heavy workload, role conflict and other high work demands will consume employees' energy; Resources such as autonomy, external support and self-efficacy can improve employees' work motivation and performance level. This dual-path analysis perspective has been widely used to interpret the stress state and professional engagement of teachers (Hascher & Waber, 2021； ; Kaur et al., 2022). Based on JD-R theory, this study analyzes the mediating role of mental health management between work stress and work performance. Among them, emotional intelligence, mental ability and physical health management are regarded as personal resources, which can reduce the adverse effects of stress and improve task performance and situational performance (Çalışkan & Köroğlu, 2022; Zin et al., 2023). Through this theoretical framework, this study further clarifies that effective mental health management can transform occupational stress into positive work motivation, thus promoting teachers to maintain a high-efficiency state and enhancing the stability of educational institutions.

3.4 Hypotheses Development

Job stress has been widely regarded as a key factor affecting employees' mental health and adaptability. Under high work stress, individuals are prone to emotional exhaustion, and their self-regulation ability and coping efficiency will also decline (Agyapong et al., 2022； ; Santamaría et al., 2021). For the teachers, the pressure mainly comes from overwork, vague role orientation and performance appraisal pressure, which will adversely affect teachers' emotional balance and professional satisfaction (Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2022). Empirical evidence indicates that teachers experiencing greater occupational stress report poorer mental health and reduced engagement in self-care (Ong & bin Sulaiman Khan, 2022; Pau et al., 2022). As mental health management requires effective emotional, spiritual, and physical regulation, excessive stress can disrupt these processes and hinder

psychological resilience (Capone & Petrillo, 2020). Hence, job stress is expected to have a significant negative influence on mental health management.
Hypothesis 1: Job stress has a negative effect on mental health management.

Effective mental health management enhances teachers' ability to regulate emotions, maintain focus, and sustain motivation, thereby improving both task and contextual performance (Benevene et al., 2020; Glazzard & Rose, 2020). Studies have shown that teachers with strong emotional intelligence and spiritual competency demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity (Chin et al., 2011; Jena, 2022). Moreover, physical well-being has been associated with reduced burnout and improved professional functioning (Madigan et al., 2023; Jodra & Domínguez, 2020). When mental health is effectively managed, individuals are more likely to maintain consistent work output and contribute positively to their institutional environment. Accordingly, mental health management is expected to play a significant positive role in enhancing job performance among teachers.
Hypothesis 2: Mental health management has a positive effect on job performance.

Job stress has a direct effect on how well employees do their jobs, how committed they are, and how they behave. Extended exposure to stress diminishes motivation and impairs task concentration, resulting in decreased performance quality (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Yang et al., 2019). Studies conducted among educators in Malaysia reveal that stress stemming from workload and administrative demands is associated with diminished job satisfaction and worse instructional effectiveness (Leow et al., 2020; Maung et al., 2022). Likewise, severe psychological stress frequently leads to burnout, absenteeism, and deteriorated interpersonal connections in the workplace (Thomas et al., 2024; Ratanasiripong et al., 2022). These findings indicate that job stress may adversely affect both task-related and environmental dimensions of job performance.
Hypothesis 3: Job stress has a negative effect on job performance.

Recent literature highlights the importance of mental health management as a protective factor that mediates the relationship between stress and performance outcomes. Teachers who manage their emotional and spiritual resources effectively tend to experience less burnout and exhibit greater work engagement even under stressful conditions (Baker et al., 2021; Corrente et al., 2022). Moreover, integrating emotional regulation, spiritual balance, and physical well-being enhances resilience and sustains job effectiveness (Akbari & Hossaini, 2018; Pradhan et al., 2023). When mental health management operates as an internal regulatory mechanism, it reduces the negative impact of job stress and transforms it into adaptive performance energy (Pau et al., 2022; Zin et al., 2023). Therefore, it is proposed that mental health management mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance among teachers.
Hypothesis 4: Mental health management mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance.

Given the paucity of empirical investigations examining the mediating effect of mental health management in the relationship between job stress and job performance, the following research framework (Figure 1) and hypotheses are proposed.

