

Study of School Teachers' Quality of Life in terms of their Perceived Stress and Parenting Style

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching has long been recognized as one of the most emotionally demanding professions. Teachers serve as the cornerstone of any educational system, shaping students' cognitive, emotional, and moral foundations. Yet, despite their crucial role, teachers often experience considerable occupational stress, emotional fatigue, and role strain. The modern educational environment places unprecedented expectations on teachers—to meet academic standards, integrate new technologies, manage diverse classrooms, and maintain enthusiasm in increasingly challenging conditions. Consequently, their quality of life (QoL) has become an important area of psychological and educational research (Kyriacou, 2011; Klassen et al., 2013).

The World Health Organization (1998) defines quality of life as individuals' perceptions of their position in life within the context of their culture, goals, expectations, and value systems. For teachers, QoL encompasses dimensions such as physical health, emotional well-being, social support, and environmental satisfaction. High quality of life enables teachers to be more motivated, creative, and emotionally available to students, while low QoL is associated with burnout, absenteeism, and poor job performance (Aloe et al., 2014). Understanding the factors that shape teachers' QoL is therefore critical for promoting sustainable teaching environments and effective education systems.

Perceived Stress and Teacher Well-being

Among the key determinants of teachers' QoL is perceived stress—a construct referring to individuals' subjective appraisal of how stressful their life circumstances are (Cohen et al., 1983). Perceived stress reflects the gap between environmental demands and personal coping resources. For teachers, such stress often arises from workload, classroom management issues, time constraints, and lack of administrative support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016).

Research has shown that teachers with high perceived stress exhibit greater emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and decreased job satisfaction (Extremera et al., 2010; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Chronic stress can lead to burnout, which in turn undermines enthusiasm for teaching and reduces overall life satisfaction (Maslach et al., 2001). Studies conducted in India also report that primary and secondary school teachers frequently experience moderate to high stress levels due to overcrowded classrooms, exam-related pressure, and limited professional recognition (Kumar & Deo, 2011). The perception of stress—not merely its existence—plays a decisive role in how teachers respond emotionally and behaviorally. Those with better emotional regulation and coping mechanisms tend to perceive challenges as manageable, thereby maintaining a higher quality of life.

Parenting Style as a Personal Factor in Teacher Well-being

Beyond professional stressors, teachers' personal and family lives significantly influence their well-being. Many teachers are parents themselves, managing the dual responsibilities of educating students at school and nurturing their own children at home. Their parenting style—the consistent pattern of behaviors and attitudes toward their children—can reflect deeper aspects of personality, emotional regulation, and interpersonal functioning.

Baumrind (1966) identified three primary parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parents balance warmth and control, encouraging autonomy within

clear boundaries. Authoritarian parents emphasize obedience and control, often with limited emotional responsiveness, while permissive parents are indulgent and lenient, providing high warmth but little discipline. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded this framework by conceptualizing parenting along two dimensions: responsiveness and demandingness.

Although parenting style is usually studied in relation to child outcomes, research indicates that it also influences parents' own emotional well-being. Parents with authoritative tendencies generally report better emotional adjustment and lower stress, whereas authoritarian or inconsistent parenting is linked to anxiety, guilt, and relational tension (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2011). For teachers, who frequently deal with children both at school and home, these emotional patterns may spill over into their professional lives.

Furthermore, work–family conflict is a major source of stress among teachers, especially women (Cinamon & Rich, 2010). Balancing school duties with parenting responsibilities can create time pressure, fatigue, and emotional strain. Conversely, positive family interactions can serve as a protective factor, buffering the effects of occupational stress. Parenting style, therefore, might moderate how stress impacts quality of life: an authoritative approach could enhance coping and resilience, while rigid or neglectful styles may intensify stress.

Linking Perceived Stress, Parenting Style, and Quality of Life

Existing research underscores the interconnected nature of stress, parenting, and well-being. Teachers with high emotional intelligence and supportive interpersonal relationships experience lower perceived stress and higher life satisfaction (Extremera & Rey, 2016). Similarly, individuals who adopt positive parenting styles tend to possess better emotional regulation skills, which may reduce perceived stress. Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) work–family enrichment theory suggests that positive experiences in one life domain (e.g., family) can enhance functioning in another (e.g., work). Thus, teachers who experience supportive and fulfilling family relationships are likely to perceive less stress at work and report better quality of life.

