

EXPLORATION OF WORKPLACE STRESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL HEAD
TEACHERS OF KATHMANDU METROPOLITAN CITY: A NARRATIVE
INQUIRY

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Prabesh Satyal* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Education Leadership* presented on 26 January 2025 entitled *Exploration of Workplace Stress in Public School Head Teachers of Kathmandu Metropolitan City: A Narrative Inquiry*

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This research delves into the practices of public school head teachers in experiencing workplace stress in the Kathmandu context. Two central research questions guide this inquiry. The first question asks how public school head teachers narrate their stressful leadership experiences in the workplace. The second question explores the strategies adopted by the principals to manage their stressful leadership encounters.

Through interpretivism as a research paradigm, the study captures the subjective perceptions of principals, acknowledging the workplace conditions and strategies they adopt to face workplace stress in public school settings. Five, each novice, professional, and experienced public school leader, were employed for my study from five public schools in the Kathmandu district. Most of them have been providing secondary education for more than 30 years. The participant selection process involved the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify suitable candidates. Subsequently, teachers meeting the inclusion criteria were selected, and pertinent information was extracted through in-depth, face-to-face interviews.

The study reveals a shift in principals' perception of workplace stress and their ways of coping with workplace challenges. The significant sources of stress were student-centered, teacher-centered, parent-induced, lengthy work hours, lack of recognition, unnecessary pressure, and insufficient resources. I found the public-school principals in Kathmandu implemented methods to manage burdens by taking

profession as a service rather than obligation, making collaboration between teaching staff and other members, taking job challenges as a source of learning, and making self-indulge in self-management exercises during the starting of the day and reflective practiced during late evening.

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26 January 2025

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शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि प्रवेश सत्यालको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक "काठमाडौँ महानगरपालिकाका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरूमा कार्यस्थलको तनावको अन्वेषण: एक संकथन " १३ माघ २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

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उप. प्रा. श्रीकृष्ण वाग्ले, पीएचडी

शोध निर्देशक

यो अनुसन्धान काठमाडौँ महानगरपालिकाका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले अनुभव गर्ने कार्यस्थल तनावको अन्वेषणमा केन्द्रित छ । यो दुई मुख्य अनुसन्धान प्रश्नहरूद्वारा निर्देशित छ । पहिलो प्रश्नले सार्वजनिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले कार्यस्थलमा आफ्नो तनावपूर्ण नेतृत्व अनुभवहरू कसरी वर्णन गर्छन् भन्ने कुरा सोध्छ, भने दोस्रो प्रश्नले प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले आफ्नो तनावपूर्ण नेतृत्व अनुभवहरू व्यवस्थापन गर्न अपनाउने रणनीतिहरूको खोजी गर्दछ । व्याख्यात्मक अनुसन्धान दृष्टिकोणमार्फत, अध्ययनले सार्वजनिक विद्यालयमा प्रधानाध्यापकहरूद्वारा अनुभव गरिएका कार्यस्थलस्थित अवस्थाहरू तथा तनाव सामना गर्न अपनाइने रणनीतिहरूलाई स्वीकार्दै उनीहरूको आत्मानुभूतिपूर्ण दृष्टिकोणलाई समेट्छ । काठमाडौँ जिल्लाका पाँच सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूबाट एक एक जना नवप्रवेशी, व्यावसायिक, तथा अनुभवी प्रधानाध्यापकलाई मेरो अध्ययनका लागि चयन गरिएको थियो । उनीहरूमध्ये अधिकांशले ३० वर्षभन्दा बढी समयदेखि माध्यमिक शिक्षा प्रदान गर्दै आएका थिए । सहभागी छनोट प्रक्रियामा योग्य उम्मेदवारहरू पहिचान गर्न समावेशीकरण तथा बहिष्करण मापदण्डहरू निर्धारण गरिएको थियो । त्यसपछि, समावेशीकरण मापदण्ड पूरा हुने गरि शिक्षकहरू चयन गरियो र विस्तृत एवं प्रत्यक्ष अन्तरवार्तामार्फत आवश्यक जानकारी सङ्कलन गरियो अध्ययनले प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको कार्यस्थल तनावप्रति धारणा तथा कार्यस्थल चुनौतीहरू सामना गर्ने उपायहरूमा परिवर्तन देखाउँछ । प्रमुख तनावका स्रोतहरू विद्यार्थी-केंद्रित, शिक्षक-केंद्रित, अभिभावकद्वारा सिर्जित, लामो कार्यघण्टा, पहिचानको कमी, अनावश्यक दबाब, तथा अपर्याप्त स्रोतहरू थिए । काठमाडौँका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले तनाव व्यवस्थापन गर्न पेशालाई दायित्वभन्दा सेवा रूपमा लिनु, शिक्षण स्टाफ तथा अन्य सदस्यहरू बीच सहकार्य सुदृढ गर्नु, कार्यस्थल चुनौतीहरूलाई सिकाइको अवसरका रूपमा लिनु, दिनको सुरुवातमा आत्म-व्यवस्थापन अभ्यासमा संलग्न हुनु, तथा साँझमा आत्म-प्रतिबिम्बन अभ्यास गर्नु जस्ता विभिन्न विधिहरू अपनाएका थिए ।

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प्रवेश सत्याल
उपाधि उम्मेदवार

१३ माघ २०८१

This dissertation entitled *Exploration of Workplace Stress in Public School Head Teachers of Kathmandu Metropolitan City: A Narrative Inquiry* presented by *Prabesh Satyal* on 26 January 2025.

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I understand that my thesis will become a part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my thesis to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

.....

26 January 2025

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated:

To all the wall staring, anxious and confused head teachers

To all the teachers who want to step up to head teachership position

To the policy drafter who needs voice of head teachers rather than a telescopic view from their chambers

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ABBREVIATIONS

ERI	Effort-Reward Imbalance (Theory)
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organization
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NEP	National Education Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RLT	Resilience Leadership Theory
Ma. Vi.	<i>Madhyamik Vidyalaya</i>
RT	Resilience Theory
SESP	School Education Sector Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The introductory part of this study contains my childhood story of how I perceive principalship, leadership, and stress. Then, I added gradual leadership experience from one to another. I have shared my life phases of experiencing different kinds of leaders and observed different scenes of leadership stress encounters. Then, I elaborated on why I chose the educational leaders of the public-school context. This way, I set some agendas for my research by outlining some research issues through my experiences in different vignettes and problematizing workplace stress in school Principals. Then, I draw the purpose of my study. The very urge that helped me to do research was my research questions that helped me guide my study. After the research questions, I presented the rationale of the study. This includes the relevant studies that I cited and my purpose to draw. I also show the rationale of this study and draw a boundary for my research as delimitations.

Scene Setting

Before I introduce the scenario of my study, I would like to begin with some short anecdotal records to set the scene for this study. In this section, I will explain my context and how I was slowly drawn upon the issue, which inspired me to pursue the issue. The background information is essential to know as without the pre-foundation, no issue could exist regarding its stand. With the same, I started my study with the guiding thought process that explaining the background is necessary to give the general reader and other researchers the foundation that generated the fabrication of issues requiring a systematic research process.

Here, I have shared my origin, what knocked my childhood of the issue in leadership, and many other facets I was going to uncover. Furthermore, the different stances that struck me to help me get deeper into the very issue are also well elaborated in this section. The shift of understanding the principal's role from childhood, adolescence, late adolescence, and adult phases during my professional setting of self in each vignette version has reshaped this study to this point.

My Childhood Lens on head teachership, Leadership, and Stress

My journey of formal schooling started when I was five years old. My first school was Vidya Mandir boarding school, Phulbari. During that time, I experienced

principals who were friendly and kind (Schulte, et al., 2010). Then I reached out to LKG and UKG, and I figured out that principals were authoritative figures and such case is common in developing countries context (Oplatka, 2004) who must be respected and followed. Likewise, I took it was that they were the institution's center. The unfavorable situation in my village with the Maoist insurgency influenced us to migrate to Banepa from my town, Mathurapati Phulbari, in the Kavre district. I realized several unfamiliar realities of the city, shifting my perception toward principals. I was in grade one when I joined the city school, Vidyasagar Secondary School in Banepa. With new friends and a new society, I was learning different things, especially the carefree and non-indulging nature of city life, which puzzled me. In between, Principal Sir, who used to be our fear factor, was a mid-height, mustached, fair-skinned individual. He was a source of authority to whom everyone had colossal respect, and some had tremendous fear. As time passed, I encountered many seniors. The roller coaster of day boarders was different. We had a bookshop, and father had difficulty making early lunch; hence, we were on day boarders. We have to go to school early in the morning. Till these moments, I understood the principal as an authoritative nature.

As I advanced from kindergarten to first grade, I encountered a different type of principal with a quick temper. One incident from my childhood, when I was in grade one, still stands out vividly. While playing with my friends on the school grounds in Banepa, I accidentally stepped on the principal's shoes. He reacted by slapping me. Looking back, I now recognize the significant pressures principals faced at the time, which have influenced the response. It seemed that the emotional burdens of their responsibilities often found an outlet in such acts of anger.

Another memorable event occurred when my mischievous friends committed a notorious act, and they went to the principal's office. There, they received punishment severely with slaps and blows to their backs. Witnessing this made me think about the emotional toll principals endured. They seemed frustrated and released stress through disciplinary actions against students.

In another incident during grade five, the teacher caught me forging my parents' signature through my diary. I feared the punishment that awaited me, and sure enough, the class teacher made me stand for half an hour before being summoned to the principal's office. He harshly reprimanded me and, as a consequence, struck me twice on the back with a belt. Reflecting on this now, I realize that principals often

seemed harsh and unpredictable, instilling a mix of fear and respect in students like me.

When I was a seven-year-old child, I occasionally had the opportunity to visit Mathurapati Phulbari, the community school where my mother worked as a teacher. During these visits, I often observed the headteacher, who seemed deep in thought. His reflective demeanor left a lasting impression on me, giving me an early sense of the immense responsibilities that came with his role.

During my secondary level formal education experiences, I realized again that principals turn out to be guides, nurturers, and supportive to me as a student of grade 8 to 10 than the perception of principals as motivators, energizers, caregivers, authority at some times and so on (Schulte, et al., 2010). were there. In this process, I realized that the principal was not only a motivator to students but a supervisor of teachers and the overall system. In this process, those roles made the principal an essential part of the school system.

In grades 11 and 12, I found the robust school system in Opa Secondary School, where my high school biology major completed. There, I realized the principal's dynamic nature. The principal was an active observer and a subject teacher who used to teach us a chapter of physics (photoelectric effect). From that instance of time, sometimes I used to take suggestions from him, and I realized he was a nurturer. But then, when some of my friends were having attitude problems and other issues, they considered the principal an opposing partner in their workplace. We took the principal as a regulation chief who maintained a sound learning environment for all students learning in the classroom together.

When I was at the bachelor's level, I took my education with a major in English from Chaitya Multiple Campus in Banepa. There was a very amiable personality as the principal whose team role play and huge understandability of his role was marvelous. He was, to me, a close observer and guide. And I took him more as a mentor than any authoritative-natured person. I was having a tough moment with my health at that time, but then, with all those circumstances, I did my best to clear the bachelor's with all my subjects cleared, being the only person to pass the subject.

These childhood and adolescence memories have led me to ponder the unique nature of a principal's role. Unlike teachers, who primarily follow set directives, principals bear the weight of leadership and decision-making. This distinction seems to mask their genuine emotions, often anger or frustration. These early experiences

left me curious about the ‘emotional masks’ principals wore and the mysteries behind their demanding responsibilities. Taking the scenario from the institutional level, the school leaders are the actors of policy, but while acting on policy, they have to go beyond their capacity to manage, supervise, and lead the team and students (Schulte, et al., 2010). If these leaders cannot manage their emotions, complex work nature, and diverse demands, these aspects would hamper workplace equilibrium and productivity.

These experiences made me think about positionality of school leaders either as friendly, authoritative, kind and/or a source of fear factor (Schulte, et al., 2010).

Vignette 1: The Encounter with Aggressive Principal

In 2015, while pursuing my Bachelor of Education degree with a major in English at Chaitya Multiple Campus, Banepa, I embarked on a teaching practicum at a local school. I was offered a teaching position after conducting one or two classes during this time. Initially, my classes proceeded smoothly. However, an event during a staff meeting left a lasting impression on me.

The meeting between the teachers and the principal unfolded in a highly punitive atmosphere. The Discipline Charge publicly criticized one of the teachers for arriving late and struggling to maintain students' discipline in the classroom. In the presence of one of the school's founders, the principal began addressing the group with a sweeping accusation, holding everyone responsible for one individual's mistake. His remarks were harsh and deeply critical, making me feel deeply uncomfortable as a new teacher. I wondered why the principal felt the need to speak so harshly and whether this behavior reflected his role or personality.

One particular meeting stood out to me. The principal declared he did not need teachers who couldn't work according to his expectations or adapt to the institution's needs. This statement left many teachers questioning their self-worth and competence. He had a habit of collectively reprimanding the entire team for the actions of a single individual, creating an environment of fear and punitive measures. This oppressive atmosphere made me question my decision to teach at the school. This action disheartened me to work in a place where respect and support are overshadowed by

Reflecting on these experiences, I began to wonder about the factors that drove the principal to act in such a manner. Was it the inherent pressures of the role itself, or were his actions shaped by personal baggage and past experiences? These thoughts sparked my curiosity and motivated me to explore the dynamics of

leadership in schools, particularly the stress faced by principals in public institutions. The toxic work environment I witnessed seemed to stem from the principal's stress, which had a ripple effect on the entire staff. This realization led me to question the underlying causes of workplace stress among school leaders and its broader impact, a subject I found largely unexplored in existing research.

Vignette 2: The Mild Yet Misguided Nature of a School Principal

The second principal I encountered during my professional journey was from Banepa. His personality was notably mild and composed, though he often seemed to bear the weight of stress internally. He exhibited clear signs of emotional fatigue and disengagement when I found him in difficult situations, such as balancing conflicts between office staff and management. I recalled observing subtle yet telling physical indicators of his stress, such as irregular breathing patterns, dry and cracked lips, and an overall demeanor of weariness.

What stood out to me was the parallel between his condition and my own experiences during the early stages of my teaching career. I vividly remembered the sensation of a dry mouth, which I initially attributed to nervousness and the transition from my previous role as a computer operator. This shift from a job focused on technical skills to one requiring significant interpersonal and communication skills carried its challenges and adjustments.

Unlike others who might channel their stress differently, this principal avoided transferring his frustrations to the teaching staff. Instead, his coping mechanism often involved redirecting stress toward students, which took the form of physical punishment. Acts such as slapping or striking students on their backs became a regular occurrence, much to the apparent satisfaction of the school director, who seemed oddly pleased by this approach. Witnessing this dynamic shocked me and prompted deeper reflection on how stress manifests and the various ways it can be managed—or mismanaged—in professional settings. This experience reinforced my curiosity and interest in exploring the multifaceted nature of stress and its broader implications.

Vignette 3: Navigating Authoritative Leadership

When I began working at a third school in Kathmandu for the first time, my experience was markedly different from anything I had encountered before. Initially, the virtual workspace seemed manageable, as my teaching duties involved conducting three-hour daily online English classes for grades 7 and 8. However, the extended

screen time didn't take long to become monotonous and draining. While balancing my teaching responsibilities with completing my assignments and thesis, I realized how taxing and irritating long hours in front of a screen could be. It felt like I was losing control, crossing an invisible boundary into the overwhelming world of the virtual classroom.

Transitioning to face-to-face teaching after the pandemic presented its unique challenges. Students displayed attention deficit issues and often exhibited challenging behavior, making classroom management more complex. The situation was further complicated when the school leader frequently questioned my teaching methods, often through mid-managers like coordinators. This lack of direct communication and constant scrutiny left me feeling demotivated. My efforts to create engaging lessons felt futile, especially since I was assigned to teach Social Studies—a subject outside my field of expertise, as my academic background was in English.

The difficulty of separating personal and professional life only added to the stress. The school leadership sometimes blurred these boundaries, compounding the pressure I felt. Rather than fostering creativity or offering constructive feedback, the leadership's rigid adherence to uniformity stifled my ability to be innovative in the classroom. Their critique often felt more like an attack than guidance. For instance, classroom interference and micromanagement of teaching methods became a significant source of frustration, leaving me emotionally drained.