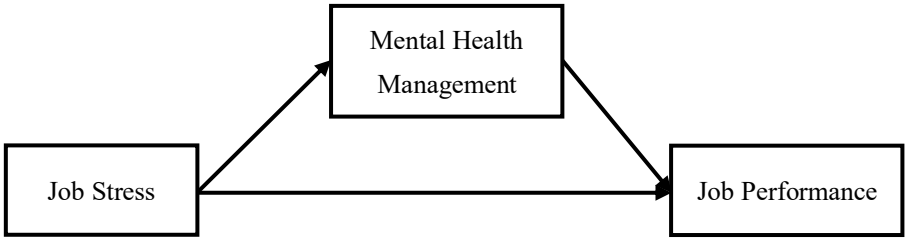

Fig 1. Research Framework

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

4.1 Population and Sample

The study's research population includes all secondary school teachers in the Klang Valley, Malaysia, covering Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, and Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya. According to data from the Malaysian Ministry of Education (2024), these regions collectively employ about 35,420 secondary school teachers. This population represents diverse school types, including national, vocational, technical, and religious institutions, providing a suitable context for examining teachers' job stress, mental health management, and job performance. The sample size was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, which recommends a minimum of 379 respondents for a population of over 35,000. To enhance representativeness and statistical accuracy, a total of 537 responses were collected using a structured online questionnaire. Convenience sampling was adopted to efficiently reach teachers across multiple districts. People filled out the poll using Google Forms and sent it out over email and instant messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were made aware of the study's goals and the steps taken to protect their privacy. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the people who answered the survey, such as their gender, age, religion, education level, marital status, years of teaching experience, grade level, type of school, subject taught, and number of hours they work each week. This shows how diverse secondary school teachers are in the Klang Valley.

Table 1. Demographic Result (N=537)

Item	category	N	%
Gender	Male	253	47.1
	Female	284	52.9
Age	18-25 years old	103	19.2
	25-40 years old	326	60.7
	More than 40 years old	108	20.1
Religion	Islam	146	27.2
	Buddhism	169	31.5
	Christianity	141	26.3
	Hinduism	40	7.4
	Sikhism	23	4.3
	Others	18	3.4
Edu	STPM	115	21.4
	Diploma	64	11.9

	Bachelor's Degree	190	35.4
	Master's Degree	127	23.6
	Doctorate/Ph.D	41	7.6
MaritalStatus	Single	208	38.7
	Married	270	50.3
	Divorced	51	9.5
	Prefer not to say	8	1.5
Years	Less than 1 year	60	11.2
	1-3 years	116	21.6
	4-6 years	147	27.4
	7-10 years	90	16.8
	11-15 years	72	13.4
	More than 15 years	52	9.7
grade	Form 1	81	15.1
	Form 2	34	6.3
	Form 3	157	29.2
	Form 4/Grade 7	143	26.6
	Form 5/Grade 8	71	13.2
	Form 6/Grade 9	51	9.5
school	Kolej Vokasional (KV)	61	11.4
	Sekolah Berasrama Penuh (SBP)	95	17.7
	SM SABK (Government-Assisted Religious School)	46	8.6
	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK)	84	15.6
	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (SMKA)	47	8.8
	Kolej Tingkatan Enam (KT6)	68	12.7
	Sekolah Menengah Pendidikan Khas (SM KHAS)	50	9.3
	Sekolah Seni Malaysia (SENI)	55	10.2
	Sekolah Menengah Teknik (SMT)	31	5.8
subjects	Mathematics	133	24.8
	Science	61	11.4
	English/Language Arts	103	19.2
	Social Studies/History	57	10.6
	Islamic Studies	30	5.6

	Arts	78	14.5
	Physical Education	28	5.2
	Special Education	29	5.4
	Career and Technical Education	18	3.4
hours	Less than 30 hours	174	32.4
	30-40 hours	242	45.1
	41-50 hours	90	16.8
	51-60 hours	31	5.8

4.2 Measures

The questionnaire for this research was divided into two sections. The initial section gathered background details including age, gender, religion, educational background, marital status, teaching experience, grade level taught, school type, subject specialization, and weekly working hours. The next section measured three key areas: occupational stress, psychological well-being self-management, and work performance. All questions were adapted from established instruments and customized to fit the setting of Malaysian secondary education. A five-point Likert scale was used for responses, extending from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After pilot testing and review by experts, the final version contained 44 items, five for each of the main constructs and four dedicated to evaluating job performance.

Job Stress

Job stress was evaluated utilizing the Secondary Teacher Job Stress Scale (SJTSS), formulated from Kaur et al. (2022) and adapted from the *Symptom Checklist-90* (SCL-90) (Derogatis & Cleary, 1977) and the *Ways of Coping* framework (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). The scale evaluates stress among Malaysian secondary school teachers across three major dimensions: Stressors, Symptoms, and Coping Mechanisms. Stressors capture the organizational, social, and personal demands experienced by teachers; Symptoms reflect the physical, mental, and behavioral manifestations of stress; and Coping Mechanisms assess teachers' adaptive and maladaptive responses to workplace pressure. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of both the sources and outcomes of occupational stress.

Mental Health Management

Teachers' Mental Health Management Scale (TMHMS) aims to measure the effectiveness of teachers in maintaining their mental health from three dimensions, namely, emotional intelligence, mental state and physical health. Among them, the EQ dimension is revised with reference to the ESCQ-45 scale (Schoeps et al., 2019), with the core focus on teachers' ability to perceive, express and regulate emotions; The mental dimension adopts SpREUK scale and sc-r-ii scale (Büsing, 2010; Lu et al., 2018), which is used to evaluate teachers' self-cognition, higher-level value orientation and reflective practice level; The dimension of physical health is revised from the scale of Webel et al. (2012), which mainly examines the lifestyle behavior of teachers, covering sports, sleep and diet nutrition. Through these three dimensions, TMHMS can comprehensively evaluate teachers' mental health maintenance from the self-regulation level of emotion, spirit and body.

