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EVALUATING WORK STRESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR PRIVATE EL EMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN MEDAN USING THE KIRKPATRICK MODEL

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Abstract

Work stress management training may receive favourable feedback while producing limited change in teachers' daily practices or working conditions. This article develops a Kirkpatrick-based framework for evaluating such training among private elementary school teachers in Medan, Indonesia. A narrative synthesis integrates literature on teacher occupational stress, workplace mental health, training transfer, and programme evaluation. The proposed framework measures reaction through perceived relevance and acceptability, learning through case-based assessment, behaviour through documented application of trained practices, and results through follow-up assessment of teacher-reported occupational stress. It also tracks workload, role clarity, and school support to help explain differences between learning, application, and outcomes. A prospective evaluation is proposed, with baseline assessment, immediate post-training assessment, and follow-up at four to six and ten to twelve weeks. The article contributes a four-level evaluation matrix and decision rules for improving programme content, supporting transfer, and addressing organisational barriers. The feasibility of the framework and the effectiveness of the programme in Medan remain to be established through field evaluation.

Keywords: elementary school teachers, Kirkpatrick model, occupational stress, teacher professional development, training evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

A teacher may leave a stress management session knowing how to prioritise tasks and ask for support, then return to a week of overlapping reporting deadlines, parent messages, and classroom preparation. Applying what the teacher learned depends on whether priorities can be negotiated, responsibilities are clear, and the school responds when support is requested. For school leaders, evaluating the training means asking what teachers learned, what they were able to use, and whether their experience of work changed.

Occupational stress in teaching is shaped by the relationship between work demands and the resources available to meet them. Teaching responsibilities, administrative deadlines, and emotionally demanding interactions can create pressure. Clear procedures, discretion over how to organise work, and access to practical support can help teachers respond. The job demands–resources perspective provides a basis for evaluating training alongside these working conditions. The World Health Organization (2022) likewise addresses both organisational interventions and worker training in its guidance on mental health at work.

A systematic review and meta-analyses by Beames et al. (2023) found that psychological programmes for schoolteachers could improve stress and related outcomes. The programmes and study methods varied considerably, and many interventions required substantial time and resources. For private elementary schools in Medan, the practical questions are whether teachers can participate without adding to their workload, whether they can use the skills during an ordinary school week, and whether any improvement persists after the training ends.

This article uses the Kirkpatrick Model to organise those questions. Its objective is to develop an evaluation framework that identifies what each level can establish, specifies the evidence needed, and links the findings to decisions about training and school support.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Occupational Stress and School Working Conditions

Teacher occupational stress can be examined through two related questions. The first concerns the sources of pressure, such as competing deadlines, unclear responsibilities, or work extending beyond agreed hours. The second concerns how teachers experience and respond to that pressure. Fimian (1984) distinguished sources and manifestations of teacher stress in the development of the Teacher Stress Inventory. This distinction has practical consequences. If teachers become better at planning their work while administrative demands remain unchanged, an evaluation may detect gains in skill and application alongside persistent stress.

The proposed programme therefore connects individual skills with organisational decisions. Teachers practise identifying work pressures, prioritising competing tasks, seeking support, and planning feasible opportunities for recovery. Principals or designated coordinators review recurring barriers that fall within the school's control. The evaluation tracks both sets of actions so that persistent stress can be interpreted in light of teachers' working conditions.

The Kirkpatrick Model

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2016) organise training evaluation into four levels. **Reaction** concerns how participants experience the programme and judge its relevance. **Learning** concerns the knowledge and skills acquired during training. **Behaviour** concerns how participants use what they learned at work. **Results** concern the outcomes that the programme is intended to improve. In this article, the principal Level 4 outcome is teacher-reported occupational stress at follow-up, summarised at group level.

Alliger and Janak (1989) questioned the assumption that favourable results at one level consistently lead to favourable results at the next. A well-received programme can produce modest learning if participants have little opportunity to practise. Strong performance in a training exercise can coexist with limited application if teachers lack scheduled opportunities or support. Each level therefore needs its own measure and interpretation.

Training Transfer in the School Setting

Ford et al. (2018) emphasise specifying which skill transfers, the setting in which it is used, and the time over which it is maintained. For this programme, an example of transfer would be a teacher using an agreed process to clarify priorities when two substantial deadlines overlap. A personal action plan drafted during training demonstrates the ability to formulate a response. Evidence that the teacher used the plan during a later workweek addresses a different question about workplace application.