The lack of recognition from the Head of Department further exacerbated the situation. My efforts and hard work went unnoticed, and instead of feeling valued, I was pushed toward a harmful and toxic work environment. These experiences made me question what drives some school leaders, including principals, to adopt authoritative and overly critical approaches. Why did their leadership lean so heavily toward control, interference, and forceful imposition of their perspectives rather than encouraging positive reinforcement and collaboration?

Reflecting on these challenges led me to a broader quest: understanding the sources of stress among school principals and how these pressures influence their leadership styles. While my experiences were in private institutions, I began to wonder about the situation in public schools. What factors shape the dynamics of leadership in these environments? Exploring this question has become an essential part of my journey to understand better the complexities of school leadership and its impact on teachers.

Vignette 4: Impulsive Leadership and Surface Pedagogy

The fourth school I worked at was renowned compared to my previous experiences, but it introduced me to a different kind of challenge, dealing with complexity within the institution. I encountered instances of gaslighting, both among teachers manipulating students and from the principal during meetings. The principal's mood fluctuated dramatically; on some days, he was exuberantly content, while on others, minor classroom incidents or mistakes, such as a poorly executed branding photograph, seemed to throw him into a negative spiral.

Despite his role as a leader, the principal lacked a solid understanding of pedagogy and effective teaching methods. However, his speeches during meetings were often highly contextual, logical, and delivered with a one-sided authority. He would address issues spanning grades 1 to 12 and concerns related to staff, but without fully grasping the nuances of teaching practices. The school had a structured system, with three representatives overseeing the heads of different sections and class teachers acting as controllers for each class. Despite this layered hierarchy, specific dynamics felt off-balance.

As a teacher, I often empathized with my colleagues and the principal. Yet, the principal's leadership style leaned more toward asserting authority than fostering collaboration. His approach was frequently hard to deal with, verbally uncomfortable, and overly focused on control, which created pressure among the staff. These interactions made me reflect on the deeper reasons behind his behavior. What kind of self-image, shaped by his experiences, drove him to display such a lack of emotional balance during his professional responsibilities?

These observations made me wonder about the broader context of school leadership, particularly in public institutions. What underlying factors contribute to the stress and behavior of school principals? Exploring these questions has become central to my curiosity as I strive to understand the emotional and professional challenges educational leaders face.

Why I Chose Community School Headteachers?

Having been educated in private schools, I realized how their small class sizes, self-financed models, and strict discipline for achieving result-oriented outcomes created a competitive edge in the institutional market. However, this made me wonder about the state of community schools. My curiosity was first sparked when I was in grade seven, and I had the opportunity to visit a public school in my village. During

my brother's grade 8 Naitik Sikshya (Moral Education) class, I noticed a stark difference: the classroom size was massive. Even today, many public or community school classes have over 50 students, which sharply contrasts with the private school environment I experienced.

This experience led me to think deeply about the unique challenges school head teachers face in public schools. What kinds of experiences shape their leadership? What causes the visible signs of stress, such as dark circles under their eyes, and the behaviors that can seem revengeful, intense, or overly serious in professional situations? These thoughts became a foundation for my deep quest to study the stressors and pressures faced by public school head teachers and how these shape their actions and identities as leaders.

One of the main reasons I chose to focus on public schools is the reason that the government, despite investing vast amounts of money in infrastructure and recruitment of qualified teachers with bulky investment but still the productive outcome assured by the private sector, and board exam outcomes are contributed mainly by private sectors. My personal experiences of visiting public schools and observing their operations revealed complexities that were absent in my educational journey.

I vividly recall conversations with my mother about workplace challenges, as she often shared stories from her experience as a teacher. She frequently spoke of the “mediocre” nature of the school head, who displayed inconsistent decision-making and imposed one-sided pressures on the staff. His lack of stability in leadership left a lasting impression on me, making me wonder how headteachers in public schools perceive their professional burdens. How do they manage their stress? What obligations and responsibilities weigh on them, and how do these shape their identities as leaders? What life experiences have they encountered, and how do they navigate the challenges of their roles?

These questions compelled me to focus on the issues faced by public school headteachers. I aim to explore their perceptions of workplace stress, the circumstances they encounter, and the strategies they employ to overcome such challenges. This exploration feels essential to understanding the broader dynamics of leadership in public education and the factors that influence the roles of headteachers.

Research Journey

At the beginning of my research journey, my initial topic was *“Exploring Emotional Intelligence in Public School head teachers of Kathmandu District.”* Over time, however, this focus evolved, delving deeper into the components of emotional intelligence. The idea of emotional intelligence captivated me because it provided a lens to understand why specific individuals exhibit greater self-awareness and empathy towards those around them.

Leadership has numerous layers of responsibilities, many of which require constant reevaluation. This reflective process allows leaders to gauge the scope of their duties and fosters self-assurance, enabling them to manage their roles effectively. While it is often tempting to seek validation or understanding from others, I realized that self-awareness and self-reflection play pivotal roles in mitigating the burdens of leadership. These realizations became the cornerstone of my interest in exploring emotional intelligence, specifically through the lens of leadership.

However, the global COVID-19 pandemic emerged as my research progressed, shifting my focus. During this time, I contemplated turning my research topic to *“Knowledge Management in Schools of Nepal.”* While intriguing, this topic felt too novel within the Nepali context, lacking the foundational research to build upon. Consequently, I shifted again, exploring *“Stress During Online Teaching Conditions Among Teachers in Nepal.”* Yet, as I delved into this area, juggling my online teaching responsibilities and conducting interviews made it difficult to sustain my focus. The topic felt relevant but short-term and less fulfilling in its scope.

Ultimately, I found myself returning to the topic of stress, but this time with a refined focus: *“Stress Experiences of Public-School Head Teachers in Nepal.”* This marked a turning point in my research. What began as an exploration of emotional intelligence eventually evolved into a study of workplace stress among school principals. Through this journey, I realized that understanding the stressful experiences of public-school principals was deeply connected to the principles of emotional intelligence. The ultimate choice to explore stress, guided by the foundational ideas of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, allowed me to shape my research into a meaningful investigation of the lived experiences of public-school leaders.

This evolution in my research reflects the adaptability required in academic inquiry and underscores the profound connection between self-awareness, leadership,

and the stressors that shape professional roles. My journey from exploring emotional intelligence to examining workplace stress among public school head teachers has been one of growth and clarity, culminating in a study that I hope contributes valuable insights to the field.

Making Explicit the Terms

Hans Selye defined ‘Stress’ as the “non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it” (Selye, 1956) and also made a distinction between good stress, which he called Eustress and bad stress, which he called Distress (Selye, 1956). Lazarus (1966) also defined stress as the inability of an individual to cope with the demands placed on them. This occurs when the existing coping mechanisms are insufficient compared to the responsibilities placed on a person (Cox et al., 1995) and an imbalance between the demands and the resources provided (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Selye (1956) states stress as a "the psychological perception of pressure and the body's response to it, on the other, which involves multiple systems, from metabolism to muscles to memory". Stress is a primarily common problem in today's modern world. As such, work-related stress, especially among employees particularly managers, prevails in every institution. The stress in school institutions is, in one way or another, linked to all the stakeholders of the schools.

Head teachers directly coordinate with the major stakeholders: parents, teachers, and students. Head teachers interact with parents regarding their issues in the classroom through the teacher or, due to the pending work of students, making multi-layer talks with the varied levels of parents of different backgrounds and diversity. Likewise, the head teacher should deliver daily mentorship and feedback to the teachers. Teachers with various subject expertise from different cultural diversity must be dealt with according to their nature, grasping quality, and personality type. In contrast, in traditional schools, the head teachers counsel the complex students to deal with. In such cases, the head teacher has to get the background from each class teacher to deal with such problems. Likewise, outside of the school ecosystem, the head teacher deals with the indirect stakeholders, such as the school supervisor, marketing partner, commercial agents, and many more. In my informal talk with a head teacher, he shared that in his public school, the primary factor he got that caused the sleepless night was the confrontation with fellow teachers and parents who were hard to deal with and could not be easily convinced. This way, days spent in

micromanagement negatively impact the employee and employer (Mauull, 2007). When head teachers micromanage the workplace, the stress persists within the team members.

One of the energetic new head teachers said that he turned out to be a sandwich between the management committee and teachers. This is also the situation of public schools. Similarly, public schools are juggling similar scenarios in different forms. Unlike that, sometimes the school head teacher gets puzzled by the role because of several problems (Khanal & Ghimire, 2022). Khanal and Ghimire (2022), in 'Understanding role conflict and role ambiguity of school Head Teachers in Nepal' clarify that the significant issue of role conflict is due to difficulty in power sharing, lack of professional freedom to act according to own planning, clashes in role-play, insufficient professional development training, and inadequate knowledge of leadership. The headteacher is the major stakeholder of the organization. My recent talk with the head teacher of a public school shared that the head teacher has to deal with major key stakeholders: students, teachers, and parents (community). The head teacher's daily communications, feedback, and motivation with students, parents, and teachers make the learning community lively. The same individual head teacher has to be a good counselor, guide, motivator, mentor, feedback giver, idea maker, and many more. This way, the head teacher has multiple hats.

Headteachers are, in several ways, impacted by professional and personal work. Is there a further cause or not that I find the head teacher in my contact has a dark circle and is much in anger? School administrators, in the maturation of the day, become teacher mentors and students' counselors, too. Such a variety of work in the same day- multiple roles played within a day has been their daily activities. What varied activities do they participate in, and are they the source of stress? What causes them to have restless nights? What makes them to be high tempered? Are there some aspects of this? This question guides this research. Stress is part of life. Having a certain amount of stress for productivity is good, but exceeding the limit leads to burnout and can cause several issues (Mohajan, 2012). Headteachers suffer from several problems in that aspect the study explored. This also helps in formulating and drafting provincial educational policy.

Statement of the Problem

Head teachers with extensive experience have dealt with several issues. Their experiences grew, and dealing with everyday management and unexpected emergent

matters was challenging. Since the new context carries a dynamic work culture and worldview, this dynamic worldview can challenge the head teachers who want consistency in the organization. The need for time-to-time updates and periodic new challenges in students, teachers, and mid-managers behavior can be a burden (DeMatthews et al. 2021). These situations cause the head teacher to have an overthinking mindset, causing stressful working time. Such stress, in head teacher, when prolonged, raises a severe issue of stress and burnout. As an employer, the head teacher has several problems that confine the stressful environment that influences student outcomes (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). This way, the head teacher's role and influence on students' outcomes are linked.

During this process, parents bring comments about their children's negligence. Teachers share their personal obstruction, and visitors bring new concepts and offers, guests come for their time to participate in new events, supervisors invigilate the school whole activities, social representatives for community issues, etc., have mostly direct and, sparingly, indirect connections with head teachers. And the school leader has to go with number of emotions the individual visitors bring and share. The major source of stress is dealing with parents (Hancock et al., 2019). Mostly, negative comments, sadness, complaints, and several other issues turn weighty against positive comments and supportive words. The continued pressure of innovation and outcome-based work add to the scenario that they also take their work home (Hancock, et al., 2019). Not only this, but the daily work and planning were also on the other hand. Hence, head teacher's stress is an eminent issue to explore.

Head teacher is the source of resources, support, motivation, kindness, guidance, and many more. If the principal gets burned out and has negative feelings, the effect will reach the students through teachers and parents too (Akinbode & Shuhumi, 2018). Hence, stress is a factor to be understood as an essential aspect in school productivity. Head teacher must go with several stakeholders and take dozens of phone calls of varied levels. The principal had to face various emotions regarding several types of people. The feelings and work time encounter with multiple works at the same time. Multitasking becomes prominent, and this causes the head teacher to work on many tasks at the same time. Is the multitasking making the principal unable to think linearly and consistently creatively? In such a scenario, the stress and how it impacted the principal is my quest to explore. Past studies on headship stress in the

context of urban areas in Nepal have yet to be studied. As such, questions like the cause of stress of head teachers and how they deal with it will be explored.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the narratives of head teachers about their stresses in the workplace. Hence, the study focuses on experiences of stress and managing such stressful workplace conditions.

Research Questions

1. How do public school head teachers narrate their stressful leadership experiences in the workplace?
2. How do they manage their stressful leadership encounters?

Rationale of the Study

Stress has a significant impact on our society and community. Stress specially workplace stress is counterproductive in workplace. This has hampered the teaching staff, non-teaching staff, parents, and head teachers (DeMatthews et al. 2021). Since the study of stress in the Nepali context has been studied in a preliminary stage (Dhakal, 2023). The stress issue is now a concern in the situation of urbanized life, and the in-depth perspective is yet to be explored so it is worth investigating.

Delimitations of the Study

This study aims to study the scenario of stress in the workplace of public school head teachers. Occupational stress and work-life balance issues that influence work can be a part of the issue. This study does not deal with the study's physical, mental, and neurological aspects. This study excludes the neurological and physical elements. Instead, my study excludes nonprofessional settings or work-life part but makes a preliminary study on stress scenarios by only overviewing professional aspects (workplace context). The Study covered the stressful experiences of principalship, i.e., individual principals' positive and negative experiences.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter critically explores the relevant literature on the perception of stress in school principals' workplaces. Generating the meaning of my research topic, I begin my review by understanding leadership and stress and how leaders perceive stress. Then, I discuss the theories that guide my research. In discussing the previous study, I have addressed the gap of research of prior research.

Thematic Review

In this section, I explained the significant terms. Then, I systematically explained the past research. Including the essential findings of past studies, I also made connections and interlinks between the previous studies and this study. I have included peer-reviewed journals and national and international dissertations in the past research.

Leadership in General

Leaders are decision-makers who have abilities to make ethical and strategic decisions in an organizational context (Viana & Machado, 2025). Northouse (2021) also states that leadership through ethics and responsibility involves ethical decision-making and accountability for actions taken. Likewise, leaders are influencers and inspirers. Bass (1990) highlights that leadership is about influencing others, not through coercion but through motivation and inspiration. The leaders should have vision and direction. For the same, Kotter (1996) also highlights that effective leaders set a clear vision for the future and align people with shared objectives. Similarly, the leader is also responsible for setting decisions in uncertain times. Yukl (2013) also states that leaders make strategic choices that affect teams, organizations, or societies, often under uncertainty. Likewise, leaders who are effective communicators and emotionally intelligent are also important. Goleman et al. (2013) also highlight that effective leaders possess interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and the ability to manage conflicts.

From these discussions, leaders as decision makers, visionary, ethical and accountable decision-makers, effective communicators, and emotionally intelligent are the attributes one should have as a leader.

Stress in General

Colbert (2012) in *Stress Less* defines stress as "the pressure of life and how one perceives, believes, reacts, and copes with these pressures" (P. 7). Colbert (2012) further adds that four categories of stress termed as 'stress-causing agent' are physical stress, emotional stress and mental stress, chemical stress, and thermal stress. Physical stress results in some conditions, such as lack of sleep, overworking, excessive exercise, bodily injury, or trauma, such as motor vehicle accidents, surgery, infection, physical disease, and chronic pain. Likewise, Emotional and mental stress, also called psychological stress, arises from the general anxiety resulting from an imbalance in work and refreshment time imbalance, too much debt, marital difficulties, children using drugs or alcohol, and other mental stresses related to one's work, finances, family issues or school. Colbert (2012) highlights that mental stress often arises when the situation hugely occupies one and gets into high emotions and feelings of being trapped without a way out. The excessive use of various substances causes chemical stress. Excessive exposure to heat causes thermal stress.

School Leadership

School leaders are the ones who educate the various publics of their schools. They foster meaningful relationships that generate resources for addressing shared problems youth and families face in a district (Knight, 2022). They shift their focus from an inward concentration on kids, teachers, and curriculum to outward-facing leadership approaches that assist in shaping state policy-making bodies and establishing partnerships with parents, business entities, and organizations in their districts. There are other leadership styles, like authentic, spiritual, transformative, etc.

Leadership Stress

The stress in school leaders is caused by several aspects, and from my literature study, I find that work-based matters, student issues, parents' responses and possible conflicts (Hancock et al., 2019), issues generated by teachers through unprofessional behavior (Wadesango et al., 2015), lack of support from human resource (Bodson, 2021), lack of training (Maskey, 2023), insufficient resources in school (Koirala, 2022), social structure based pressure for female teachers (Lamsal, 2019) and Microaggressions in workplace (Jones, 2024) were the significant causes of stress.