However, the reverse may also occur: high perceived stress from professional demands may negatively influence parenting behaviors, creating a feedback loop that diminishes well-being. Pithers and Fogarty (1995) found that teachers with higher stress levels reported poorer family satisfaction and lower overall quality of life. Yet, research exploring these interrelationships—particularly the moderating or mediating role of parenting style between perceived stress and QoL—remains limited, especially in developing countries such as India.

Indian Context and Research Gaps

Indian teachers face unique contextual challenges: large class sizes, pressure to complete prescribed curricula, frequent changes in educational policies, and the moral responsibility of being role models in society. Additionally, many teachers—particularly in public schools—experience resource shortages, low pay scales, and limited autonomy. Alongside these professional pressures, social expectations regarding family responsibilities remain strong, particularly for women educators who manage domestic duties alongside teaching. These overlapping demands make Indian teachers a distinct group for studying the combined effects of perceived stress and parenting style on quality of life.

Despite growing research on teacher stress in India (Kumar & Deo, 2011; Sharma & Kaur, 2018), little empirical work has examined how family-related factors interact with professional pressures to affect well-being. A holistic approach that considers both occupational and personal domains is therefore essential to understand and support teachers' overall quality of life.

Rationale and Hypotheses

The reviewed literature establishes that (a) perceived stress negatively affects teachers' well-being and quality of life, (b) parenting style reflects emotional regulation and influences coping, and (c) family–work dynamics can either buffer or exacerbate stress outcomes. However, empirical evidence integrating these variables in the context of school teachers, particularly in India, remains scarce.

Given these theoretical and empirical gaps, the present study seeks to examine the role of perceived stress and parenting style on school teachers' quality of life. Specifically, it aims to investigate how teachers' subjective experiences of stress and their parenting behaviors jointly influence their overall physical, psychological, and social well-being.

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived stress will have a significant negative relationship with teachers' quality of life.

H2: Parenting style will have a significant relationship with teachers' quality of life, with the authoritative style being positively associated and the authoritarian and permissive styles being negatively associated.

H3: Parenting style will have a significant relationship with perceived stress, with the authoritative style linked to lower perceived stress levels.

By examining these hypotheses, the study aims to contribute to the literature on teacher well-being by integrating occupational and family dimensions. Understanding these dynamics can help educational institutions design comprehensive well-being programs, promote stress management interventions, and encourage healthy family–work balance strategies that enhance teachers' overall quality of life.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employed a correlational and cross-sectional research design to examine the role of perceived stress and parenting style on school teachers' quality of life. This design was chosen as it allows the exploration of the relationships

among naturally occurring variables without manipulating them. The approach is particularly appropriate for understanding how teachers' personal (parenting style) and psychological (perceived stress) factors jointly influence their overall quality of life.

Participants

The study sample comprised 200 school teachers (both male and female) working in government and private schools. Participants were drawn from secondary and higher secondary schools located in urban and semi-urban areas. The age of the participants ranged between 28 to 55 years (Mean = 39.2 years, SD = 7.4). All participants had at least three years of teaching experience and were parents of at least one child, ensuring that parenting style could be meaningfully assessed.

The sample included approximately 45% male teachers ($n = 90$) and 55% female teachers ($n = 110$). Teachers represented diverse subject areas, including science, humanities, and language disciplines. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided voluntary consent prior to participation.

Sampling Technique

The study used a combination of purposive and incidental sampling techniques to select participants.

Purposive Sampling: This technique was employed to deliberately include school teachers who met specific inclusion criteria:

- (a) currently teaching in a recognized school,
- (b) having at least three years of teaching experience, and
- (c) being a parent of one or more children.

These criteria ensured that the participants had relevant professional experience and parental responsibilities, both central to the study variables.

Incidental (Convenience) Sampling: Within the purposively identified group of schools, teachers who were available and willing to participate at the time of data collection were included. This pragmatic approach was adopted to ensure adequate sample size and participation within the given time frame.

This mixed sampling approach was appropriate given the study's objectives and the need to access working teachers who fit the inclusion criteria while also being available during school hours.