METHOD

Article Design and Sources

This article uses a narrative literature synthesis to develop a programme and its evaluation framework. Sources were identified through searches for *teacher occupational stress*, *teacher stress interventions*, *Kirkpatrick training evaluation*, *workplace mental health*, and *training transfer*. Sources were selected for their contribution to the definition of outcomes, the design of training activities, or the interpretation of changes after training. The synthesis translated the four Kirkpatrick levels into indicators, instruments, measurement times, and decisions applicable to the intended school setting. The proposed programme has yet to be implemented with teachers in Medan.

Proposed Programme and Field Evaluation

The intended participants are active teachers in private elementary schools in Medan. The proposed programme comprises three weekly sessions of approximately 90 minutes, supported by brief workplace practice. Session one addresses sources of work pressure and distinguishes issues teachers can handle directly from those requiring coordination. Session two uses fictional school cases to practise prioritisation, clear requests for support, and planning for demanding workweeks. Session three develops an action plan and identifies the conditions needed to use it. Training examples would be reviewed with local teachers and school leaders before delivery.

The proposed evaluation begins with a feasibility pilot to assess recruitment, session timing, instrument clarity, and follow-up completion. If enough schools participate in a subsequent effectiveness study, schools could be randomly assigned to immediate training or a wait-list group that receives training after the final assessment. School-level assignment would reduce the likelihood of teachers in different conditions sharing training materials within the same school. If a credible comparison group is unavailable, changes can still be reported descriptively as

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part of a programme evaluation. The first field study should distinguish feasibility questions from questions about the programme's effect.

Measurement and Analysis

Baseline assessment would document teacher-reported occupational stress, existing use of the target practices, and relevant working conditions. Reaction and learning would be assessed immediately after training. Behaviour would be assessed four to six weeks later and revisited at the final follow-up. The primary results measure would be teacher-reported occupational stress at ten to twelve weeks, using a teacher-specific instrument with suitable evidence for its Indonesian-language version and scoring in the intended population. The Teacher Stress Inventory is one candidate. Instrument selection and the primary score would be specified before the main study. Measures of workload, role clarity, and support would be reported separately as context indicators.

For a comparative study, the primary analysis would estimate the difference in follow-up stress scores between groups, adjusting for baseline scores and accounting for school-level clustering. Learning and behaviour would be analysed as separate outcomes. Estimates would be reported with 95% confidence intervals, denominators, and missing-data patterns. Implementation records would cover attendance, training content delivered, changes to school procedures, and timing within the academic calendar. Individual responses would be confidential, with school leaders receiving aggregate findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Proposed Evaluation Matrix

The synthesis produced a four-level evaluation matrix for the proposed programme. Each level answers a distinct question and leads to a different management decision.

Table 1. Kirkpatrick evaluation matrix for teacher work stress management training

Level	Evaluation question	Proposed evidence	Measurement time	Programme decision
1. Reaction	Did teachers find the programme relevant, practical, and manageable alongside their duties?	Anonymous ratings of relevance, usability, and scheduling, with an open-ended comment	After the final session	Revise examples, delivery, or timing.
2. Learning	Can teachers recognise a work stressor and select a response appropriate to the situation?	Comparable pre- and post-training cases scored against a common rubric	Before training and after the final session	Revise instruction or add practice where performance remains weak.
3. Behaviour	Do teachers use the trained practices when suitable opportunities arise at work?	Brief de-identified application records and, where feasible, an agreed work plan or other supporting artefact	Four to six weeks after training, with a later check	Provide coaching, clarify procedures, or address barriers to application.
4. Results	Has teacher-reported occupational stress changed by the final follow-up?	A pre-specified occupational stress measure, interpreted alongside workload and school support indicators	Before training and ten to twelve weeks after training	Consider whether to continue, revise, or combine training with changes to working conditions.

Level 1 Reaction and Level 2 Learning

Reaction should be interpreted as evidence about the learning experience. One teacher may find the content relevant but be unable to complete the practice activities because the sessions overlap with report preparation. Another may attend every session but consider the examples too distant from daily teaching. A short questionnaire would therefore ask separately about relevance, ease of applying the examples, and the burden of participation. An open-ended question can identify which example or activity needs revision.