Review Related to Previous Studies

In reviewing the previous study, I found diverse issues of stress, stressing agents, and managing tools. Hancock et al. (2019), through 'Causes of stress and

strategies for managing stress among German and US principals' with the context of cross-cultural context principal's stress conducted among 200 samples, representative sample, i.e., 19 principals of the southeastern region, USA and 24 principals of Stuttgart, Germany. The study took principals of both areas with similar gender, educational levels, work hours, responsibilities, levels of schools, and years of service.

The study's findings revealed that the significant causes of stress are the classified variety of work, constant improvement of students' achievement, and principals' awareness of present trends. Principals must also deal with the parents' negativity, conflict, and conflict resolution. The principal has to deal with the human resources department, often dealing with multiple conversations on confidential information. Furthermore, the US Differs from Germany in that there are dual roles of leaders, i.e., German principals have to teach and leadership roles. The study also discovered that the only authority vested to deal with all the issues at last is the principal. The state increases accountability by decreasing financial aid, which results in further stress. German Principals do not receive pre-service training, but US principals do. Other times, Principals have to deal with odd situations with clarity and professionalism with school and community stakeholders.

From this study, I understood that the US and German context school dynamics are different, and these two countries' principals experience different scenarios. US principals who get pre-service training and have no teaching duty show Nepali context principals' condition. Still, Germans who lack pre-service training and have to teach and lead both show Nepali context headteachers' condition.

Wadesango et al. (2015), in 'Occupational Stress among School Head Teachers: A Case for Hwedza District Secondary Schools'' Head Teachers' studies the 30 school head teachers and 30 ordinary teachers through descriptive survey using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study found that the school head teachers face occupational stress, which is generalizable internationally. Conversely, the 'ordinary teacher' is affected on the physiological, psychological, and behavioral realms. The study recommends the clear roles and responsibilities needed for school head teachers. The program on ways for head teachers to cope with workplace stress needs to be launched through the Education Ministry's program. The study reveals the cause of occupational stress: unprofessional behavior like teachers not dedicating themselves to the proper grading and not giving timely feedback to the low performer,

the teachers lately reporting the significant issues and causing leadership questions for the head teacher and teachers coming in professional workplace drunk. Blood pressure, diabetes, ulcers, heart complications, frustration, depression, guilt and shame, and low self-esteem are some health issues resulting from occupational stress in school headteacher. From this study, I concluded that the principals are more concerned about the output but the teachers are not worried about the students' proper grading in exercise copy and time to time check. The occupational stress caused health complications in school head teachers.

Bodson (2021), through the comparative study of Finland and Canada on School Principals' Stressors and Coping Strategies among eight principals through diary and interview, claimed that main stressors in both countries were workload, insufficient time to complete tasks, and constant interruptions. Notably, the study concludes that Canadian principals worked more than Finnish principals. Job stressors caused disagreements about school violence in the German context. In the Finish part, the study reports verbal disagreement as a cause of stress. The significant effort both head teacher played was taking care of their physical and mental health through various activities, prioritizing, and being proactive in many cases. However, the primary cause of stress in both contexts was lack of support and non-replacement of human resources. The finding also revealed that the network of people around head teachers supported both contexts. The study can be helpful in the research as the issues of stress in headteachers, namely lack of time management, replacement issues, disagreements, and lack of proper support, are some issues that can be further studied to check if those issues also persist in the context of headteachers of Kathmandu in Nepal. From the study, I realized that stress in head teachers (principals) is caused by the Canadian perspective that there is a lack of time management, replacement issues, disagreements and lack of proper support.

The dissertation "Examining the Roles of Head Teachers of Community Schools in Kathmandu District: An Exploratory Factor Analysis" by Maskey (2023) explores the role of the head teacher of Kathmandu community schools to examine the nature and extent of their engagement in such roles and how their engagements differ through gender, experience and number of students in schools. The studies reveal that head teachers are involved in instructional, internal and external roles. According to the research by Maskey (2023), the result led us to know that the professional self-development aspect in principals is not seriously taken care. The

research reflects that the community head teachers only focus on instructional roles, which included focusing on student learning and planning academic activities goals set by the head teacher and stakeholders of schools.

Furthermore, the study made me realize that in community schools, the role of school teachers is only confined to managing day-to-day classes and routines and connecting with local and federal government bodies. Instead of this only duty, they had to be involved in more than such duties, namely planning, preparing lesson plans, and policy and future prospects for schools. Furthermore, Maskey (2023) highlighted the instructional role of the headteacher to check lesson plans, design instructional strategies, and provide training and workshop on demand of time after frequent talk with the teacher is not practiced much this reveals that the instructional leadership role is underestimated in Nepali community schools. Maskey (2023) included that school leaders who lack training have to focus on many duties. With all the duties and responsibilities of non-academic work, the academic-based instructional role is missing for head teachers who are not trained in it. This shows that there could be unique nature of stress in the workplace of head teachers.

Another dissertation in the Nepali context on 'How Headteacher competency to search funding sources shapes school' studied 221 schools and 141 respondents using mixed method explored by Koirala (2022) reveals that public schools are more dependent on federal funds rather than diversifying the sources of funding and the knowledge of fund proposing and training for collecting fund is confined to the head teachers only is shown as a problem in management of fund in public schools. The study's findings can be crucial to us as the principal's only responsibilities could overburden the head teachers' role play. From Koirala (2022) I have drawn the insight that head teachers are the only fund managing agent in schools, which can burden head teachers. The policy made the head teacher only the agent to request funds to only federal agency is another narrow path of stressor. Whether head teachers are troubled by the single soldiered responsibility is an explorable issue. Furthermore, only a federal agency and non-diversifying funding narrow resources making insufficient resources in school could also add job-based stress in head teachers.

The dissertation 'Striving for Roles: Narrative Inquiry of Female Head Teacher of Public Schools' by Lamsal (2019) explores the experiences of female headteachers, their confrontation with the patriarchal mindset in school setting and the overcome difficulties they faced in a way to bring results. She shared that female

headteachers strongly understand their social dynamics at school and community levels. She also shares that female headteachers raised their voices against contemporary malpractices and challenged patriarchy. Furthermore, she draws the idea that with female headteachers' leadership, freedom was fully given to facilitate students and a harmonious relationship with the School Management Committee (SMC) was made for all round development of school. Lamsal (2019) also highlights that the timely update with technology and alternate classroom-based teaching were their inputs during their sharing. In my study the coercive force of social construct that is patriarchal mindset is a real difficulty the female headteacher often faces that could cause stress.

Kandel (2020) through a qualitative study among 315 respondents through 'Contribution of Head Teacher's Transformational Leadership to Teacher's Organizational Commitment', concludes that the head teacher's transformational leadership and organizational commitment help promote better educational achievement in community schools. He states that this is possible as the behavior of teachers to perform beyond their expectations increases when school leaders adhere to transformational leadership practices and organizational commitment. From his study, he found that head teacher of community schools practices a high level of transformational leadership, among which age, education level, and monthly income of teachers influenced the head teacher's transformational leadership. From this study, I can correlate that if the head teachers perform their responsibilities by focusing on norms of transformational leadership and have a commitment towards the organization, one can experience less stress and high productivity.

Sanjel (2021), through the narrative inquiry approach, studied head teachers' narrative through, 'Head Teachers Narratives on Mentoring Novice Teachers in Schools in Nepal' studied that non evaluative mentoring approach for novice teachers makes the new teachers sustain their role play. He further legitimizes the context with the finding that if a head teacher helps in non-judgmental mentoring, it could impact learning and the overall outcome of students in school. This implies in my research that how if head teacher instead of judging, could mentor their novice teachers, the adjustment issues and confusions creating stress could be minimized.

The dissertation on context of US female head teachers by Jones (2024) on 'How I Got Over: Long-Serving Black Women Principals Coping with Microaggressions' explores the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of six

Black women who served as public school principals in predominantly White, midwestern school districts of Minnesota for over a decade. Using a descriptive phenomenological approach, the study employs critical race theory (CRT) and Black feminist theory to address systemic and intersectional challenges. Methodologically, data collection involved a semi-structured focus group where participants discussed instances of racial microaggressions, their impacts, and their strategies for coping. This framework allowed the researcher to emphasize participants' unique, narrative-driven insights, enhancing understanding of long-term challenges in educational leadership for Black female principals. For experiences of Workplace Stress, Jones (2024) highlighted pervasive racial microaggressions impacting their daily roles, resulting in isolation and additional scrutiny. Each participant faced unique challenges as they were often the first, or only, Black woman in leadership, encountering silent resistance, direct opposition, and overt racism. This atmosphere led many to experience psychological effects akin to "racial battle fatigue," characterized by chronic stress and emotional strain, contributing to personal and professional tolls on their well-being.

For impact on personal and professional identity the dual pressures of racial and gender-based microaggressions often compromised head teachers' sense of agency. Many reported internalized anxieties, questioning their value and often feeling isolated in their professional spaces. Common effects included hypervigilance, constant strategizing to avoid confrontations and the emotional labor of maintaining resilience. Additionally, district-level inconsistencies and lack of support amplified stress, as principals frequently felt they were navigating challenging environments without adequate institutional backing. Adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies emerged from participants' narratives. For some, maintaining a connection to community and faith-based support networks was crucial for emotional stability. Techniques like avoidance and selective confrontation allowed them to navigate microaggressions strategically. Participants also developed resilience by setting personal boundaries and fostering positive self-affirmation practices. However, the study noted that these strategies required constant adjustment, reflecting the dynamic nature of workplace stress in racially hostile environments.

The significant aspect of participants' coping strategies involved seeking solidarity within informal networks. The dissertation notes that the focus group functioned as a "Sistah Circle," providing participants with validation and

understanding, crucial for emotional sustenance. Black feminist theory's emphasis on intersectional resilience was evident in how participants supported each other, reflecting a collective agency that reinforced individual coping strategies in the face of systemic challenges.

The study concludes with practical recommendations, advocating for district-level initiatives to provide intentional, consistent support structures for Black women in educational leadership. It suggests more inclusive training for staff on racial microaggressions and their impacts, alongside efforts to create mentorship programs that recognize the unique stressors these leaders face. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to track how coping mechanisms evolve over time. The findings emphasize that addressing the needs of Black women principals is critical for fostering more supportive, equitable environments in public education. Jones (2024) concluded that the unique stressors faced by Black women in educational leadership suggest systemic support mechanisms to enhance their professional sustainability and well-being.

Policy Review

The challenge of the Nepalese education is to strengthen the educational leaders (National Education Policy, 2076 BS). The policy has promised to make the result-oriented administration in education. The policy has stated that the children get child-centric education, educational and learning-centric environment, good relations between student and teacher, safe classroom, respectful environment to the students, etc. (National Education Policy, 2076 BS). From this, we can infer that the policy has addressed the possible aspects of teacher management and behavior management issues but has not much cleared what the principal's role plays result to the principal's state of mind during his work time.

Likewise, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST, 2019) states that teacher should be accountable to principal for administrative purpose, teacher should be responsible to students and parents for learning outcomes and principal will be made accountable towards the school management for students, parents and local level. The accountability cycle of the principal is that he should be responsible towards teachers administratively and accountable towards school management being mediator of students and teacher along with the other sectors such as local bodies and parents. With this multiple stakeholders' mediator ship the

principal's workload and management aspects are not addressed. The possible issue of stress in the workplace has not been speculated. A principal not only has to only manage the workplace in day-to-day settings but also has to foster and guide accordingly. The policy focuses on the principal being a stake holder to make professional development of the teachers for student's learning outcomes at school level (MoEST, 2019). This way, the education policy has mentioned School management and leadership but the work-related stress, and office-based stress is silent and these are largely missing in our policy. The policy and program namely NEP (National Education Plan) and SESP (School Education Sector Plan) mention the headteacher's role play. Still, the possible confusions and conflicts during role play and ways to come out from it are silent. Furthermore, the policy has not stated the responsibility towards the headteacher who encounter mental health issues in their workplace; instead, such professionals are tagged mentally and removed from the profession.

For the proper learning environment, the principal of the school must be stress free and obligation free. What is stopping the head teachers of public school of Nepal not able to make their proper learning environment in their well-funded school? Buildings for their students are very few and the educational environment and learning environment are the major issue (Mathema, 2007). Mathema's report attempts to question the contemporary issues, illuminating on the gaps policy has created is still relevant.

According to SSRP (School Sector Reform Plan) in case of training and development of head teachers it states the provision for giving School Management and Leadership Training for head teachers between 1-3 month as a mandatory training and also states that head teacher has to take part in role of academic aspect (teacher assignment and professional supervision) and administrative aspect (such as teacher schedules, maintaining record, managing non-teaching staff) (MoE, 2009). Head teacher as well authorized to set targets and appraise teacher performance. It has not mentioned any workplace based issues and concerns and also has not shared any wellbeing and head teacher work conflict aspect shared in the report.

According to Sixteenth Year Plan, (2024), also shares that for making headteachers capable and competent they give training on good governance and effective administration. The plan highlights on mental health in general way as “Mobilize men's participation networks to prevent gender-based violence. Promote

psychosocial counseling and good health at the community level to mitigate the increasing mental problems among women, adolescents and gender and sexual minority groups (National Planning Commission [NPC], p. 147).” But this has not included workplace based stressing factors in schools.

Theoretical Review

In the theoretical review section, I reviewed two theories: effort-reward imbalance theory and resilience leadership theory. The first theory was for understanding workplace stress and second theory was used to understand the coping mechanism of stress. In each section of the explanation of theory, I have defined origin of theory and purpose of theory connecting the relevance of theory in my study.

Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) Theory

Johannes Siegrist developed this model. This theory offers a theoretical framework for understanding how imbalances between efforts and rewards can contribute to work-related stress, especially in professions with high demands. The ERI model proves that stress arises when there is a mismatch between the effort one invests in work and the rewards received in return, such as salary, recognition, and career advancement. This imbalance can lead to feelings of job dissatisfaction, emotional strain, and ultimately, stress (Peter & Siegrist, 1997). This way the theory focuses on origin aspects of stress.

For school head teachers, this model is particularly relevant, as their roles often involve significant emotional and time investments, with expectations for high performance and problem-solving. Yet, the rewards-whether financial, social, or intrinsic-may not always correspond to the effort required, especially in challenging or under-resourced educational environments. Many head teachers report insufficient support, limited decision-making autonomy, and underappreciating, which aligns with the ERI model's stress triggers.

In terms of data, studies have shown that school head teachers experience higher levels of stress due to these imbalances. By examining aspects such as workload, autonomy, and administrative support, the study has validated that a perceived lack of reward (recognition, resources) in relation to effort (work hours, emotional labor) increases stress, thereby affirming the ERI model's applicability in educational leadership contexts (Vegchel et al., 2005). This way, ERI will be contextual in educational leadership settings where the headteachers nature of

workload, autonomy and administrative support, researchers have validated that a perceived lack of reward in relation to stressful workplace experiences.

Resilient Leadership Theory (RLT)

Ledesma (2014) states on resilience that it is the ability to come out of or get relieved from adversity or tough moments for effective leadership. It was first used in 2004 by Geocaris in research to study head teacher to thrive in difficult situations. The two models of Resilience Leadership Theory in leadership are thriving and hardiness. Thriving comes with an individual or organization that confront the challenge in which they survive the incident, they recover from incident and they thrive as they make cognitive shift on responding challenge (Baah, 2015). Once the leader come to the stage of thriving his or her cognitive shift has already shifted or elevated the mindset of leader.

Likewise, the other transformational aspect includes renewal of faith, trust, hope, and connection, redefining of self, self in relation and sense of community (Ledesma, 2014). Hardiness is thriving but individual aspects play a pivotal role in it. The individual personality traits help to buffer exposure to extreme stress. Individuals finding meaningful purpose in life, owns belief to influence surroundings, belief on own growth from positive and negative experiences shapes individual hardiness (Ledesma, 2014). The internal and external variables play crucial role in shaping the resilient leadership. Internal variables are personal attributes and external are relationships. Likewise, Career resilience of individual also plays a vital role. Furthermore, Organizational Resilience also shapes individual resilience as an organization provides constant feedback, sets goals, and has intelligent gathering (Ledesma, 2014).