Job Performance

In this study, Motowidlo and Van Scott's (1994) Job Performance Scale for Middle School Teachers (STJPS) was selected to quantify the job performance of teachers. The scale divides teachers' behavior into two categories: one is task performance, which mainly measures the behavior directly related to teaching quality and classroom management; The other is situational performance, which includes voluntary activities that help improve the social environment and organizational atmosphere of schools. By integrating these two dimensions, STJPS can make a comprehensive and balanced evaluation of teachers' professional efficacy and its influence on the overall operation of the school.

4.3 Data Analysis Technique

For data analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS 23.0. This method was selected because it allows for the simultaneous assessment of intricate relationships between latent constructs. The analytical procedure involved two primary phases. Initially, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to evaluate the measurement model. This step verified convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability by examining factor loadings, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted. Subsequently, the structural model was tested to assess the hypothesized paths connecting job stress, management of mental well-being, and performance at work. Model fit was gauged with standard goodness-of-fit indices such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and the Chi-square/df ratio. The significance of the structural paths was determined by analyzing p-values and standardized regression coefficients.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for all of the items that were measured. The average scores were between 3.65 and 4.36, which means that most people agreed with the notions at a moderate to high level. The skewness values were between -1.50 and -0.63, and the kurtosis values were between -0.32 and 1.97. This shows that all of the items were normally distributed within the permitted range of ±2. These results show that the dataset fits the normalcy assumption needed for structural equation modeling later on.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Measurement Items (N = 537)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
ST1	537	1	5	3.825	1.106	-1.037	0.634
ST2	537	1	5	3.773	1.125	-0.846	-0.027
ST3	537	1	5	3.661	1.193	-0.786	-0.321
ST4	537	1	5	3.782	1.159	-0.919	-0.021
ST5	537	1	5	4.002	1.039	-1.005	0.294
SY1	537	1	5	3.790	1.215	-1.182	0.566
SY2	537	1	5	3.818	1.095	-0.893	0.000
SY3	537	1	5	3.652	1.165	-0.771	-0.321
SY4	537	1	5	3.693	1.156	-0.930	0.078
SY5	537	1	5	3.905	1.166	-1.234	0.845

CM1	537	1	5	4.045	1.001	-1.255	1.502
CM2	537	1	5	3.855	1.030	-1.043	0.782
CM3	537	1	5	3.899	1.100	-1.100	0.617
CM4	537	1	5	3.840	1.028	-0.824	-0.003
CM5	537	1	5	3.816	1.112	-1.045	0.527
EI1	537	1	5	4.356	0.865	-1.415	1.875
EI2	537	1	5	3.849	0.957	-0.669	0.023
EI3	537	1	5	3.933	0.918	-0.637	-0.084
EI4	537	1	5	4.201	0.833	-0.993	0.870
EI5	537	1	5	4.052	0.902	-0.928	0.609
SP1	537	1	5	4.095	0.883	-0.904	0.625
SP2	537	1	5	3.994	0.969	-1.052	0.916
SP3	537	1	5	3.974	0.994	-0.943	0.524
SP4	537	1	5	3.898	1.036	-0.946	0.445
SP5	537	1	5	4.123	0.991	-1.220	1.133
PH1	537	1	5	4.123	1.038	-1.502	1.974
PH2	537	1	5	4.076	1.063	-1.480	1.930
PH3	537	1	5	3.981	1.027	-0.885	0.008
PH4	537	1	5	3.957	1.082	-1.004	0.300
PH5	537	1	5	3.892	1.133	-1.078	0.486
TP1	537	1	5	3.996	1.029	-1.187	1.065
TP2	537	1	5	3.989	0.994	-1.029	0.692
TP3	537	1	5	3.881	1.046	-0.850	0.118
TP4	537	1	5	3.810	1.105	-0.834	-0.038
CP1	537	1	5	4.024	0.991	-1.225	1.506
CP2	537	1	5	3.916	1.043	-0.960	0.437
CP3	537	1	5	3.831	1.124	-0.935	0.112
CP4	537	1	5	3.940	1.056	-1.015	0.388

Note: ST = Stressors; SY = Symptoms; CM = Coping Mechanisms; EI = Emotional Intelligence; SP = Spirituality; PH = Physical Health; TP = Task Performance; CP = Contextual Performance.