Tools Used

The following standardized instruments were administered to collect data:

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983):

This widely used 10-item self-report measure assesses the degree to which individuals perceive their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*). Higher scores indicate greater perceived stress. The PSS-10 has demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .78-.85$) and validity across diverse populations.

Parenting Style Inventory II (PSI-II) by Darling and Toyokawa (1997)

This scale measures three major parenting styles—**authoritative**, **authoritarian**, and **permissive**—based on Baumrind's framework. Participants respond to statements on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The subscale scores reflect the dominant parenting orientation of the respondent. The instrument has demonstrated satisfactory reliability ($\alpha = .70-.82$).

WHO Quality of Life-BREF (WHOQOL-BREF) developed by the World Health Organization (1998): This 26-item scale assesses quality of life across four domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment. Items are rated on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating better quality of life. The WHOQOL-BREF is validated for use in the Indian population and exhibits strong psychometric properties ($\alpha = .84$ overall).

All tools were used in their English versions, as participants were proficient in English. Instructions were clearly explained, and participants completed the questionnaires individually during school hours.

Procedure

After obtaining formal permission from school authorities, the researcher personally visited selected schools. Teachers who met the inclusion criteria were approached, and the purpose of the study was explained to them. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were assured.

The questionnaire booklet containing the three scales and a demographic information sheet was distributed to participants. The average time for completion was 25–30 minutes. Data were collected over a period of two months. Incomplete or

inconsistent responses were excluded from the final analysis, resulting in a valid sample of 200 participants.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and range) were computed to summarize the data. Pearson's correlation to examine the relationships among perceived stress, parenting styles, and quality of life.

Result and discussion

Table 1: Depicting the relationship between quality of life and perceived stress

	<i>Perceived Stress</i>
Quality of Life	0.925**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presents the Pearson product–moment correlation between perceived stress and quality of life among school teachers. The obtained correlation coefficient was $r = -.925$, $p < .01$, indicating a strong, statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables. This result implies that as teachers' perceived stress increases, their overall quality of life markedly decreases. Conversely, lower levels of perceived stress are associated with higher well-being across physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains.

The magnitude of this correlation suggests that perceived stress is a major determinant of teachers' quality of life. In practical terms, teachers who frequently appraise their work and personal circumstances as stressful may experience emotional exhaustion, fatigue, and reduced satisfaction with life, while those who perceive less stress tend to report better health, stronger relationships, and a greater sense of balance.

These findings support Hypothesis 1, confirming that perceived stress and quality of life are inversely related in this sample of 200 school teachers. The strong correlation aligns with previous research (Extremere et al., 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) that underscores the detrimental effects of stress on educators' psychological and occupational well-being. It reinforces the idea that effective stress management and emotional-regulation strategies are vital for enhancing teachers' overall quality of life.

Table 2: Correlations between parenting styles and quality of life

Parenting styles	Quality of Life
Authoritarian	-.322**
Authoritative	.106
Permissive	-.081
N	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficients between the three parenting styles and quality of life. The results show a significant negative correlation between authoritarian parenting and quality of life ($r = -.322$, $p < .01$). In contrast, authoritative parenting ($r = .106$, ns) and permissive parenting ($r = -.081$, ns) did not show statistically significant relationships with quality of life.

This pattern suggests that teachers who exhibit an authoritarian parenting style—characterized by high control and low warmth—tend to report lower levels of life satisfaction and well-being. Such rigid interpersonal tendencies may contribute to emotional strain, reducing flexibility and emotional balance both at home and in professional contexts. On the other hand, teachers with an authoritative orientation appear to experience somewhat better quality of life, though the association was weak and nonsignificant in this sample.

Overall, the findings partially support Hypothesis 2. The expected negative association between authoritarian parenting and quality of life was confirmed, whereas the positive link with authoritative parenting and the negative link with permissive parenting were not statistically significant. These outcomes echo earlier research (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2011; Riany & Haslam, 2018) indicating that rigid or inconsistent parenting approaches are associated with poorer psychological adjustment and overall well-being among adults.