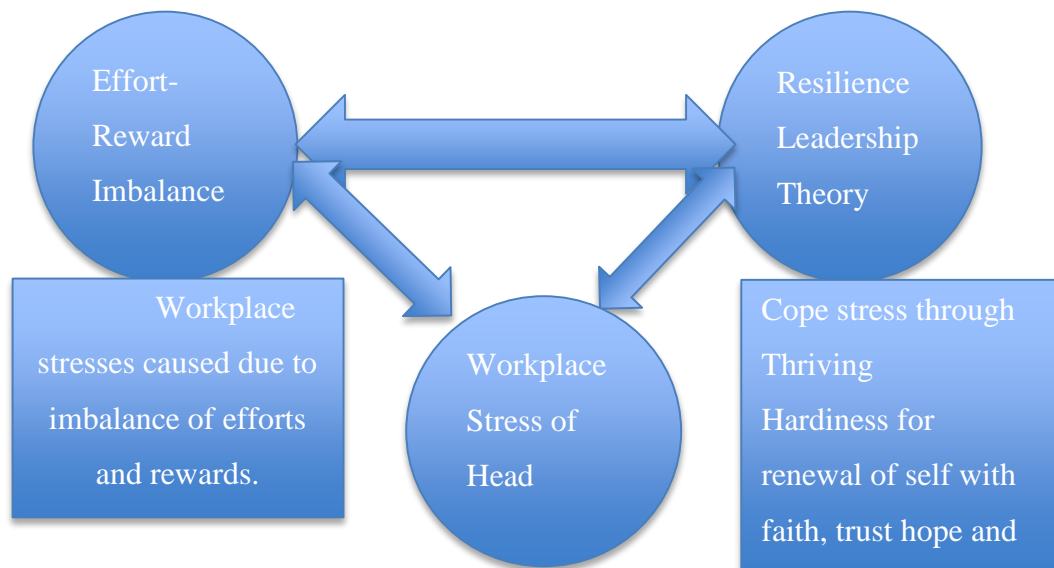
In my study, my participants, in what way has been shaped through his career, his own nature of facing tough moments and what were his coping methods were consistently taken care of. The variables that shape them were also explored through his observation as what were the traits s/he finds himself as and what factors let her/him to face the tough moments whether it's his self-nature of thriving and the hardiness, their relationship influence and the organizational role to what extent has shaped him or her as a resilient leader.

Research Gap

The rigorous study of literature helped to figure out the research in different countries and gave me insights on the issues of stress in various sectors, especially in

health and industrial sectors and university-level professorships and few of them were in education settings. I want to learn more about educational leaders, especially in public settings, about their workplace stress. As I went reviewing the National Educational Policy of Nepal, I found that the addressing for stress management is not even addressed instead other kinds of duties and responsibilities are more discussed. Furthermore, the policy has caused confusion that the head teacher or principal who intermixes with society and issues of society where schools lie and who is stressed and unable to perform well due to some health condition would be considered unfit for the job. This clause made me study about what is the condition of head teachers in public settings in Nepal. I found few of the studies done in the private sector on the role of head teachers and in public settings the aspects of school culture, instructional role of principals etc. But I find gap that the policy is making no address to the workplace stress and wellbeing provision for principals or head teachers. This made me to study on deeper level about what are the aspects of workplace that makes head teachers and head teachers stressed. Hence, I felt that I should study this issue, therefore, I focused on men and women head teachers' workplace nature of stress and how they cope with it, which are my missing puzzles to explore.

Theoretical Framework



In this research, I have used the lenses of Effort and reward Imbalance (ERI) theory to assess the stress in school head teachers where the effort made by principals and the reward they receive are not balanced. Then the Resilience Leadership Theory makes thriving and hardiness a phenomenon in which leader confront challenges, survive incident, recover from incident and thrive with cognitive shift on responding challenges while hardiness where leaders' renewal of faith, trust, hope and connection, redefining of self, self in relation and sense of community. Here Effort Reward Imbalance theory, and Resilience Leadership Theory are inter-linkable.

Essence of Chapter

I have discussed two aspects in this chapter: a literature review and a theoretical review. I reviewed the literature study's issues of national and international journals and thesis on school leadership workplace issues and duties and responsibilities of head teachers in Nepalese context. Furthermore, I have highlighted the gaps in the research on policy and practice related to head teacher's workplace experiences in public schools of Kathmandu context. Similarly, in the next section of this chapter, I have covered the Effort Reward Imbalance Theory for stressful experiences of head teachers, and Resilience Leadership theory for coping and leadership resilience. The Theoretical framework used in this study is also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the whole methodological procedures to explore the stories of headteachers related to stressful experiences in workplace and coping mechanism they implemented among selected schools of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. This chapter includes the philosophical foundation, where I have discussed the study's ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Further, I have demonstrated the research paradigm and design and discussed information collection, interpretation, and meaning-making. Finally, I have described the research area and participants, the information collection procedure, the study's credibility, and ethical considerations.

Philosophical Premises

Every research study has its own worldview, which is shaped by the researcher's experience and worldview. The worldview of my research was that of interpretive, subjective nature data, field-based study on philosophical stance with interpretive nature of study (Taylor & Madina, 2011). This study carried out the life experience of head teachers, which was nonobjective. Instead, it has been interpretive and subjective in nature. The study went through the collection of the subjective ideas assimilated time and again with the theory and global perspectives.

Ontological Assumptions

As a researcher, I believe that my study constitutes subjective realities which can be explored through interactions revealing out the singular or multiple realities of the participant (Killam, 2013). Since the experience of participant is guided by the varied experience, social background in different context and their personal disposition towards leadership. The professional workload, work-life balance, sociocultural situation, family circumstances, personal beliefs and dispositions upon the professional and personal realm shaped the realities of my participant to make the multiple reality which is the ontological stance in this study.

Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemological study deals with understanding the knowledge and knowledge worth knowing. The stories and experiences of the participants were subjective and revolved around the study process. In this process, the participant reshaped his perspectives by going through dialogue-based storytelling with the participant with the

researcher. In some cases, participant and researcher co-construct the knowledge (Killam, 2013). The subjective knowledge is fluid in nature. Knowledge, instead of being rigid and in frame, is flexible and includes multiple realities. The study uncovered the understanding, experience and realization on in what way the stress has been part of school head teachers and how they have experienced and is experiencing is my epistemology. In this process their multiple reality and their reshaping realities became part of the study. The researcher in this process not only confined with dialogical construction of knowledge but also make a co-construction of knowledge.

Axiological Assumptions

Axiology is respecting participants' value and reality without overlaying researchers' values and beliefs. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), axiology refers to researchers collecting reality taking judicious space with critical reflexivity in the research process. While constructing the questions, my world view, belief and assumptions did not interfere with the study's process, methods, and findings. The reality that came out from the study was independent of my perceptions and assumptions.

Research Design

The study demands on qualitative research. The study covers the experiences, stories and narratives of participants. Therefore, the study is narrative inquiry in nature. Narrative inquiry helps to make human experiences that are precious in form to an individual as a source of knowledge and understanding and will be significant to the reader (Clandinin, 2007). The individual experiences cover own challenging moments, overcoming the tough moments and changing the scenario. This experience of individual can be a general experience of other too. In such way, the experience of participant comparing with other individual dwelling in the nearby area with different socio-economic background can be comparable. These experiences can now do not confine to the individual monologue. It will be narrated experience that can be the knowledge and understanding for the area of research. Contextualizing the components of narrative inquiry, Kim (2016) explains that the notion of narrative thinking consists of three components: the storyteller's narrative schema, prior knowledge and experience, and cognitive strategies--generates a story that aids in understanding of others and oneself in connection to others.

My Interpretivism Research Paradigm

Relativist ontology and social constructivist epistemological assumption guided me to use interpretivism as my research paradigm. I believe in subjectivity and

relative and contextual knowledge. As the nature of my research problem and purpose I have formulated (to explore the perceptions and practices of school head teachers in dealing with workplace issues), I illustrated through lens of interpretivism: recording the views and opinion of my participants through informal discussion and narrating and analyzing them from various socio-cultural and contextual aspects. The realities are multiple in nature and people perceive things vividly, most of us have multiple layers of experience for the same thing and knowledge is gathered and established in in our mind from wider context and content. Ongoing through this, I got in-depth and detailed accounts related to my problem area rather than many inputs from large group of people which in a way could be done through interpretivism as a best-fit approach to fulfill the purpose of my study. I also focused on constructing new context-induced knowledge as the opposite reproducing prior established knowledge as a truth (Bryman, 2008) which was also best achieved from the interpretive paradigm. This study is not one setting writing but a constant knowledge generated through context and it is always relative and the study collected the painful experiences of workplace of principals and how they cope gradually with the time (Cohen et al., 2018). In the process of unfolding their stories, they made an encouragement in form of a gesture of appreciation to their efforts and showing respect to their values and practices so that they could open up more and share multiple realities going into the core of the issue. Thus, interpretive paradigm of research allowed me in doing so.

Within my qualitative design my study was narrative study. The narrative multiple experience on stress in the participant under covering story, experience, restoring of all these things made the narrative inquiry and these aspects justifies my research.

Site Selection and Participant

Initially, I purposively selected five participants according to my research question among which I included two female participants, from Kathmandu-based public schools. I selected participants of schools leveled *Ka, Kha, Ga and Ghha*. The experience of the head teachers' professional issues and other aspects that brought out the stressful situation in participants were covered. The criteria were school size, location (core city, sub-urban), serving community, academic background, ethnic background, etc. The five participants profile was shared below:

Participant 1: Ravee

Ravee is 59 years male head teacher, who is married. He was born and brought up in Nawaraj Pur Kurse village, Siraha, Madhesh Pradesh. He completed his secondary school from Siraha. He is 5 feet 4 inches tall with grey skin and short and thin hair. He shifted to Kathmandu to further his study and completed high school and bachelor of science. His aim was not to be a teacher, but luckily, or through karma, he said he turned out to be a teacher. He then started his first career as a teacher at Bhaga Ma Vi School, Palanchwok, as a math teacher located in the Kavrepalanchwok district. He worked there for 3 years. He was renowned there, being named a 'BSc Sir'.

He states, "I had a language problem initially but I was acquainted with it gradually". He did not clearly state what bothered him behind the language barrier but with his body language, it was geographical disparities. During that time, he used to roam around many places in the country. He was guided by the philosophy that he would not involve in any individual party and hence, he is proud to state, "I am not aligned to any parties". He was very famous in his area there.

Then after he worked in Sanga at Mahen Ma Vi. He worked there for one year. It was a good experience to work, even if it was only for one year. With the experience of teaching outside the valley, he was entranced inside the capital city of Kathmandu from mid-2015. After 2019 mid, he turns out to be the principal of the school. During Covid time he said that he coordinated with ward officer to make online class to start and made it effective. The reflection according to him was louder in SEE result. The present school where he works has students from urban and semiurban and village origin and belong to marginalized group.

Participant 2: Bimarsh

Bimarsh is 59 years male head teacher, who is married. He was born and raised in Panauti village, Kavre, Bagmati Pradesh. His secondary education was completed there. He is 5 feet 3 inches tall with grey skin and short and thin hair. He came to Kathmandu to further his study and finished high school and B.Com. In Kathmandu. He became a teacher when he started a volunteer teaching service at the tender age of 19 in 1993. He began his first career as a teacher at Bal Ma Vi School, Panauti. Then, after 18 years of service at the Bal Ma Vi, he shifted to Mangal Ma Vi School as an Economics and Samjik teacher in Battisputali of Kathmandu district. He worked there for 22 years as a principal.

He states, “I encountered students’ inability to suffice the basic stationery, clothes and other issues.” The situation was primarily because the very marginalized population represented the school’s students. He shared many memories of his career experiences, especially sleepless nights and strenuous effort that he led and many silent confrontations. The present school where he had worked students from urban and semiurban and village origin and belonged to marginalized group.

Participant 3: Jenalia

Jenalia is 38 years old and a married female head teacher. She was born and brought up in Dhading, Bagmati province. She is 5 feet 4 inches tall with fair grey skin. She completed her secondary school in Dhading and later for a further career to complete B.Ed., she went to Chitwan and later reached Kathmandu to complete her M.Ed, LLB, etc. Academically, she is pursuing an M.Phil. Degree from an open university and trying her best with a busy schedule to complete a dissertation.

She was highly influenced by her father who was teacher. Balsewa Ma Vi was her first school as a English teacher, and she shifted to the post of head teacher. She was also involved in social work activities. She said she loves teaching and loves to work with teaching-learning activities. She represented the school, which represents marginalized group children, which has caused less resourcefulness in school. It has been less than a year since she has been head teacher. She shared most of her experiences about the initial rapport-building process, the toughness of the job and other technical aspects and principal aspects of the head teachership. The present school where she had worked had students from urban and semiurban and village origin and belonged to marginalized group.

Participant 4: Upashak

Upashak is 48 years male head teacher, who is married. He was born and brought up in Nala, Kavrepalanchwok. His secondary education was completed there. He is 5 feet 6 inches tall with grey skin and short and thin hair. He came to Kathmandu to further his study and finished high school ISc and BSc.

His father was a teacher at Sanskrit Secondary School, where he was reading the ISc in Science. He got a back paper. And he stayed for some time in village and started teaching. Then, he further his career in masters in mathematics. Then, he began in a school as a tenure-based teacher from a private source, funded by International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs) as a temporary teacher, permanent teacher, and principal. It has been 5 years since he was the principal of the

school. Students now comprise 400 hundred 26 teaching faculties, including tenure-based (3 teachers). The three building are now acquired by the school. The school was given land by Ratnarajya Laxmi queen and was small for that time and slowly through government aid and several foreign donors helped make the full-fledged school today existing in the heart of Kathmandu. Through the conversation he has unleashed the hidden nexus of malpractice and challenging webs that has made the education status quo. The present school where he had worked had students from urban and semiurban and migrated village origin and belonged to marginalized group of population.

Participant 5: Geetanjali

Geetanjali is 55 years female head teacher, who is married. She was born and brought up in Dolakha, Bagmati pradesh. She is 5 feet 5 inches tall with fair grey skin. She completed her bachelor and masters from Kathmandu. Professionally, she started her journey as a Primary English teacher from Dolakha and then gradually, she gets upgraded to Ma Vi and came to Kathmandu valley. She first became the head of the English department after she came to Kathmandu as an English teacher. Then she gradually turns out to be head teacher and has been in the position for nine years.

She as teacher faced students' issues and collected many goose bumps moments during her teaching careers. Her transition from teaching to Head of English department and then to principal was a journey full of colorful experiences she has shared. The experience of teaching career, the experiences of head teachership she finds are different to one another. In a sense, they are contrasting as one post is about following orders and completing creative lesson plans into action in class while the another is a sole autonomous work one has to do where the person is given guidance by policy and framework. Still, their instructor is their conscience, she says. The present school where she had worked had students from urban and semiurban and migrated village origin and belonged to working group of population.

Tools and Fieldwork Process

The nature of my study was narrative and I collected experiences, realities and stories of professional settings. As a beginner qualitative researcher, I began by guiding open-ended and connected questions to shape the discussion and interaction with the participant. The data collection includes setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured (semi-structured) observation and establishing the protocol for information recording (Creswell, 2003). Each of these steps of the data collection process will be explored within this section. I made

informal observations to figure how professional life and informal work setting takes place with participants.

I approached the participant using social media and phone calls and set dates for the two face-to-face meetings, two phone call and two online meetings. The first few minutes talk were about rapport and sharing of the general experiences, and then the question-based discussion were undertaken. An in-depth interview was taken to dig out the data. Note was simultaneously taken about the verbal and nonverbal cues on facial expression, body language for authenticating the research process. The interaction was recorded with taking consent from the participant. The questions were semi-structured, and some were unstructured, but hooking questions were used (Creswell, 2003). The research focused on significant questions, among which sub-questions were asked in this process. With all the methods of field-based data collection, I reflected back my experience and feelings in the form of journaling and scratch notes while interacting. The entire transcription of each interview was preserved in Word during the analysis process, allowing for a detailed examination of the data and ensuring the spreadsheet could be cross-checked with the original information as needed. This reference to the original data ensured the accuracy of the findings. Additionally, the Word transcriptions provided access to direct quotes from interviewees, which were used to enrich or clarify the research outcomes. The final phase of qualitative data analysis involves assigning meaning to the data.

Interpretation / Analysis

I carefully listened to the recorded data and transcribed them. The data were rigorously read, re-read, and fully grasped. Then I made process coding with color-coded on the data with red, yellow and blue colors. As an example, red colour denoted to the challenge, Yellow for suggestion, Blue for experience were categorized and the like. The coded data sheets were clustered and from each cluster data were chronologically ordered. Thereafter, clustered code was categorised and themes were derived. Here after analysis and meaning-making process will be done. This way the process of making meaning was thematic and inductive (Patton, 2002). Each field data was divided into themes and inductively studied.