Table 3 shows a summary of the total construct-level descriptive statistics. Teachers said they were moderately stressed at work (M = 3.82, SD = 0.80) and had relatively high levels of mental health management (M = 4.03, SD = 0.68) and job performance (M = 3.92, SD = 0.78). Emotional intelligence (M = 4.08, SD = 0.72) had the highest mean score among the subdimensions of mental health management. Spirituality (M = 4.02, SD = 0.82) and physical health (M = 4.01, SD = 0.92) were next.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Variables (N = 537)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TJS_X	537	1.200	4.933	3.824	0.803	-1.393	1.370
ST_X1	537	1.400	5.000	3.809	0.949	-1.155	0.175

SY_X2	537	1.000	5.000	3.771	1.014	-1.229	0.430
CM_X3	537	1.200	5.000	3.891	0.870	-1.228	0.635
TMHM_M	537	1.333	5.000	4.034	0.682	-1.072	1.158
EI_M1	537	1.200	5.000	4.078	0.719	-1.118	1.583
SP_M2	537	1.600	5.000	4.017	0.819	-1.149	0.515
PH_M3	537	1.200	5.000	4.006	0.920	-1.496	1.833
TJP_Y	537	1.500	5.000	3.923	0.776	-0.884	0.259
TP_Y1	537	1.250	5.000	3.919	0.896	-1.077	0.439
CP_Y2	537	1.250	5.000	3.928	0.876	-1.228	0.948

5.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

5.2.1 Reliability Analysis

This study assessed the internal reliability of all measurement constructs by employing Cronbach's alpha alongside Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) scores. As presented in Table 4, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for every construct surpassed the 0.70 threshold, a benchmark recommended by Nunnally (1978). CITC values for all items exceeded 0.50, indicating that each item was positively correlated with its respective construct. The results confirm that the items are reliable and internally consistent, and therefore all items were retained for subsequent analyses.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis Results

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Stressors (ST)	5	0.899
Symptoms (SY)	5	0.923
Coping Mechanisms (CM)	5	0.882
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	5	0.861
Spirituality (SP)	5	0.895
Physical Health (PH)	5	0.912
Task Performance (TP)	4	0.880
Contextual Performance (CP)	4	0.851

The reliability coefficients demonstrated strong internal consistency across all constructs, ranging from 0.851 to 0.923. These results indicate that the measurement instruments are robust and suitable for further factor analyses.

5.2.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Employing SPSS 23.0, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to assess the measurement scale's construct validity. The outcomes from the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test are displayed in Table 5. The KMO value of 0.950 exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 13271.503$, $df = 703$, $p < 0.001$), which means that the dataset was good for factor analysis.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.950

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	13271.503
df	703
Sig.	0.000

Principal Component Analysis was applied using Varimax rotation, retaining factors that had eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. As indicated in Table 6, eight components were extracted. These factors collectively explained 71.728% of the total variance, a figure that surpasses the acceptable threshold of 50%. This outcome indicates that the measurement scale possesses strong explanatory power and effectively represents the underlying constructs.

Table 6. Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.218	34.785	34.785	13.218	34.785	34.785	3.747	9.859	9.859
2	4.080	10.736	45.520	4.080	10.736	45.520	3.745	9.856	19.716
3	2.332	6.138	51.658	2.332	6.138	51.658	3.633	9.562	29.277
4	1.811	4.767	56.425	1.811	4.767	56.425	3.589	9.446	38.723
5	1.674	4.406	60.831	1.674	4.406	60.831	3.495	9.197	47.920
6	1.472	3.875	64.706	1.472	3.875	64.706	3.322	8.743	56.663
7	1.439	3.788	68.493	1.439	3.788	68.493	2.916	7.673	64.336
8	1.229	3.234	71.728	1.229	3.234	71.728	2.809	7.391	71.728
9	.592	1.559	73.286						
10	.543	1.430	74.716						
11	.532	1.401	76.117						
12	.501	1.319	77.436						
13	.490	1.290	78.726						
14	.478	1.257	79.983						
15	.450	1.184	81.166						
16	.443	1.166	82.333						
17	.428	1.126	83.459						
18	.421	1.107	84.565						
19	.406	1.069	85.635						
20	.392	1.031	86.666						
21	.384	1.011	87.677						

22	.362	.952	88.629						
23	.353	.930	89.559						
24	.346	.910	90.469						
25	.339	.891	91.361						
26	.318	.836	92.197						
27	.301	.793	92.989						
28	.292	.769	93.758						
29	.282	.742	94.500						
30	.273	.717	95.218						
31	.265	.698	95.916						
32	.250	.659	96.575						
33	.246	.646	97.221						
34	.237	.623	97.844						
35	.231	.607	98.451						
36	.222	.583	99.034						
37	.199	.524	99.559						
38	.168	.441	100.000						

The rotated component matrix is shown in Table 7. All items had factor loadings exceeding 0.50 on their corresponding factors, but cross-loadings remained below 0.40. This shows that each item loads correctly on the construct it was meant to, which shows that the structure is genuine.