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Learning should be demonstrated through a realistic task. In one proposed case, a teacher faces an administrative deadline on the same day as a scheduled parent meeting and still needs to prepare materials for the following morning. The participant identifies the competing demands, decides which priorities can be managed independently, and formulates a request for clarification or support. A response earns a stronger rating if it specifies who can make a decision, what needs to be clarified, and what action the teacher can take while waiting. Equivalent cases before and after training would help assess whether participants can apply the approach across situations.

Level 3 Behaviour and the Opportunity to Apply Skills

The proposed evaluation tracks three observable practices: clarifying priorities when demands conflict, using an agreed route to request assistance, and reviewing whether an agreed action resolved the issue. A brief application record can document the type of situation, the action taken, and the support received. The record should distinguish no relevant opportunity**,** opportunity present but practice not used**,** and practice used. When reporting application rates, evaluators should state how many teachers had a relevant opportunity.

This distinction matters for interpretation. If teachers learned to request support but could not identify the responsible person, a school procedure may need clarification. If responsibilities were clear and teachers still struggled to formulate a request, further rehearsal may be appropriate. If teachers used the technique during a planned follow-up week, the later check can establish whether they continued to use it under ordinary conditions. This interpretation follows the distinction between acquisition, workplace application, and maintenance in the training transfer literature.

Level 4 Results and the Role of School Conditions

The primary results indicator is change in teacher-reported occupational stress at the final follow-up. Evaluators should document circumstances that may influence the result, such as examination periods, changes to staffing, new reporting requirements, or a policy that affects after-hours communication. Where a comparison group is available, the groups should be assessed during comparable points in the school calendar. Changes in work demands and support can then help explain why stress improved in some settings and persisted in others.

Absence records, if collected, would be exploratory. Absence has several possible causes and may be too infrequent to interpret over a short follow-up. A more proximal organisational indicator would be whether a school clarified overlapping deadlines, assigned a contact for workload concerns, or provided the follow-up agreed during training. These indicators describe school actions and provide context for the main stress outcome.

Interpreting Patterns Across the Four Levels

Table 2. Examples of evaluation findings and corresponding decisions

Hypothetical pattern	Interpretation to examine	Programme response
Teachers rate the programme highly, but case performance shows little improvement.	Examples may be engaging while practice or feedback remains insufficient.	Add coached rehearsal and revise the assessment tasks for alignment with the instructional objectives.
Case performance improves, but workplace use is uncommon.	Teachers may lack suitable opportunities, a clear procedure, or practical support.	Review barriers with teachers and arrange an opportunity to apply the skill.
Teachers report using the skills, but occupational stress remains elevated.	Significant work demands may persist, or the follow-up may be too short to detect a change.	Examine workload, role clarity, and school support before deciding what to revise.
Occupational stress improves after training and a concurrent scheduling change.	The training and the scheduling change may both contribute to the result.	Document the timing and content of both changes when reporting the outcome.

The framework's value lies in showing where change occurred and where it stalled. For example, a school could keep a session that improves teachers' ability to clarify priorities while revising a reporting schedule that repeatedly creates conflicting deadlines. Training records and outcome data can then inform separate decisions about instruction and work organisation.

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Implications and Limitations

For private elementary schools in Medan, the framework can be implemented with a short reaction form, a scored case exercise, a brief follow-up record, and a confidential stress assessment. A designated coordinator can collect evidence of implementation and summarise recurring barriers for school leaders. To keep the evaluation manageable, workplace records can focus on one or two target practices rather than requiring teachers to log every stressful event.

The framework remains conceptual. The proposed session length, case rubric, stress measure, and follow-up intervals need local piloting. Teacher reports of workplace application may be affected by recall or a desire to give favourable answers. Supporting artefacts can improve interpretation when they are available and appropriate. A short follow-up can show whether gains persist across several workweeks, while longer observation would be needed to assess sustainability across academic terms.

CONCLUSION

The Kirkpatrick Model provides a framework for evaluating work stress management training among private elementary school teachers in Medan. Reaction covers the relevance and feasibility of participation. Learning is demonstrated through case performance. Behaviour is assessed through application during regular work. Results are assessed through follow-up measurement of teacher-reported occupational stress, interpreted alongside school working conditions.

The proposed programme and evaluation matrix connect the evidence from each level to a decision about training design, follow-up support, or the organisation of work. A local pilot can establish whether the procedures and instruments are usable. An adequately designed field evaluation is needed to determine whether the programme improves teachers' skills, supports workplace application, and reduces occupational stress.

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