Quality Standards

In order to maintain the quality and rigor as a researcher, I have used several techniques to fulfill the quality criteria in my study. These quality criteria can help the enthusiast reader to rely with trust and confidence upon the findings of the research.

The three major aspect of quality standard are temporality, sociality, place, reflexivity, transferability and trustworthiness in narrative inquiry (Williams & Morrow, 2009).

Temporality

Events, people, and objects under study are in temporal transition and narrative inquirers describe them with a past, a present, and a future (Clandinin, 2007). It consists of temporality of the researcher and temporality of the participants. In order to maintain temporality, I talked with my participants about the events and experiences with time. As a researcher, I was sensitive to temporality and the past, present and future of all the occurrences involving my participants, locations and objects (Clandinin, 2007). My study covers the experience of head teacher as a past experience and the present experience of how one was and is able to cope with the situation. The aspirations and outcomes for the coming days including future ones.

Sociality

Individual is shaped by the people, environment, surrounding factors and forces around them which is a social condition for one. The head teacher's perspectives are shaped by the people they are usually communicating, the environment they interact, what they listen and other aspects that impliedly shapes their perception on their narrative production. I understood and noted down the influencing factors that has shaped the understanding of the school leader. I was sensitive on demographical composition of the society, urbanity or rurality, cultural values and traditional assumptions of the participants (Clandinin, 2007). The participants' demographical distribution also has diverse experience that it covers.

Place

In narrative inquiry place of participant plays an important role in the nature of meaning during meaning making process. Place is, the physical environment, where the experiences unfolds over time (Dewart et al., 2019). The specificity of place represents an essential role in narrative inquiry with the reflection that events impact in each place (Clandinin, 2006). The workplace and workstation of principal were my place in research.

Reflexivity

Narrative inquirers cannot subtract themselves as they are the part of the research. (Clandinin, 2007). Researchers' position in the research is not negligible. I began narrating my experience. In this process my life event connecting to the context

of study was chronologically presented. Likewise, I made the reflection in the phase of interpretation of the data. At the same time, I made participant reflection on the data they collected. What made the participant reveal such data was closely reflected. At such I as a researcher get involved in closer observation upon the participants' vivid vantage points while adopting the story. Furthermore, the characters making gaps, silences and tension throughout the stories will be sensitively studied.

Transferability

Transferability tries to share the research conceptual and applicability of research by making readers aware about applicability, resonance and theoretical engagement in research (Stalmeijer et al., 2024). This infers that the research findings can be applicable to the workplace wellbeing context of public school head teachers. Transferability is the possibility of using research finding in other contexts. The rigorous process I applied while conducting research has maintained the quality standard of transferability. Lincoln and Guba (2013) mention that in interpretive inquiry, transferability is possible through thick description by providing sufficient details of the context, participants, values and possibility for context related generalizability.

Trustworthiness

The research being qualitative study constrains to the subjective nature of finding but my methodological part assures the proper trustable nature for the readers. Williams and Morrow (2009) suggest that the three major categories of trustworthiness to which all qualitative researchers must attend are integrity of the data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings. I have maintained full integrity in my data by interpreting the meaning out of data reflected meaning generated from notes on nonverbal cues and body languages. I have adopted the in-depth interview with my participants with time to time follow up with them in a consistent manner maintaining subjectivity. I then used narratives of my participant delicately translate to English from Nepali language. Then made the whole narratives in a coding and systematically integrate with citations. The finding was drawn with clear communication of what I have achieved. This way I consistently made Trustworthiness in my study.

Ethical Considerations

I conducted this investigation under ethical guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. All five participants authorized me

to conduct the study before beginning my research. Creswell (2003) states that ethical research looks at the moral, political, and ethical ideas behind research and ensures all voices are treated fairly. In this study, the sensitive information was handled carefully and stored securely. All participants willingly gave their informed consent after being assured that their participation was voluntary and would not have any negative consequences.

Arifin (2018) highlighted that research participants secure their self-esteem in each angle. I adhered to the principle. I ensured that the participants had full autonomy to decide for discontinuity if they might feel the difficulty in continuation. Their privacy was respected and thus their identity was anonymized. The narrative inquirer should attend to relational ethics, and due respect is shown towards it, considering the principles of openness, mutual vulnerability, and care (Trainor & Graue, 2013). I used pseudonyms for all participants to maintain anonymity and their schools to keep their identities private. The purpose and possible outcome of the study have been discussed and sought their consent to participate in the study voluntarily. I have not plagiarized in the documentation of my study. Similarly, their information or any materials related to the participants be it in the form of audio recordings or field notes written or transcribed and translated one, were kept safely in order to preserve their right to privacy. My engagement with the participants was maintained carefully without disturbing their conversations.

Essence of Chapter

I have discussed two aspects in this chapter: a literature review and a theoretical exposition of the theory of change. I reviewed the literature study's issues and regulations pertaining to women and their leadership styles. I persuasively expressed my interpretation that linked to the goal of my research during the literature review. Furthermore, I have highlighted the gaps in the research on policy and practice related to the obstacles women experience in achieving leadership roles. Similarly, in the next section of this chapter, I have covered the liberal feminist theory and transformational leadership theory to comprehend the difficulties experienced by women and the leadership style of women head teachers. The theoretical framework used in this study is also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

HEAD TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE STRESS

The purpose of this chapter is to explore and present the findings related to the main research questions: 'How do public school head teachers narrate their stressful leadership experiences in the workplace?' and 'How do they manage these stressful leadership encounters?' The findings are portrayed by narrating the head teachers' life events according to their profiles, focusing on their perceptions of workplace stress and how they navigate these challenging experiences. This narrative approach helped to uncover the personal insights of each principal's journey in making sense of their experiences.

In this study, three male and two female school head teachers from Kathmandu shared their narratives about the stress they faced throughout their careers in school leadership and the coping mechanisms they employed. These stories have provided a personal perspective on the experiences of head teachers working in public schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. Each narrative offered a glimpse into the subjective meaning behind their encounters with professional stress and the strategies they used to cope. Furthermore, the stories highlighted critical incidents and the evolution of each principal's leadership style.

Walking on a Tight Rope in the Midst of a Storm

The concerns of head teachership are always considered as walking a tight rope in the midst of a storm. The participants have also mentioned it as their everyday concerns are related to students' presence, annual risk is there to increase student enrollment, parents' expectations and child-friendly environment are other demanding agendas. Both Ravee and Bimarsh highlight the inherent challenges and responsibilities associated with the role of a school principal, particularly in the context of student enrollment and school development.

Concerning this, Ravee shared, "*While head teacher role is tough and is obvious. If you know, realize, understand the head teachership in itself is tough. It is true to say that the different principled, diverse kinds of people are to be dealt.*" Here, Ravee reflects on the demanding nature of the head teachership, emphasizing the necessity of understanding and managing a diverse set of people and situations. A leader who perceives his complexity in job such as dealing with situations, people and

circumstance he can only deal the issues of leadership (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019). Despite the difficulties, he and his team successfully increased the student population from 34 to 250 during his tenure, gradually expanding the school from pre-primary to secondary level and achieving significant progress in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). This growth underscores the principal's ability to navigate complexities and foster school development despite the challenges.

Similarly, Bimarsh illustrates the fluctuations in students number and the lengths to which they went to stabilize enrollment. Faced with the potential decline in student attendance, Bimarsh took the initiative to personally invest in providing daily tiffin (meals) to the students, thereby ensuring a more consistent student presence. He shared, *“The fluctuation of students number from first period to fourth students was there and I made my personal own investment for drinking water and tiffin in public school to sustain the number.”* This illustrates how, in such a situation, the only thing keeping the school stable is each individual's dedication to upholding moral principles. The actual state of the school may be worse than anticipated. But leaders can make dedication go to every shoulder through personal dedication he makes and make shared ownership flow through the channel. Ownership is a key component which Kirk and Barblett (2022) also highlight that psychological ownership is an essential factor for the distributed leadership. Here for maintaining the student population the principal's proactive approach to manage school sustainability highlights the unique and diverse tough reality head teachers face in community school settings. The study on head teachers' personal traits and sustainability by Goode (2017) found that head teachers' personal qualities, their attitudes and strategic interventions plays crucial role to impact external and internal environment to instill successful sustainability.

Likewise, Jenalia and Upashak spotlights on clashes of expectations particularly in dealing with children and Students irregular presence. Jenalia tried to adopt the dealing of children according to modern child friendly method. But the expectation of parents contradicts the action of principal. Parents here wants their children to be physically punished for their mistakes or misconducts. Jenalia says-

Guardians asks why their children were not punished for their incomplete work and misconducts. The guardian's education is most in today's need as guardians want the same teaching method of corporal punishment as the form of teaching as they used to face. This makes us stressful.

The head teachers only ways to deal students in the child friendly manner is interrupted by parents because of prenotion that the way they behave is the only way. Here, the major thing is that guardians' assumptions contradict school values. Here, Daniel et al. (2024) and Perron et al. (2023) also strongly affirm that conflicts arise when school leadership values, like promoting inclusivity or adopting progressive teaching methods, clash with the more conservative or traditional values upheld by parents or guardians. This made me realize my student life when my father complained against corporal punishment, which was against my nature. The school could not focus on making a child-friendly environment and now teachers and head teachers want to change something they were disturbed which turned to be stressing factor for the leader.

Furthermore, Jenalia, Upashak and Geetanjali narrated the students - teachers irregular presence, impact on learning, wrong team player and internal politics. Jenalia shares that the students who come to the school are mostly engaged in domestic helper jobs, makes the learning a second or part time work rather than a primary work which is a difficult situation to face. She says-

In our school, we have, total number of students i.e., 220 but this number is also irregular. Most of the children are from marginalized community hence their focus is to earn rather than to learn. Most of the children who are coming from home works as a domestic helper.

The principal faces irregular number of students presence. The reason behind this is the student's priority. The students prioritize earning over learning this create their attention more towards earning activities rather than the learning activities. This also create a tension to principal that they neither could do something new to meet the gap the students realized nor could modify the educational activities such that they could read and earn. The role obligation and reality of student creating fluctuating student number here is the catalyst for the stress in head teachers. Grissom and Bartanen (2019); Levin et al. (n. d.) also support and point out that the role of school head teachers has become increasingly complex over the past decade. They now have to juggle instructional leadership responsibilities with operational tasks, which becomes especially challenging with the constant changes in student populations. This pressure is further heightened by the expectation to sustain high academic performance despite shifts in student demographics and enrollment numbers.

In similar manner, Upashak is also not taking the circumstance of irregular students a normal one. He further adds that another stressing factor for him is irregularity of teachers as a normal phenomenon. He says-

Students' untimely presence makes me stressed. But the teacher's irregularity makes me troubled more. We take record of the substitutions of each teacher. And in teachers' insufficiency, I also take lead of the substitution class or engage the class which is at a time strenuous.

This shows that not only students but teachers' irregularity is also the stressing factor for the headteachers. In comparing the stress source of Jenalia and Upashak, Jenalia is mostly troubled by the students lack of focus towards study. Rather they want to earn and be financially stable. Still, the other side Upashak is troubled by students' irregularity and too the teacher irregularity is another factor that makes it difficult to manage the workplace. He has to manage 7/8 periods that cause him stress. What he pointed out in this conversation is the teachers own personal baggage they take with them really is bothering workplace performance he said in his tail reflection for this. The baggage he infers was the home affair work which teacher want to do during work hour by taking short leave or early leave or half leave. This shows that lack of proper commitment either from the student side or from teachers is the major stressor for the head teachers. Blazar and Kraft (2016) journal "Teacher and Teaching Effects on Students' Attitudes and Behaviors" also supports how the effectiveness of teachers not only shapes student outcomes but also affects teachers' and principal's well-being and job satisfaction. When students perform poorly and teacher morale declines, it puts additional strain on school head teachers, who are held responsible for both leading instruction and ensuring student achievement, thereby increasing their stress levels. Apart from this the confusion created in role-play for a headteacher is caused when the wrong team play and internal politics play a significant role. Upashak elucidates an incident where a collusion mindset teacher tried to spoil the team spirit and tried to get the teamwork mentality of leader into trouble. He expressed-

Two years ago, when in a team our whole teachers were in proper frame of teamwork. But all of sudden, a new teacher came. It has been because of the political influence, and he seemed to me that he holds a bad reputation from his previous workplace... This individual made the situation upside down of

the team work by making a team player into a fraction created enmity and not being professional in the workplace.

The head teacher shared the bitter experience of a new teacher, and slowly, he made the team player of headteacher leadership into a useless attempt. This stress him for some time. When a team player does not perform in a team the daily goal set, objectives, brainstorming for ideas, putting ideas into action and getting speculated results will be at stake. Each individual on a team should align with the aim of the team so that only the central role of the team could be fulfilled. ‘One of the rotten apples spoils every other’ is a well-known proverb that can be reflected here. In a sense, if any employee focuses on his self-interest and works against the interest of the team, this can cause counterproductive outcomes and could be the primary cause of stress to head teachers. To the opposite of this Weidmann and Deming (2021) share that social intelligence is a critical aspect in shaping members into the team. Geetanjali’s instance is quite different of a kind but is about political interference in her construction work at school. She says-

In our school, the construction moment was going on, and it was the time and again attempt when a few characters played within for their interest. Those characters worked for personal interest. They wanted to arrange the existing setting so that the quotation and bid could be finalized. However, my nature is different, as I wanted to focus more on transparency in decision-making and fair competition in procurements. Being honest was very nature of mine and was pricy. This created a lot emotional setback for two weeks.

Geetanjali shares that her honest attempt to make the construction work go with open competition bidding method was interrupted by few people fixing the bidding to some preset client. If the construction favors a handful of people and budget get uncontrolled, then the whole sum budget will be significant sized and it will be dishonest to the donor and surely is an unethical act. She did not want this to happen for if it happened, then a handful of people would play the budget in their way and obstruct the honest and fair bidding system. Unethical alignment is always a big ethical red flag for a leader like her. Leaders could not withstand such unfairness in the construction process of leadership. The interruptive behavior of some people made the leader's patience tasted, but leader has really proved patience with the courage to confront them for those action was unethical and not anyway professional in such settings. This has caused a lack of ethics for her being in the position of authority to

do nothing for some time this made leader stressful work experience in the workplace. This sort of interruption disturbed the leader emotionally for some weeks. When a leader is questioned, that is ok but the question comes to ethics. The spiritual leader does not accept it and counters or fights, which causes tremendous stress that one should withstand (Ayoko, 2022). Summing up, leaders get stressed when questioned about ethics.

In school leadership, there is massive interpersonal communication between stakeholders and operational difficulty caused by rules violating teachers with irregularity. Likewise, leaders have to act according to the priority of students without violating ethics in any troubled circumstance. Furthermore, non-cooperative faculties and staff also stress school leaders. In a nutshell, challenges in communication, operational difficulty, prioritizing students in troubled times, and non-cooperative faculties are some of the challenges that make leaders stressed.

Hailstorm and Seedlings' Toughness to Stand Still

This section covers the Hailstorm as a stressor and seedlings as a principal. Here, toughness that does not let seedlings stand are teachers' issues, workplace scenarios, and surrounding impact on students.

Both Ravee and Bimarsh spotlight issues in leadership under pressure associated with the role of a school principal, particularly in the context of an inexpressible form of stress and teachers' revenge attitude, which to him is not to be expressed in any condition in the workplace. Ravee disclosed-

Principal is a commander in chief as the lion of the jungle. They can take themselves as a major person but should not show it. They need not to show their emotions in language but rather with the mind. The head teachers should not show stress even if it is exposed in the workplace.

He says that leaders are like the major person in the workplace. The leader should be mature enough not to express emotions in the form of reaction but be responsible with mind to respond with a form of action. The 70 leaders coaching intervention-based research by Halliwell et al. (2023) finds that authentic leaders are the ones who have responsible actions in reaction forcing moments showing effective leadership traits. Bimarsh expressed the leadership and emotions in a bit different way about how revenge of a teacher spoils the leadership role play when a principal wants to be responsible leader. Bimarsh revealed-

The revenge I encountered was that few teachers were once not serious about their job, especially in the classroom teaching-learning process. They spend time on their cell phone and stay idle rather than teaching. This causes an irritation to the head teachers like us; hence, I, as a head teacher time, make bad mouth to them, and they, from the other side back, stab or take revenge against me. This is a major problem I faced, and I am irritated by such instances time and again.