Table 7. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
PH1	**.863**	-.077	-.072	.139	-.092	.156	.160	.098
PH2	**.819**	-.096	-.101	.149	-.083	.213	.159	.096
PH3	**.764**	-.085	-.045	.191	-.048	.153	.142	.073
PH4	**.740**	-.057	-.119	.233	-.094	.218	.141	.129
PH5	**.729**	-.083	-.149	.278	-.075	.212	.104	.086
SY4	-.077	**.819**	.191	-.073	.170	-.073	-.050	-.106
SY2	-.066	**.801**	.200	-.108	.190	-.071	-.094	-.126
SY5	-.076	**.775**	.261	-.142	.262	-.113	-.091	-.116
SY1	-.096	**.763**	.313	-.121	.245	-.073	-.127	-.092
SY3	-.110	**.741**	.219	-.123	.246	-.044	-.115	-.165
ST2	-.023	.161	**.795**	-.118	.156	-.163	-.084	-.025
ST4	-.116	.240	**.769**	-.091	.206	-.027	-.073	-.092
ST5	-.107	.254	**.762**	-.098	.235	-.087	-.120	-.075
ST1	-.097	.257	**.754**	-.097	.214	-.128	-.065	-.079
ST3	-.136	.188	**.731**	-.118	.206	-.071	-.108	-.078
SP5	.243	-.102	-.104	**.792**	-.136	.170	.093	.127
SP1	.203	-.146	-.128	**.786**	-.102	.187	.077	.129
SP2	.225	-.047	-.105	**.748**	-.022	.198	.161	.104
SP4	.139	-.131	-.109	**.742**	-.103	.133	.052	.163

SP3	.160	-.102	-.078	**.733**	-.092	.278	.129	.045
CM1	-.048	.246	.256	-.103	**.764**	-.104	-.128	-.073
CM3	-.097	.193	.214	-.097	**.752**	-.072	-.117	-.044
CM5	-.105	.195	.180	-.110	**.748**	-.075	-.094	-.128
CM4	-.082	.170	.185	-.040	**.727**	-.134	-.119	-.123
CM2	-.045	.233	.177	-.098	**.703**	-.135	-.129	-.170
EI1	.165	-.050	-.135	.198	.010	**.774**	.135	.136
EI4	.223	-.104	-.094	.264	-.047	**.736**	.132	.127
EI3	.127	-.067	-.112	.172	-.177	**.711**	.140	.086
EI2	.183	-.076	-.048	.101	-.156	**.709**	.093	.084
EI5	.209	-.045	-.073	.203	-.118	**.706**	.046	.145
TP2	.152	-.117	-.090	.105	-.176	.154	**.805**	.138
TP1	.160	-.118	-.104	.178	-.149	.132	**.778**	.217
TP4	.193	-.102	-.094	.078	-.087	.157	**.765**	.183
TP3	.171	-.072	-.135	.119	-.145	.087	**.737**	.246
CP4	.022	-.115	-.091	.115	-.088	.108	.133	**.802**
CP1	.116	-.162	-.053	.106	-.080	.158	.187	**.786**
CP2	.130	-.141	-.084	.145	-.169	.116	.208	**.719**
CP3	.183	-.092	-.070	.152	-.152	.156	.221	**.714**

All items exhibited primary loadings > 0.50 and cross-loadings < 0.40, confirming strong factor differentiation and satisfactory construct validity across all eight factors.

5.2.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Using AMOS 23.0, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to check the measurement model, which had eight latent constructs and forty-four observed items. Below is a summary of the standardized factor loadings and model fit indices. The results show that the model fits well and has convergent validity.

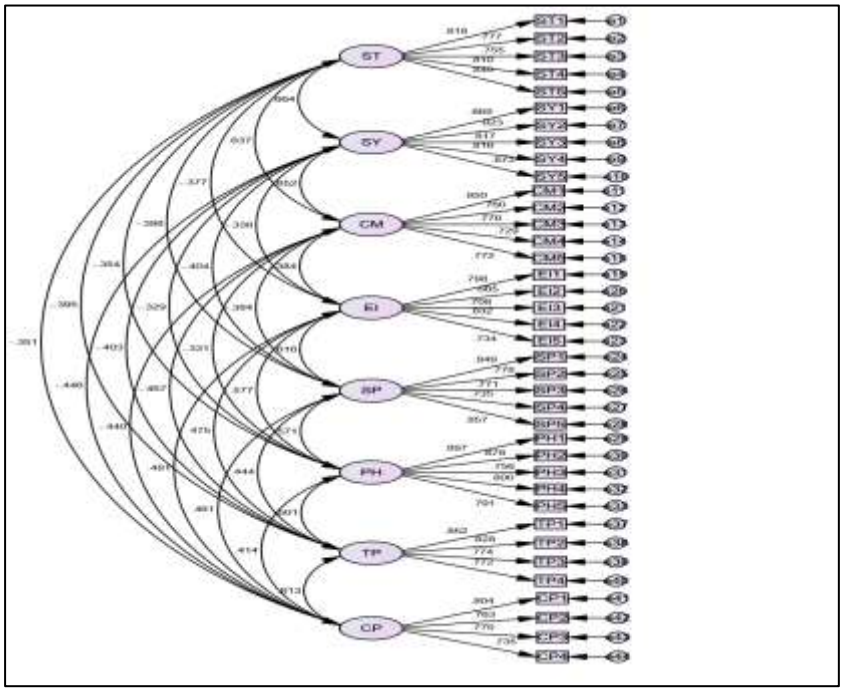

Fig 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

The overall model fit indices are presented in Table 8. The CMIN/DF value was 1.156, which is below the recommended threshold of 3. The values of GFI (0.934), AGFI (0.923), NFI (0.946), IFI (0.992), TLI (0.992), and CFI (0.992) all exceed 0.90, indicating good model fit. In addition, RMR (0.034) and RMSEA (0.017) were both below 0.08, confirming that the model fits the data well.