Table 3: Correlations between parenting styles and perceived stress

Parenting styles	Perceived stress
Authoritarian	.42**
Authoritative	-.403**
Permissive	.071
N	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 3 stated that *parenting style will have a significant relationship with perceived stress, with the authoritative style linked to lower perceived stress levels.*

Table 3 displays the correlations between parenting styles and perceived stress. The findings reveal that authoritarian parenting correlated positively with perceived stress ($r = .42, p < .01$), whereas authoritative parenting correlated negatively ($r = -.403, p < .01$). The permissive parenting style ($r = .071, ns$) was unrelated to perceived stress.

These results indicate that teachers who use an authoritarian style tend to experience higher perceived stress, possibly due to greater rigidity, overcontrol, and less emotional openness in family interactions, which may mirror their response to professional challenges. Conversely, those who practice an authoritative style, marked by warmth, consistency, and open communication, report lower perceived stress levels. This finding supports the notion that positive parenting behaviors reflect strong emotional regulation and adaptive coping skills, which buffer against stress.

Hence, Hypothesis 3 is fully supported. The significant negative correlation between authoritative parenting and perceived stress reinforces earlier studies (Extremera & Rey, 2016; Gunarsa, 2019) emphasizing that emotionally intelligent and flexible interpersonal styles reduce psychological distress. Teachers who extend empathy and balanced control at home appear more capable of managing stressors at work, promoting healthier overall functioning.

3. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine how perceived stress and parenting style influence school teachers' quality of life. The findings across the three analyses provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of professional and personal factors affecting educators' well-being.

First, a strong negative correlation ($r = -.925, p < .01$) between perceived stress and quality of life confirmed that higher levels of perceived stress are accompanied by substantial declines in physical, psychological, social, and environmental well-being. This supports the view that teachers' emotional responses to workplace pressures are critical determinants of their overall life satisfaction.

Second, the relationship between parenting style and quality of life revealed that authoritarian parenting was significantly and negatively related to teachers' quality of life, while authoritative and permissive styles showed no significant associations. This suggests that rigid, controlling interpersonal tendencies may extend beyond family interactions and reduce teachers' capacity to experience balance and fulfillment.

Third, analysis of parenting style and perceived stress demonstrated that authoritative parenting correlated negatively ($r = -.403, p < .01$) with stress, whereas authoritarian parenting correlated positively ($r = .42, p < .01$). This pattern indicates that teachers who practice warmth, empathy, and reasonable control with their children tend to experience lower stress levels. In contrast, those who favor strict or punitive approaches may internalize greater emotional tension.

Taken together, the results highlight that both professional stress and personal relational patterns contribute meaningfully to teachers' well-being. While the teaching profession inherently involves stress, the way teachers manage family relationships and emotional demands can either mitigate or magnify its impact. Promoting stress-management training, emotional-intelligence development, and positive parenting awareness programs within teacher-support initiatives could therefore enhance teachers' quality of life and, by extension, their effectiveness in the classroom.

4. LIMITATIONS

Despite its meaningful findings, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results:

Sampling Approach: The use of purposive and incidental (convenience) sampling limits the generalizability of the findings. Participants were selected from a specific set of schools and may not represent all teachers across regions or educational boards.

Cross-Sectional Design: Because the data were collected at a single point in time, causal inferences cannot be drawn.

Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how perceived stress and parenting styles interact over time to influence quality of life.

Self-Report Measures: All variables were assessed through self-report questionnaires, which are susceptible to social-desirability bias and subjective interpretation. Future research could incorporate observational or multi-informant data for greater objectivity.

Uncontrolled Variables: Factors such as marital satisfaction, socioeconomic status, school climate, and coping resources were not included but may also influence teachers' stress and well-being.

Cultural Context: The findings are situated within the Indian educational and socio-cultural context; cultural values around family and work may shape parenting and stress experiences differently in other countries.

Future studies should consider larger and more diverse samples, include qualitative interviews for deeper insight, and employ experimental or longitudinal methods to clarify causal relationships. In conclusion, the study provides strong evidence that perceived stress significantly undermines teachers' quality of life, and that authoritative parenting may act as a protective factor by fostering emotional resilience. These results underscore the need for institutional and family-based interventions that enhance teachers' coping skills, promote balanced parenting practices, and ultimately support a healthier and more sustainable teaching workforce

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