Here, Bimarsh illustrated that the revengeful attitude of undutiful teacher makes him irritated to perform his duty well, which causes stress to him. For the cause of this issue, Bimarsh adds that political influences have a significant impact. He says, *"I found several issues in the teachers, especially political interference in teachers' appointments rather than qualifications."* When a teacher is not appointed on the basis of qualification instead of near and dearness of political alignment, the performance is compromised. Mayo (2020) affirms that when there is insufficient collaboration within a team, particularly when essential or unique information is not communicated or trusted, it significantly heightens stress and pressure on leaders, impacting the ability to lead effectively. Furthermore, it emphasizes that a strong, cohesive team is critical for leadership success, especially in challenging or complex environments. Similarly, Jenalia and Geetanjali have stress arousal aspects, namely work that occupies everywhere, urgent work, and unrecognition in the workplace. Jenalia states that workplace stress occupies her in such a way that time for work engulfs all personal engagement opportunities. Jenalia states-

I was going through a transition of three months as a principal. I realized there is no personal life. But my home time and family time are encroached on, as is my MPhil. The program is stocked at present. I get frequently troubled by this.

Here, her statements infer that she had no personal life and her academic career for MPhil. The program she joined was in significant stake, and she finds herself in stake or somewhere dangling. A 2020 article on leadership challenges highlights that unpredictable work demands and unclear strategies can increase stress for leaders. This is particularly true in roles where decisions affect both the organization and personal well-being. Leaders often face difficulty in maintaining work-life balance, and uncertainty during challenging situations can lead to personal

sacrifices (Goldsby et al., 2020). Furthermore, she shares that the initial time was challenging for her in aspects of connection with parents. She states-

Initially I got a challenge in collaboration and cooperation. I needed to make more strong relations with the community of parents. For the first week, I felt a lot stressed. As the responsibility holder, workplace concerns occupied me from work and even to home.

She opines that in during her home time, she also has a lot of hunches of workplace that occupies her. When she got challenged in making better rapport and strong relations it made her in trouble. Furthermore, the deprivation of sleep was caused when her work matters echoed in her head during sleep time. This is an unusual situation as work occupies your sleep and home time. The article '*Sleep and Organizational Behavior: Implications for Workplace Productivity and Safety*' by Pilcher & Morris (2020) discusses how sleep deprivation significantly impacts leadership performance, decision-making, and overall workplace productivity. Lack of quality sleep can lead to higher stress levels, poor decision-making, and increased personal health issues for leaders, making it harder to manage responsibilities effectively. The article emphasizes the need for better sleep management to prevent leadership burnout. Furthermore, Geetanjali also states that she has a hard time connecting with balancing the professional load along with home affairs. Here Geetanjali states-

At present, I have to work sometime till 10 pm for data filling. Due date-based work is definitely after school time. I have no comfort of 10-5 pm duty. Actually, I am giving more time to schools and professions than at my home, and this makes me uncomfortable sometimes.

She states through this affirming statement of workload and its occupancy to her realm that she says her 10-5 pm professional time is more likely extended to 10 pm, which means her 12 hours of work is a lot for her to fit professionally. Afonso et al. (2017), through the study of comparison between long working and short working hours among 237 participants, highlight that extended work hours significantly affect leaders' mental health, which leads to increased stress and burnout. This can hinder effective leadership and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, Geetanjali is traumatized by the construction work, which is hectic for her. Geetanjali says- *The work of construction takes my stress a lot as I start to do it. But now it has been changed. I am used to it now. But sometimes, the*

timebound work is stressful at a sudden time. She shares that the construction work at her workplace is very occupying to her, especially the time-bound ones that are stressful to her. This factor is unique in comparison to all the participants. Research by Vegchel et al. (2005) suggests that prolonged work with limited control increases stress levels, particularly for leaders who are unable to influence key aspects of their tasks. This stress can be exacerbated when leaders face high demands with little autonomy, which is critical for well-being and engagement. Studies based on the Self-Determination Theory emphasize that fulfilling psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is essential to reduce stress and improve engagement in work (Schaufeli, 2021). In the other way, Jenalia, Upashak and Geetanjali expressed students concerns in realm of behavior impacting and distracting factors and study impacts. Jenalia opines-

Tattoo-making, deadlocking and grunz pant use and rag-like clothes-wearing tourists are visible around the locality, which has caused behavioral issues in Kathmandu core area students. The students really need time to be attracted to make them toward the teaching and learning at home. We are very worried that the behavioral impact will cause more significant issues and concerns for us. Piercing, tattooing, and hoarding boards are everywhere that impact issues in the behavior of children.

Here, she expresses her challenges that the behavior of students is impacted by the surroundings where the time of students is spent. The way tourists wear, behave and deal with other people, such as tattoo making, deadlocking and other asocial contexts for Nepali context, according to her, is really challenging the overall aspect of children, which can impact them to imitate and requires parental attention and that result in a health implication and school culture violation. 'The Reality of Teen' on 'Psychology today' also highlights that the teen under less or no parental control is likely to indulge in the use of weeds in form of smoke or vaping and indulging in antisocial behaviors (Gold, 2024). In addition to this Upashak has another concern that the present students are not much studious as it used to be. They are having the other kind of engagement especially love affairs, addiction of tobacco and other kinds of intoxicating things and talking with the parent is also curving the issue to other side. Upashak says-

Today's children are not much study focused they are more distracted by love affairs, addiction of tobacco and other kinds of intoxicating things and they

are hardly focused on study. The one who are distracted once are called by parents, and the parents are not committed to continuing the study in town; instead, they say the child will study in the village. Now, I am in a dilemma about how to share the problems so that the student population would not be affected.

He states that the students are engaged in distracting activities, especially love affairs, addiction to tobacco and other kinds of intoxicating things and once informing parents is also creating a deduction of students' number. Not telling is ethically wrong, and if informed, then the students leave the city school and join the village school with their parents. This created a huge dilemma. Hiekkataipale and Lämsä (2017) and Morley et al. (2019) justify through their studies how managers often face ethical dilemmas, experiencing stress due to the complexity and inevitability of such stressful encounters. This exhibits that moral dilemmas, if not resolved, can be a major stressor for school leaders.

Upashak and Geetanjali states that there is no growth, lack of appreciation, insufficient policy addressing and time bound work, personal baggage of teachers and lack of commitments which also culminates the stress in them. Upashak says-

The growth of staff from teachers to other higher level is not assured. The policy and demand have not been fulfilled. The teacher who has worked for many years (30 years) has not been singly upgraded. The teacher who are not upgraded are not given proper facilities by the state as per the promise. This sort of condition is stressful to teachers and their outcomes makes me stressful.

Upashak states that the growth for staff is not assured that cause less performance in school teachers. If teachers are not upgraded the need to work and need to do better in their job place could never be achieved. Lack of growth, no upgrade and degrading academic performance significantly impacts the performance and the outcome of students and hampers effective leadership causing stress in leaders (Bhatta, 2020; Chhetri, 2022). If the teachers are not time to time trained and motivated the outcome of students cannot be assured causing the decline in performance and outcome both resulting stress to head teacher for unexpected outcomes. Furthermore, Upashak shares his dissatisfaction with the financial privilege given to head teachers. Upashak says-

A principal, Rs 500 and Rs 300 is the only incentive for secondary and primary level school head teachers. Since there are a lot of duties, and 'you should do this and that also' makes a troublesome and stressful situation, Some municipal level initiatives for giving extra incentives were heard but have not been able to execute.

He says the monetary value is very negligible and is not even sufficient to consider any value. The work is piling and the day-to-day work are challenging too. The municipal approach to make a financial incentive to the headteachers turn futile as it could not be executed into practice. This also hurt principal like him. The extrinsic motivation depreciates the intrinsic motivation of a leader. The purpose to do work in better way comes to the team when they are well paid and their growth is assured if that is compromised than no good thing can happen but just a stress of underperformance to the leader. To the contrast the study among Chinese youth revealed that intrinsic motivation plays a significant factor for their retention rather than the extrinsic motivation (Miao et al., 2020). This shows that extrinsic motivation such as salary and extra pay does not assure the satisfaction and retention of managers instead the intrinsic factors such as work environment, supportive staffs and work culture are the one that assures job satisfaction and retention of mid managers. Geetanjali being unrecognized in workplace and untrained in accountancy and having to make surveillance of account-based work makes her stressed. Geetanjali states-

Leaders are always on one side. Leaders' problems are not understood intentionally or are unable to be understood. From time to time, the leader has to be trained in accounting, which is online and is confined to accountants only. Appreciation is expected, but no one has been able to say a single optimistic word.

Here, Geetanjali states her bitter experience of not being supported and not getting adequate training in accountancy. As team players, accountants are only given training. The principal also has to make major financial decisions, which is another cause of stress for her. This condition is the opposite of the study by Koirala (2022), in which she states that the headteachers are the only stakeholders in managing the funding project for schools. The policy says the headteacher should be responsible for funding the program. Still, the reality is head teachers like Geetanjali are untrained and are not aware of the fundamental aspect of accountancy and funding that could help in funding-based proposal drafting.

Furthermore, the lack of support and enhancing appreciation from anyone in her institution and through her management committee is another source of stress for her. Being recognized in the workplace as a leader is crucial for work-related contentment. Elomaa et al. (2023) magnify the scenario with the term social support and share that school leaders lack social support, and work-based pressure makes them stressed. This reveals that social support for head teachers is essential, and if it is lacking, the stressful scenario is inhabitable.

This way, the section covers head teachers encountering revengeful teachers' political interference in teacher appointments as teacher-based stress. Likewise, other aspects of the principal's stress are lack of trust support, unclear plans and unpredictability in the workplace, lack of collaboration and cooperation, creating workload at home occupying sleep, and poor sleep emphasizing poor decisions and performances. Furthermore, Head teachers are stressed by the time-bound work, lack of autonomy, competence and relatedness, students' behavior resulting from tourist surroundings, and ethical dilemmas. Likewise, lack of growth, degrading academic performance, and negligible incentives also cause stress in head teachers. A lack of financial knowledge for financial judgments and decisions, lack of social support and work-based pressure also enhance stress in head teachers.

The Mist of Cloud and the Seedling: What the Fate Drive

The Mist of Cloud and Seedling What the Fate Drive here refers to the mist of cloud as a confusion that the seedlings, head teachers, hold that made them in a sort of uncertainty denoted by dangling fate. In a nutshell, the section elaborates on silence as a coping method by head teachers who are mindful of their inner voice, are apologetic in time, seek help in need, and resolve conflict through student-centeredness.

The participants Ravee, Bimarsh, Upashak, and Geetanjali are confused by the complexity of the workplace. Ravee unleashes that complexity exists in the workplace where collaboration and massive communication appear, and uncomfortable pressure is frequently challenging. Ravee adds, "*The complexity of collaboration and massive communication with all kinds of parties are always challenging.*" Here, Ravee infers that the workplace has horizontal and vertical stakeholders with whom a leader has to deal very cautiously. The communication and collaboration between the stakeholders are very challenging. Inter-personal communication is another stress factor for school leaders. Likewise, Upashak has a different experience (Elomaa et al., 2023). He has trouble with the teacher who does not integrate with the rules and regulations of the

school, and being the caretaker of extra periods bothers him. He says, *“The teachers who do not follow school rules and come late really bother me, and sometimes extra periods on working hours really confuse my schedule.”* It infers that the headteachers get into trouble when the teacher cannot cope with the responsibilities well; instead, they breach the rules and regulations of the school. Similarly, the absent teachers’ extra periods have to be dealt with, which makes the principal confused about their schedule. Operational difficulty is another factor that induces stress in leaders (Elomaa et al., 2023). A leader is a single person who has to delegate duties. With the shortage of human resources, a leader being unable to function with the team properly is a big problem for the leader. Malaysian Deputy Headteachers study by Tahir et al. (2019) also differently magnifies headteacher stress that the cause of being resourceful to the teacher, working on their own duty and primary head teacher delegated work makes them stressed. Headteachers being occupied and absorbed by human resources also lead them to be noted. Bimarsh, in the context of political interference and influence, shares incidents that are pretty similar to Geetanjali's. Bimarsh had a serious encounter with political influence from a local political leader who tried to trap him and make it a challenging experience for him. He says-

It was an incident 4 years ago, a day when a BLE grade 8 female student taking two exams left coming exams. I even called the parents, reached home in person and went to ask to attend the exam. She pretended to be sick and left attending the exam, resulting in the repetition of the following year. The person behind all this trouble-making cause was a political enmity, a local political person. This made me into great trouble for some time.

Here, Bimarsh got political influence from local politicians that, with personal envy, a student’s academic life was made a pun. Watching a student’s academic life to repeat for next year by a collusion action by local politician for fulfilling personal hostility with him made him sad and tensed for some time. A leader has to counter the ideas that are odd and harmful, and such one makes enemies with the local influencers, causing a rivalry. The leader has to be ready for action that can go against his role-play time in the name of influencing another person who is under the leader’s supervision. The leader has to act according to the demands of the role, considering students' rights first and without violating ethics (Norberg & Johansson, 2007). Ultimately, ethically guided work and student-focused action are specific to wins

against the ill will. Similar to this, Geetanjali wants to share that the unsupportive faculties create stress for her. She says-

At the present, as in countries of Bermuda triangle situation. In my workplace too I had to work juggling with the senior teaching male faculties who were tough to deal. I was going through enormous challenges.”

Here, Gitanjali realizes that the three corners of the Bermuda Triangle are symbolic and similar to the teaching faculties, management, and headteacher. These three poles exist but sometimes do not fully and cooperatively help each other. She realized several challenging moments she faced during her tenure as head teacher in school. The context of male dominance in the workplace is louder. The leader, who has no cooperative faculties or staff, creates a deadlock and tough moment for leaders to lead (Mankins et al., 2004). This is always a hard-to-manage moment that can cause stress to the leader.

This way, head teachers encounter massive interpersonal communication between stakeholders, and they find operational difficulty caused by rules violating teachers with irregularity. Likewise, leaders have priorities for students without violating ethics in any troubled circumstance. Furthermore, non-cooperative faculties and staff also stress school leaders.

Seedling Gets its First Petal and Makes the Hope Turning a Tree

In this section, a seedling that is a school leader could get the first petal. That is a balancing act of managing the tough moment by raising hope of turning into a tree, which means being a balanced and resilient leader. Here, being silent in times of conflict, keeping an inner voice still and quiet, and apologizing when wrong were some strategies used by school leaders to cope with hurdles in the past. Lastly, the school leader was asking sources for help and being fair and student-centered activities to solve conflicting interests and to understand self and others silently within the mind.

Being silent and dealing with the people by making their minds silent is what Ravee shared with coping with different stressors, circumstances and people. Ravee says-

Silence is the answer to everything, and I practice it regularly. Once, a person tried to harm me physically and on that particular day, I confronted him with being still silent and unmovable. These sorts of incidents were many in my career. But being quiet is the only medicine I figured out.

He infers that when two people make prominent voices, no one can be heard, but if one becomes idle and listens and is silent as a single hand makes no clap, so is the quarrel and fight. Leaders take steps such as communicating, apologizing when wrong, asking outside sources for help, reflecting, and being fair, which are the steps to solve school leadership issues (McMillan, 2004). This can solve many conflicting issues. With similar experience of Bimarsh is here commendable to share. Bimarsh says-

I adopted to talk less, and silence was the medicine for all conflict. And the main principle of my workplace was to focus on students' academic progress. Once, there was a situation when my parents came with the baton to injure me physically. Then, I, without reacting, became receptive and was unharmed. This sort of circumstance was many in my career. But my only solution was to be silent from the inside out to make the non-reactive expression.

As a principal, I know that many kinds of personalities have to be bumped in during the career of leadership. In such a process, conflicting situations can arise in leadership. If leaders want to be unharmed and tactful, they must be silent in conflict and listen to others' perspectives. Here, the school leader's priority is the student's learning, which means in whatever way, he should not lose his point of reality. The equilibrium of the balance of noise within and outside by being silent within and outside is the most important. For a leader who has numerous rollercoasters to go, he has to be quiet within so that s/he can hear the voice of outside to analyze and understand the fundamental reason for its arousal within. Branson (2007), through exploring the authentic leadership among seven principals of Catholic primary schools in Brisbane, Australia, finds out that the leaders who can understand the voice within themselves are more authentic leaders. This shares that genuine leaders are the ones with a silent mind and heart, and such leaders can only understand others and understand the voice in themselves.