Table 8. Model Fit Indices of the CFA Model

Model Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value	Interpretation
Chi-square (CMIN)	-	736.056	-
Degrees of Freedom (DF)	-	637	-
CMIN/DF	< 3	1.156	Good
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	< 0.08	0.034	Good
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	> 0.90	0.934	Good
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	> 0.90	0.923	Good
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> 0.90	0.946	Good
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	> 0.90	0.992	Good
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.90	0.992	Good
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.90	0.992	Good
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.017	Good

The factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for every construct are displayed in Table 9. All standardized loadings exceeded 0.60, CR values were greater than 0.70, and AVE values surpassed 0.50, demonstrating that the measurement model exhibited robust internal consistency and strong convergent validity.

Table 9. Convergent Validity of Constructs

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
ST	ST1	0.819	0.9	0.643
	ST2	0.777		
	ST3	0.755		
	ST4	0.81		
	ST5	0.845		
SY	SY1	0.869	0.923	0.706
	SY2	0.823		
	SY3	0.817		
	SY4	0.816		
	SY5	0.873		
CM	CM1	0.85	0.884	0.604
	CM2	0.76		
	CM3	0.77		
	CM4	0.729		

	CM5	0.772		
EI	EI1	0.798	0.865	0.562
	EI2	0.665		
	EI3	0.708		
	EI4	0.832		
	EI5	0.734		
SP	SP1	0.849	0.898	0.639
	SP2	0.778		
	SP3	0.771		
	SP4	0.735		
	SP5	0.857		
PH	PH1	0.897	0.915	0.683
	PH2	0.878		
	PH3	0.756		
	PH4	0.8		
	PH5	0.791		
TP	TP1	0.852	0.882	0.652
	TP2	0.828		
	TP3	0.774		
	TP4	0.772		
CP	CP1	0.804	0.852	0.59
	CP2	0.763		
	CP3	0.77		
	CP4	0.735		

All factor loadings, CR, and AVE values meet the recommended thresholds, confirming that the measurement model exhibits strong convergent validity and reliability.

5.2.4 Discriminant Validity Analysis

To assess discriminant validity, the approach proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was applied. This criterion requires that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for any given construct be larger than its correlations with all other constructs. As presented in Table 10, all diagonal values, representing the square roots of AVE, are greater than the off-diagonal correlation coefficients. This confirms that each construct is distinct and captures a unique concept within the model, thereby successfully establishing discriminant validity for every latent variable.

Table 10. Discriminant Validity and Correlation Matrix

	ST	SY	CM	EI	SP	PH	TP	CP
ST	**0.802**							
SY	.598**	**0.840**						
CM	.564**	.585**	**0.777**					
EI	-.337**	-.303**	-.356**	**0.750**				
SP	-.360**	-.364**	-.341**	.542**	**0.799**			
PH	-.332**	-.308**	-.308**	.528**	.539**	**0.826**		

TP	-.353**	-.361**	-.414**	.416**	.395**	.458**	**0.807**	
CP	-.309**	-.396**	-.391**	.414**	.406**	.372**	.535**	**0.768**

Note: Diagonal elements represent the square roots of AVE, and off-diagonal elements indicate inter-construct correlations. $p < 0.01$.

5.3 Structural Model Analysis

5.3.1 Model Fit Indices

The structural model was examined in AMOS 23.0 using the maximum likelihood estimation technique. The resulting model is illustrated in Figure 3. According to Table 11, every model fit index meets or surpasses the suggested thresholds. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF = 1.166) is less than the cut-off value of 3. The values of GFI (0.931), AGFI (0.922), NFI (0.944), IFI (0.992), TLI (0.991), and CFI (0.992) all surpass 0.90, indicating an excellent model fit. Also, the RMR (0.037) and RMSEA (0.018) are both less than 0.08, which shows that the proposed structural model fits quite well overall. These findings indicate that the model sufficiently reflects the observed data.