This section covered the school principals' ways of dealing with different circumstances, such as being silent in times of conflict, making inner voices still and quiet and apologizing when wrong. These were some strategies used by school leaders to cope with hurdles over time. Lastly, the school leader was asking sources for help and being fair and student-centered activities to solve conflicting interests and to understand self and others silently within the mind. In conclusion, the section

covered coping with stress by head teachers through being silent, keeping their inner voice still, asking for an apology in time, asking for sources for help in need, and having a student-centered interest in conflict.

Seedling Turns to Plant with the Brighter Sunny Morning

The seedling turning to plant here symbolizes that the principal finds their leadership voice within a clear state of mind, referred to by a brighter sunny morning. In this section, being humble, maintaining dignity, being self-aware and socially aware, morning preparation and self-reflection are explained and have played a significant role in shaping a coping method adopted by head teachers.

Ravee, Jenalia and Geetanjali share that collaboration, delegation and cooperation are the only means to win in the leadership role play. Ravee focuses on delegation and shares, *“The distribution of stress by power delegation can help reduce stress and achieve victory in leadership roleplay.”* Here, he states that if leaders try to divide what can be delegated, they can win their core work easily and get ample time to plan and recharge. Similarly, Jenalia has an initial workspace with lots of challenges in understanding the community and parents' demands. Jenalia says, *“Cooperation, collaboration, and transparency would solve any issues of leadership. The lack of resources and physical and technical day-to-day issues are now managed. They were managed through NGOs and INGOs connections, which helped fix infrastructure and day-to-day financial needs.”* She says that inter-organizational collaboration, cooperation, and transparency within an organization are crucial for the organization's resourcefulness. Hence, transparency and collaboration support effective educational leadership.

The school leadership role is challenging, and it's obvious that the thriving mechanism each head teacher possesses is unique. Here, Upashak shares responsibilities and leadership guided him, while Geetanjali says the servant leadership quality that she possesses guided her. Upashak finds himself thriving because of the consistent feeling of responsibility and learning. He says, *“Feeling responsible makes me stick in the work. Any way the responsibilities make us have enormous learning.”* Here, Upashak expresses that the feeling of responsibility consistently guides him, and the responsibilities he holds lead him to huge learning through his experiences. Bimarsh talks about thinking the principal's role as a service, not employment, will help him thrive and be content in his life. Bimarsh says, *“Thinking that teaching and leading is a service, not an employment, will not bring*

any dissatisfaction, but a contentment in career.” This means that professional practice in the educational space is a service of self-respect that cannot be measured in terms of monetary value. Here, Bimarsh contemplates the headteacher role as very deep and massive; hence, he says if one goes to the economic value, one cannot satisfactorily survive, but if one connects it with a selfless act of service, one can enrich self with devotion and give more than we get. And it’s evident that when one gives something to others, we are always happy people.

Every headteacher should consider duties and obligations as a service rather than employment. Likewise, Jenalia talks about ownership of all stakeholders as crucial to making school a place of result-oriented learning as the head teachers’ single effort. Jenalia says, *“Ownerships from parents, teachers, students and school management. As a triangular basis, we community, school and parents can collaborate to enhance the GPA of students and their learning.”* For a school to be sound academically and team-wise, there is a massive role-play by four stakeholders: parents, teachers, students and school management. The Ownership of parents in teaching during class or at home really helps in the learning outcomes. Likewise, head teachers’ close supervision as school management can really help foster the learning of the students. Likewise, Geetanjali shares their strategic position within the team and working with a team is crucial. She says, *“Making self small and working together and asking ideas and brainstorming on self is my way to get most out of people.”* Here, she expresses that being humble and receptive helps leaders get easy help. Gist (2020) acknowledges that to make people volunteer their maximum support, the humility of a leader (mostly underestimated) is extraordinarily powerful. When dignity is maintained in the workplace, empowerment, engagement and enthusiasm can be instilled in the opposite. If dignity is compromised, resentment, anger or withdrawal can be familiar feelings among members. This shows that if a leader is humble, he can make the members share their ideas and viewpoints, maintaining an empowering, engaging and enthusiastic environment. Finally, Upashak shares that for the leader to be effective in dealing with all the circumstances, he should know the manual of his workplace. He says, *“As the device functions are known, then the device could be operated. Similarly, if a school's strengths and weaknesses are well known, then we could be able to deal with them as leaders in that context.”* Here, he shares that if a leader knows his workplace's strengths and weaknesses in terms of human resources, physical resources and

proximity, he can gain all strengths over weaknesses. A leader who has self-awareness and social awareness can excel in his role-play (Sahlin, 2018). This means a leader who knows himself and knows the people around him can excel in a leadership role. Ravee shares his self-management by managing his daily schedule.

He says-

To reduce stress, I have to exercise, which is not dominantly what I have in my condition at present. I start my evenings by exercising in the evening by visualizing the work and human resources. I regularly take back, hand, breathe, and push up 20 times. I stay in the workplace room chair for 30 minutes for administrative work. Other times, I go around and attend the class if needed.

Here, Ravee shares how he manages his morning schedule and then manages his physical activity by properly supervising his classes during the day. Also, his self-reflection helps him thrive in the leadership role-play. A leader starts his day with self-management and ends with self-reflection, which is what makes a leader thrive in his dynamic leadership role-play. Beginning with self-management, such as physical exercise and exercise of mind and spirit, helps leaders to prepare for a busy and challenging day. On the other hand, self-reflection in the evening makes the leader think about his actions, identify whether his actions meet objectives or not, and reconfigure or revise the actions that were not aligned with his objectives and goals. This way, a leader who prepares for the day and reflects on his actions is the thriving aspect of leadership. The study on self-reflection shows that in personal and professional spaces, an individual could grow with a meticulous understanding of their situation and get ready to handle such a situation. Aryal (2022) discusses that self-reflection focuses on the process of employing good self-care techniques to make sense of an experience. The participants got a similar way through the situational hurdles.

This section concludes that leaders adopt some coping mechanisms that help them deal with leadership issues. The essentiality of being humble, maintaining dignity in the workplace, self-awareness and social awareness in leaders, preparing morning activities and self-reflection during the evening for evaluating self and calibrating their position with the goal were some coping mechanisms adopted by the leaders.

Theoretical Discussions and Meaning-Making

In this section, I have done a theoretical reflection of the field narratives in reference to Effort- Reward Imbalance Theory, Resilience Theory and Resilience Leadership Theory. Effort-Reward Imbalance theory has been used to study the stressful experiences of head teachers in the workplace. Likewise, the Resilience Leadership Theory is used to understand how the five participants faced the situation and shared thriving and hardiness in their leadership venture as coping and resilient leaders. Each theoretical lens, along with the data that connect with the theory, is discussed hereafter.

Workplace Stress and Emotional Labor

In this section, I have done a theoretical reflection of the field narratives in reference to the Effort- Reward Imbalance Theory. Effort-reward imbalance Theory states that if rewards such as salary, esteem, colleague support, promotion and security are given but instead, the effort by the managers, such as workload, time pressure, maintaining teamwork against difficult times, overtime hours and intense emotional labor exceeds the reward, the imbalance exists. The imbalance, such as lack of resources, lack of recognition, lack of support from colleagues and obstruction in work, makes the reward insufficient and causes imbalance, resulting in stress in the workplace for leaders or head teachers.

Complexity is the primary cause of stress in school head teachers. Ravee and Bimarsh put together their idea where Ravee's sharing is contextual. He says, "*While principal role is tough, it is obvious. If you know, realize, understand, the head teachership in itself is tough. It is true to say that the different principled, diverse kinds of people are to be dealt.*" Here, leaders have to deal with varied kinds of complexities. Workplace complexity is a kind of imbalance a part of ERI Theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997). Likewise, Jenelia, Upashak and Geetanjali share that head teachers are also stressed by the student's absenteeism and lack of sincerity. Likewise, head teachers get stressed because of the lack of seriousness of teachers, the sacrifice of head teachers, and the value clash of head teachers with parents, which is another encounter raised by Jenelia. The value clashes mainly in the disciplining method, where parents ask for corporal punishment while teachers and headteachers adopt child-friendly counseling methods. Here, the theory of effort-reward imbalance proposed, especially on underappreciation in the workplace, supports the effort made by teachers has not been credited by the parents; instead, the effort has been

undermined (Peter & Siegrist, 1997). This kind of instance causes stress in head teachers.

Furthermore, Jenelia, Upashak and Geetanjali share that students and teachers are not regular, and their priorities are other than learning, and new teachers ill team membership causes stress in participants. The leader's ethical dilemma is another eminent cause of stress in school leaders. Here, insufficient support as a source of stress is supported by theory to explain the context. When students' and teachers' focus is not congruent, emotional labor is one way invested, as defined by theory, causing unexpected results and stress in head teachers. Here, Kandel (2020) supports, but in a contrasting way, that high-performing teachers help students perform well, and this causes less stress in head teachers.

Likewise, Upashak points out that the leaders are working with teachers who are not given any financial, academic or professional growth in their career that impacted their performance. Aljumah (2023) affirms that the leadership style needs to be adept in such a way that staff morale is higher and creativity in the job can be achieved to instill job satisfaction in employees if the municipal-level educational department could adopt the leadership model to make the head teachers' morale high and make the workplace creative such that the job of the principal could be more satisfying. Lack of satisfaction in school head teachers directly impacts the outcomes of students and causes stress when head teachers compare results with those of other schools. Here, the ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997), especially the imbalance part, is matchable where the participant addresses a negligible increment of salary. Similarly, head teachers are stressed as they do not get financial incentives to work more than teachers. ERI theory strongly supports the idea that insufficient incentive support for professionals causes stress in head teachers.

In addition to this, Geetanjali points out that head teachers are stressed by the lack of sufficient training, especially accountancy training. Without training, they have been accountable for the school's financial matters in coordination with the accountant. Peter and Siegrist (1997), in ERI theory, also state that the lack of resources and effort to reward lack, especially in career advancement, is another source of stress in head teachers. Geetanjali adds another aspect of stress is a lack of appreciation and recognition in the workplace. ERI supports the idea that lack of recognition is the source of stress. This is supported by Aljumah (2023), who states that job satisfaction can be made possible if recognition and timely felicitation of the

best performer is done. Upasak highlights the operational difficulties, such as the extra period irritating the head teacher, being occupied with solving others' problems, and his duty and reporting work, which makes him stressed. Here, the ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997) emphasizes the effort made by professionals, which causes emotional strain this cause stress in head teachers.

Geetanjali shares that making transparency in construction bidding work was stressful and occupied her for a week. Here, ERI supports particularly the high performance made on maintaining transparency causes stress as the emotional stress lasts for long in head teachers (Peter & Siegrist, 1997).

Both Ravee and Bimarsh shared the principal's reactionless situation in terms of stressful scenarios, which is a kind of self-realization state of stress where the leader chooses responsible action for reaction to the stressful scenario. Here, Resilience Leadership Theory (RLT) supports Bimarsh, who took stress as a tough moment. He moved on, and later, with the cognitive shift, he realized stress is part of his professional world, adapted to the situation and overcame stress. Bimarsh further shares stressing factors, such as the political interruption by the school teachers upon being punished for the lack of fulfillment of duties. Here, ERI theory does not support the scenario of political interruption as a cause of stress, but lack of recognition could be linked to stress. Jenelia's source of stress is being alienated from her academic and personal life by her professional life. Here, Jenelia's condition of self-sacrifice as a maximum effort she made is also contextual. She adds, *"I was going through the transition of three months as a principal. I realized there is no personal life. But my home time and family time are encroached on, as is my MPhil. The progress is stocked at present. I get frequently troubled with this."* This situation of lack of self-reflection time and no time for growth is a serious situation where this condition can be contextual to the imbalance part of the theory of Effort Reward Imbalance by Peter and Siegrist (1997). Getanjali further adds that she is occupied and is victimized by work-life balance as she absorbs the work stress and reflects at home, and she affirms that it affects her. Here, the theory of ERI also states that when a considerable effort is made and, in return, an individual gets emotional strain that lasts for the week, then it's a stressful moment (Peter & Siegrist, 1997). The study by Afonso et al. (2017) also clearly affirms the impact of the mental health of leaders and its closer root linkage with stress and burnout from the workplace.

For Jenelia, the students' antisocial behaviors, such as indulging in relationships with the opposite gender, using weeds and vaping, were distracting and created an impact on academic outcomes, creating a deep-down stress. ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997) strongly supports this source of effort, where the distracting aspects of students cause poor academic outcomes. This causes prolonged stress in principals for the maximum effort made if the outcome is not met.

Likewise, Upashak also raged about similar issues, especially addictive teens issues and shared the dilemma of reporting to parents and students being taken back to village school. Here, the ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997) further validates the source of stress in principals. The principal's effort to keep students away from distraction was counter, and the result was parents withdrawing students from school, which made the head teacher stressful. Upashak then highlights the issue of teachers' lack of obedience caused by insufficient incentive and growth in incentive and professional and academic parts. Upashak further adds that the monetary values are aligned with the duty of the headteachers, which causes him to feel deeper stress. Here, the ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997) strongly affirms the source of stress as the effort made by head teachers is not awarded with a proper salary, and its increment causes stress. Geetanjali then is more stressed by the accountancy-based work she has to perform, at which point she is a novice and unrecognized at the workplace, which is supported by the ERI theory by Peter and Siegrist (1997). Likewise, Lukić and Lazarević (2019) affirm the context and share that social support, if lacking in the workplace, can easily boost stressing aspects in school leaders. Ravee, Bimarsh, Upashak, and Geetanjali have focused on the complexity of the workplace and their issues with massive vertical and horizontal communication.

Furthermore, interpersonal communication is another aspect that school leadership stress holds (Elomaa et al., 2023). Here, Upashak points out the operational difficulty in school leaders. Here, ERI does not support the operational source of stress. Bimarsh had a serious encounter with political influence, which tested his ethical role. The role of being ethically bound was not easy as he had to focus on the student first and win the ill-willed person's echo. The unsupportive stakeholders added another source of trouble for Gitanjali in her professional career, where, being female, she faced a lack of trust and cooperation from male stakeholders and teachers. Here, being troubled by the opposite gender, lack of confidence and collaboration,

and lack of recognition and support are part of the imbalance aspect of ERI theory proposed by Peter & Siegrist (1997).

Workplace Stress and Leadership Development

In this section, I have done a theoretical reflection of the field texts in reference to Resilience Leadership Theory. The data's significant ideas are connected to the Resilience Leadership Theory that I have used in this research. Resilience Leadership Theory states that there are two stages in resilience leadership theory through which a leader should pass. First is thriving, and second is hardiness. The way the principal confronts challenges survives incidents, recovers from incidents, and thrives with cognitive shifts in responding to challenges is studied with data. Second is Hardiness, in which how a principal renews faith, trust, hope and connection, redefining of self, self in relation and sense of community is included.

In the study for thriving, when *Ravee*, *Bimarsh* and *Getanjali* had a hard time managing the conflict, they had to go through sleepless nights but also, but they confronted such challenges. The friends who were considered hard to help on building rapport turned out to be collaborative agents for *Getanjali* and *Jenelia*—likewise, the parents whom *Jenelia* found challenging internalized parents as an integral part of the education system. Furthermore, *Bimarsh Ravee's* shift from the monotony of teacher management, situational hurdle, and troubling circumstance of lack of resources later turned to a cognitive change where he considered his work now as a core community service rather than an obligation. Chigeda, et al. (2022) also affirm through their findings that motivation, commitment and an attitude of service and support are key factors in articulating a resilient process. *Geetanjali*, considering previously hard to make rapport and feeling isolated in the workplace as a leader, realized that being humble is necessary for a leader. Likewise, she also realized that maintaining dignity is required to maintain workplace empowerment, engagement and enthusiasm.

For Hardiness, *Geetanjali's* shift from less self-awareness to meaningful self-awareness and social awareness from excelling leadership was a significant cognitive shift to responding to challenges. Lastly, *Ravee*, *Geetanjali*, *Upashak*, *Bimarsh*, and *Jenelia* highlight self-development, self-reflection and self-care leading to a hardy state where he could renew faith, trust, hope and connection and redefine self and self in relation and make sense of community.