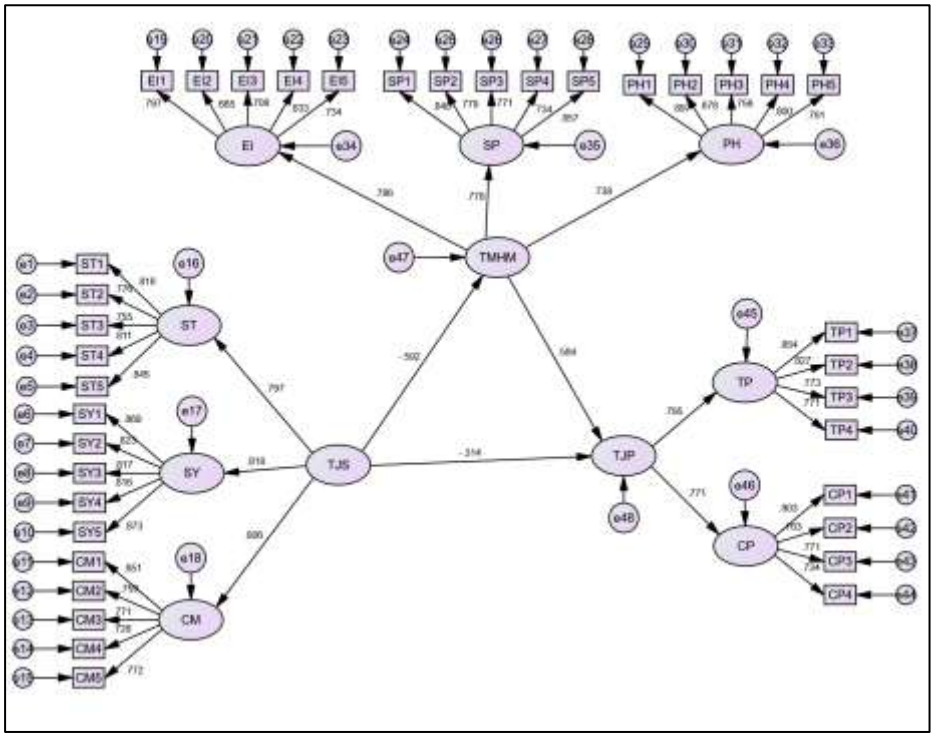

Fig 3. Structural Model

Table 11. Model Fit Indices of the Structural Model

Model Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value	Evaluation
Chi-square (CMIN)	-	762.765	-
Degrees of Freedom (DF)	-	654	-
CMIN/DF	< 3	1.166	Good
RMR	< 0.08	0.037	Good
GFI	> 0.90	0.931	Good
AGFI	> 0.90	0.922	Good
NFI	> 0.90	0.944	Good
IFI	> 0.90	0.992	Good

TLI	> 0.90	0.991	Good
CFI	> 0.90	0.992	Good
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.018	Good

The fit indices collectively indicate that the structural model demonstrates strong reliability and validity, making it suitable for hypothesis testing in subsequent analyses.

5.3.2 Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct Effects)

The direct path relationships among the constructs were examined using AMOS 23.0. Table 12 presents the standardized and unstandardized coefficients for each hypothesized relationship. The results reveal that job stress (TJS) has a significant negative effect on teachers' mental health management (TMHM) ($\beta = -0.592$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, job stress negatively affects teachers' job performance (TJP) ($\beta = -0.314$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, mental health management positively and significantly influences job performance ($\beta = 0.584$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that all three direct hypotheses (H1–H3) are supported.

Table 12. Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing Results

Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Unstandardized Coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	p	Hypothesis Result
TMHM ← TJS	-0.592	-0.445	0.048	-9.254	***	Supported
TJP ← TJS	-0.314	-0.304	0.064	-4.748	***	Supported
TJP ← TMHM	0.584	0.753	0.098	7.693	***	Supported

Note: ***p < 0.001.

5.3.3 Mediation Analysis

The mediating influence of teachers' mental health management (TMHM) on the relationship between work stress (TJS) and job performance (TJP) was assessed using the bootstrapping approach in AMOS 23.0. The bootstrap resampling method was used 5,000 times with a 95% confidence level. Table 13 shows that the confidence intervals (CIs) for all effects did not include zero. This means that both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant.

Table 13. Bootstrapping Results for Mediation Effect

Path	Effect	S.E.	95%CI		p
			Lower	Upper	
TJS → TJP (Total Effect)	-0.66	0.039	-0.733	-0.581	0
TJS → TMHM → TJP (Indirect Effect)	-0.346	0.056	-0.463	-0.242	0
TJS → TJP (Direct Effect)	-0.314	0.062	-0.431	-0.186	0

The total effect of job stress on job performance was significant ($\beta = -0.660$, $p < 0.05$), as the 95% confidence interval (-0.733, -0.581) excluded zero. The indirect effect through mental health management was also significant ($\beta = -0.346$, $p < 0.05$), with its confidence

interval (-0.463, -0.242) not containing zero. Similarly, the direct effect remained significant (β = -0.314, $p < 0.05$). These findings confirm that TMHM partially mediates the relationship between job stress and job performance, indicating that stress influences performance both directly and indirectly through mental health management.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Discussion of Findings

This research investigated the effects of occupational stress on the management of psychological well-being and work performance in a sample of Malaysian secondary school educators, considering mental health management as a mediating factor. The results demonstrated that job stress negatively affected both an individual's capacity to manage their mental health and their effectiveness at work. Conversely, effective mental health management was found to positively influence job performance and to partially mediate the connection between stress and performance. These outcomes are interpreted through the lens of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, the Stress Response System theory, and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework.

The first finding confirmed that higher job stress reduces teachers' ability to manage their mental health. Consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model, excessive job demands surpass teachers' coping capacity, resulting in emotional exhaustion and maladaptive coping (Agyapong et al., 2022; Kaur et al., 2022). Similar evidence from Maung et al. (2022) also showed that Malaysian teachers under pressure experienced anxiety and burnout. However, this study extends prior work by showing that stress affects not only emotional regulation but also spiritual and physical management, highlighting the multidimensional nature of coping.

The second finding revealed a negative relationship between job stress and job performance, supporting the Stress Response System Theory (Selye, 1976; McEwen, 1998). Prolonged stress responses can impair focus and energy, leading to lower task effectiveness (Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Travers & Cooper, 1993). Compared with Western studies where autonomy helps reduce stress, the Malaysian context shows limited structural support and heavy administrative workloads (Al Ayubi et al., 2021). This suggests that stress is not only an individual issue but also shaped by organizational factors.

The third finding showed that mental health management enhances job performance, aligning with studies emphasizing the role of emotional and spiritual regulation in promoting resilience and engagement (Chin et al., 2011; Benevene et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2023). In the face of work challenges, teachers who can maintain physical and mental balance and adhere to a healthy life and rest can often show better working conditions. This finding is consistent with previous research conclusions, that is, emotional, mental and physical factors should be integrated into a unified overall consideration, rather than dealing with each dimension in isolation.

In addition, the results of intermediary analysis show that mental health management plays a partial intermediary role in the relationship between stress and performance. This conclusion is consistent with JD-R theory-personal resources can help individuals to cope with work needs, but they cannot completely eliminate these needs (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Pau et al., 2022). Part of the mediating effect shows that the individual's coping

behavior needs to be supported by a favorable institutional environment to fully play its role. Therefore, in order to maintain teachers' health and help them to play their best work level, schools need to launch structured mental health programs and establish a fair work distribution mechanism.

This study confirms that teachers' happiness and job performance depend on the interaction between personal coping mechanism and organizational support. At the same time, the study emphasizes that effective mental health management can transform stress from a risk state to a controllable state, which plays a fundamental role in ensuring the sustainable development of the education team.

6.2 Research Contributions and Implications

6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

This research enhances the comprehension of teachers' psychological well-being by synthesizing the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, the Stress Response System Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources framework. By revealing how stress assessment, physiological response and personal resources interact in a dynamic way and affect performance results, the study adds new content to the relevant theoretical system. The verification results of mental health management as a part of intermediary variables provide a new perspective for understanding the role of coping mechanisms in educational scenes. In addition, the study applies the existing theories to the teachers in Malaysia, and analyzes the formation process of local teachers' pressure, which is aggravated by institutional restrictions and lack of autonomy. This discovery also highlights the applicability of the existing pressure theory in a specific context and further expands the practical scope of the theory.

6.2.2 Managerial Implications

The findings offer valuable implications for educational institutions. Schools should implement structured mental health management programs that combine emotional regulation training, peer support, and workload balance. Administrators need to recognize that individual coping alone is insufficient; institutional support must address systemic stressors such as excessive administrative tasks and unclear role expectations. Promoting open communication, providing psychological counseling, and fostering a positive school climate can enhance teachers' resilience and job performance. Integrating wellness strategies into teacher development policies will strengthen both teacher well-being and educational quality.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study offers valuable insights; nonetheless, it is essential to recognize its limits. First, the data were gathered via self-reported questionnaires, potentially influenced by social desirability bias. Future studies could adopt mixed method approaches to capture more nuanced experiences of stress and coping. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; longitudinal research would better explain how mental health management evolves over time. Third, the study focused on Malaysian secondary school teachers, which may limit generalizability to other educational levels or countries. Future research should include comparative studies across regions or integrate additional variables such as organizational culture and leadership support to further explain the complex dynamics between stress, well-being, and performance.

7. CONCLUSION

This research examined how occupational stress influences the professional performance of teachers, specifically exploring the intermediary role of psychological well-being management in Malaysian secondary schools. Structural equation modeling results revealed that work-related stress had a negative impact on both teachers' ability to manage their mental health and their job effectiveness. In contrast, effective mental health management demonstrated a positive effect on work performance and served as a partial buffer in the stress-performance relationship. These results help clarify the dynamic interaction between stress factors and coping strategies within educational environments, highlighting the importance of both psychological support and organizational frameworks. The study contributes to theoretical understanding by integrating the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Stress Response System Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model into a unified analytical structure. From a practical perspective, it underscores the importance of incorporating mental health support initiatives into educational institutional policies to improve educator welfare and instructional quality.

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