Chapter Summary:

In this chapter, I have discussed the themes under stress in headteachers and their way of coping using theory, along with justifiable citations as needed. Along with this, under each thematic context, I have connected participants' data with the contextual literature in a sequential manner and made their experiences associated with contextual theories. The first theory, the effort-reward imbalance theory, talks about the experiences of head teachers, whether they are stressed or not, and the resilience theory talks about their reaction to the experiences as a coping mechanism. Finally, the Resilience Leadership Theory was used to make the proper connection between their leadership practices.

CHAPTER V

INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTION

This chapter contains the overall reflection and sharing of my worldview changes about school leadership challenges, personal ways of solving them, and issues regarding school leadership. Similarly, the chapter also has a comparative chart of experience of stressor and the coping mechanism in novice and experienced head teachers comparatively. Furthermore, the chapter contains the conclusion of the study and implications for head teachers, school leaders for the future, and policymakers regarding workplace stress and well-being's importance in school leadership.

Insights

I found that the head teachers were facing major troubles from students. When the students are not focused on their studies and are distracted by the lousy company and asocial behavior, it causes the effort of teachers to mismatch the activities of students, resulting in the outcomes compromise that causes stress in head teachers. Since the school compared the outcomes with other schools, this made a sense of competition that also enhanced stress, to my understanding.

I find another agent of stressor is the teacher for head teachers. The power struggle between teachers and head teachers also causes stress for head teachers. I especially realized that the politically antagonistic nature that makes head teachers and teachers add hostility is another cause of stress in head teachers. Moreover, a teacher who does not follow the school code of conduct makes the principal lead the team, resulting in stress for head teachers.

I find parents to be an agent of stressors for head teachers. The parents who want to make their way the only way to teaching-learning activities make the principal stressed. Similarly, the length of work hour-based stress also makes head teachers stressed. I realize that the principal engages in school teaching, and administration work has to be confined to reporting work at home till late hours up to ten PM. Regular work hours, when extended to late at night, cause sleep and directly induce stress in head teachers.

Lack of recognition-based stress is another realm of stress for head teachers. When the principal as a leader is isolated in the workplace, makes extra effort to work and is underestimated by the faculties and other staff, this causes stress in school head

teachers. I find that when head teachers are not acknowledged, it also causes them stressed, and lack of recognition is another aspect.

I find another source of stress that is unnecessary pressure stress. I see that political interventions also stress the principles. Political interventions like making the workplace complex, obstructing doing work, etc. I find another aspect of stress, which is insufficient resources. The lack of a proper sufficient salary, no incremental facilities and lack of growth in the workplace are some insufficient sources causing stress.

My Second Research question: *How do they manage their stressful leadership encounters?*

While the head teachers stress management method is taking the profession as a service rather than an obligation. In the high-stress environment, a gradual shift of individuals evolved from stressful situations to another form, making them take service for the professional work they do.

I find the resilience in school head teachers is consistent when most head teachers take their profession as a service rather than an obligation. In the phase where principal takes their work as an obligation, they are hit by stress, but then when they stop considering their work an obligation, they make themselves into service of others that do not cause any stress. They neither seek acknowledgment and recognition nor appreciation from others.

Moreover, collaboration between members is another crucial aspect that made the principal survive and work in a leadership role. I realize when the principal takes themselves out of their post and come to common ground, they can gain more trust and great knowledge sharing between the team members. This helps automatically enhance collaboration. Furthermore, taking work as a source of learning is another significant aspect. When the workplace is considered a source of learning the head teachers take the event of the workplace as a chance to grow rather than obstruction. The individual gets into a balanced emotion regardless of the situation he passes because he makes himself shift to learning mode rather than reacting mode. Likewise, self-indulgence in self-management at the start of the day and reflective practice at the end of the day are other coping methods practiced by the principal. When a professional manages his day by making his body and mind ready for the coming day, he prepares his topsy-turvy moment into somewhat equilibrium. When a principal practices reflection in his day-to-day work life, he can correct his mistakes and be the

better version of himself and can do better. Such reflective head teachers have more accurate decision-making capacity, and they believe in evolution as a means to grow rather than sudden change. This way, head teachers take collaboration, learning mindset self-management and reflective practice as a means to manage themselves for uncertain time.

Comparing the stressing factors of stress in novice vs experienced head teachers following data were collected:

Table 1

Comparative Experiences of School Leaders on Novice and Experienced Head Teacher

S.No.	Participants	Experiences
		Novice Head teachers
1	Upashak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No personal aspects were shared. ➤ Minor stressors were shared and is general external aspects. ➤ Few problems-based stress experiences such as politicization in workplace, lack of support in initial days from fellow staffs, confrontation with parents, language barrier, lack of incentives and necessary facilities etc. were discussed. ➤ Coping mechanism of stress such as collaboration, support, rapport building and team work were discussed. ➤ Brief discussion on problems in workplace stress was made and coping mechanism were also discussed but not as detailed as experienced head teachers.
2s	Jenalia	
		Experienced Head teachers
3	Bimarsha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal time, life and sacrifice for the occupational role shared. ➤ Job role-based instances shared with multiple scenes.
4	Geetanjali	
5	Ravi	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sleepless night and tough moments dilemma and stressful experiences shared. ➤ Big picture view on stressing aspect were discussed along with their own experience based coping mechanisms ➤ Coping mechanism included self-realization, visualization, student- centered dilemma resolution, silence in conflict, being humble in idea sharing and making self-small while getting ideas from team members, being bold and strong in own decision and determination to do the planned work etc were discussed. ➤ Broder area of problem in workplace and its experience discussed with examples.
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The table shares the novice head teacher and experienced head teachers experience of stress are similar but more classified and collection of pre-service and while-service experiences in terms of experienced head teacher comparing to the novice head teacher. Similarly coping ways in novice head teacher was less detailed and more like problem focused and experienced head teacher was big picture focused and solution driven method in dealing with stressing aspects.

Conclusion

The reflection section contains the narrative of the overall findings of the research process. For my first research question (*How do public school head teachers narrate their stressful leadership experiences in the workplace?*), I found the significant sources of stress were student-centered stress, teacher-centered stress, parents-induced stress, lengthy work hour-based stress, lack of recognition-based stress, unnecessary pressure stress, insufficient resource-based stress, etc.

For my second research question (*How do they manage their stressful leadership encounters?*) for managing stressful leadership encounter, I find the head teachers implement the method to manage burdens by taking profession as a service rather than an obligation, making collaboration between teaching staff and other

members, taking job challenges as a source of learning and making self-indulge in self-management during starting and reflective practice during the day.

Finally, the study concludes that the head teachers dealt with several kinds of stressors. Still, once head teacher knew that they needed to move ahead from such circumstances, they chased the method to cope with the stressful circumstances with their techniques. Most of the head teachers were gradually dealing with stress after the circumstance convinced them that they were bigger than the problem and searched and explored ways to face stressors. Likewise, the novice head teachers brought issues of pre-service adjustment-based stress while experienced head teachers brought issues of while- service struggles in their workplace and coping mechanism on such issues.

Implications

This implications section has explained to whom this research can help, support, and impact. The section explained the implication of the study to existing and future head teachers, the implication to policymakers, the implication to leadership education programs and future researchers. The study influences all the enthusiasts who have a curiosity to explore workplace stress in school dynamics.

Implications for Existing and Future Headteachers

The study findings provide an eye-opening scenario on present practices and future possible issues for head teachers to lead in schools to support male and female head teachers and school leaders who wish to pursue leadership roles in the public sector. It informs and makes upcoming school head teachers get involved and positively impact the education sector. Young head teachers who wish to dive into this profession and become leaders in the education sector will also find the research beneficial. Similarly, this study is helpful to assistant head teachers/vice head teachers and school administrators in identifying approaches to overcome challenges in their professional lives and cope with them with better communication strategies, mobilization of human resources, believing in service above self, effective team spirit and political neutrality.

Implications for Policy Makers

This study showed that head teachers' conditions in the workplace and roles and responsibilities are beyond those expressed in policy. The undefined role played by prolonged work hours makes the head teachers emotionally triggered, and their mental health is challenged. For this reason, the policy has not addressed the issue of the head teacher having cognitive problems. Instead, the provision of disqualifying

mentally disabled head teachers is existing. Such a gap in the possible conditions of head teachers can be an addressable issue for policy drafting implications. Moreover, health problems caused by stress are prone to them, so the government needs to bring out health plans for head teachers so that the head teachers get after-service care for the sacrifices they made. Likewise, the incentives for head teachers, either intrinsic information monetary value or extrinsic information of respect, recognition or support, dire need of time which policy should address to make the principal role transparent and reliable for the betterment of the healthy public school workplace. Lastly, the provision of in-service, while service and post-service, retirement role play head teachers can make the public school's role to community prominent and visible in education and awareness.

Implications for the Leadership Education Program

Leadership education programs can include a variety of workplace issues, environmental impacts, and other external factors that impact school leaders' work performance. For this, the preparatory program for head teachers on workplace complexities, strategic communication, and professional environment enforcement are namely the areas where the pre-while and post-program for school leaders can be conducted. Furthermore, the study also shares the coping mechanisms for the head teachers in which the coping method of workplace stress can be discussed in leadership preparatory programs to ensure a healthy workplace.

Implications for Future Researchers

This study offers a valuable starting point for future research into head teachers' difficulties and their resilient leadership style in Nepal's public education system. The emphasis on the viewpoints of school head teachers highlights their distinct experiences with barriers to becoming leaders in their leadership roles. The narratives of head teachers provide the real-life experience of the head teacher role and ways to reduce workplace stress implications. For future researchers, the difference between male and female situations in the workplace can be an interesting area to explore, as the study's finding was different situations for male and female head teachers. However, this study was a preliminary study of both male and female head teachers in common in the context of public schools.

Overall Reflection

In my initial days when I wanted to explore school dynamics, I had a question that if a leader impacts others, i.e., teachers, students and parents, then the other side,

the head teachers, are also affected by those stakeholders. This directed to explore the school dynamics. I wanted to examine the stress level at first. Hence, I took my primary leading subject of advanced quantitative research. Later, I realized my strength was in storytelling with descriptive explanations. On watching the qualitative nature of my explanation, I shifted my research method from quantitative to qualitative. Upon using this qualitative method in data collection, I realized how the data and meaning-making process led me to pursue the narrative inquiry as a process to go through my quest, which is to explore the stressor dynamics of headteachers of community schools.

From this study, the participants and the literature and theory discussed cleared me up about the various sources of stress that troubled headteachers/ head teachers in different ways in their workplace. Likewise, the way they dealt with the stress made clear how they propelled themselves from the stressful encounter to the gradual shift of well-being by shifting their understanding, revising their mindset and reflecting their self-position along the pass of time.

As per my experiences, in the initial data collection, I found it quite uneasy to approach the completely different people whom I have never met. With such awkwardness, I came across 10 head teachers, among which five were in regular contact, so I was able to make the research possible. Initially, the stressing aspect of head teachers was only confined to the understanding of international journals understanding and a handful of national journals off-the-topic ideas. This idea enriched my hunger to search for workplace stress in Nepal, especially in Kathmandu public schools. With this hollow puzzle, I made the data collection. During each day's talk with the participant, I came to know the unique idea that I had very little knowledge and insights about the school leader's scenario at that time. I consider the leadership of the school to have to do with only the learning and teaching activities, and there is a limited area of influence they have.

After the study, I realized that the tremendous scattered ground reality was really making the situation very complex. Though complexity exists in the workplace, I was informed through my MPhil program policy studies subject. A principal who has to look after teaching learning activities is not only just a caretaker but is an integral part of the system of education, which was insightful for me. The parents, as a window to the community, are for the head teachers. The Source of influence on the future through the students of today's teachers is impacted by every move of head

teachers, and head teachers' reactions and actions affect the teachers' performance significantly. Likewise, the head teachers' slower and definite shift from problem-centric leadership to solution-centric leadership was significantly visible when I interviewed the participants. I realized their leadership was growing from one research question's answer to shifting to the other.

The shift was clear to me when my quest from a dark-circled mature fellow sitting on the chair with the table labeled 'head teacher' is not only a professional s/he is an influencer, a magnetizer, an example whose every action and decision shapes society. His personalization of the issue to self can be reactive, can dispose of many hearts, distract and disintegrate many minds and create chaos. But to the contrary, the principal takes the situation under control and tactfully judges and acts wisely in any circumstance, which can be a big crash save for many in the school. The varieties of needle-like problems under the shoes of a leader include self-alienation, lack of resources, lack of technical support and trust and many other issues the head teachers possess. When the problem-based mindset matures into the solution-based thought process, the principal can win any situation. This was what my experience with this research brought to me. When a principal takes the same thing, a problem later turns out to be a solution once they shift from one horizon to another cognitive horizon.

In conclusion, what I realized is that head teachers' self-centric thoughts on communal and community-based shifts can solve any problem I have. Likewise, the principal's self-transformation on a regular basis rather than criticism of the present situation was another insight I received when I adopted the resilient leadership model.

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APPENDIXES

Interview Questions

Research Question 1.**How do public school principals narrate their stressful leadership experiences in the workplace?**

What kind of educational background do you have?

तपाइ कुन शैक्षिक विधासँग सम्बन्धित हुनुन्छ

What kind of working experience do you have?

तपाइले कुनकुन विधामा अनुभव हासिल गर्नुभयो

What was your first school to work at?

तपाइको पहिलो स्कुल कुन थियो

पहिलो स्कुलको कार्य स्थलको वातावरण बारे भनिदिनु हुन्थ्योकी

What were your major experiences in the workplace?

तपाईंका कार्यस्थलका प्रमुख अनुभवहरू के थिए?

Were there any incidents you find noteworthy in terms of the huge workload?

के त्यस्तो कुनै घटना थियो जसलाई तपाईंले अत्यधिक कार्यभारको दृष्टिले विशेष रूपमा सम्झिनुहुन्छ?

What was the next workplace nature of work different from the first one? Was there less burden or what kind was it?

दोस्रो कार्यस्थलको कार्यप्रकृति पहिलोभन्दा फरक थियो? त्यसमा बोझ कम थियो कि कस्तो थियो?

What were the moments you would like to recall when you find uneasy, sleepless or hard to go through? Did it last for more than two days?

तपाईंलाई असहज, निद्रा नलाग्ने वा सामना गर्न गाह्रो महसुस भएको क्षणहरू के थिए? के ती अवस्था दुई दिनभन्दा बढीसम्म कायम रह्यो?

What were the breaking moments for you as a leader and misunderstood? Could you clarify it by adding more on when that happened and in what kind it turn so?

तपाईंलाई असहज, निद्रा नलाग्ने वा परिस्थिति सामना गर्न गाह्रो महसुस भएको क्षणहरू के थिए? के ती अवस्था दुई दिनभन्दा बढीसम्म कायम रह्यो?

How many years have you worked as a principal?

तपाइले कति वर्ष सम्म प्रिन्सिपल वा हेड सर वा म्याम भएर काम गर्नु भयो

How did and, maybe, did not your previous studies and/or experience equip you to work as a principal?

तपाइलाइ विगतको अनुभवले हालको जिम्मेवारीमा कतिको सक्षम बनायो या बनाएन

Describe your school, e.g. a school level, size, staff and a leading group? What kind of school is it (e.g. programs, pupils, families, socio-economic environment, etc.)?

तपाइको स्कुलको बारेमा जस्तै कति तह सम्म कति विद्यार्थी र कति कर्मचारी तथा नेतृत्व गर्ने समूह रहेको

यो स्कुल कस्तो किसिमका रहेको कस्ता कार्यक्रम चलाएको
विधार्थी र पारिवारिक वातावरण आदि

Research Question B.

How do they manage their stressful leadership encounters?

For this study, how do you understand these concepts: Stressful situation? Job stressor? Coping strategy? Support?

तपाइलाइ तनाव के हो जस्तो लाग्छ
कामले निम्ताउने तनाव के होला
यसलाइ निउनी करण कसरी गर्न सकिन्छ

As a leader, how do you spend most of your time? What are your priorities as a leader and do you allocate time for them?

नेतृत्व गर्ने मानिस भएर तपाइले दैनिक समय कसरी बिताउनु हुन्छ
तपाइको प्राथमिकता के के हुन्
तपाइले समय व्यवस्थापन कसरी गर्नुहुन्छ

On average, how many hours per week do you work during the school term? How do you relax or get away from it all? How often? Does this help? In what ways?

सरदर तपाइ हप्ताको कति घण्टा विधालयसमयमा काम गर्नुहुन्छ र सरदर कसरी पुनरताजगी गराउनु हुन्छ
कति समयमा
कसरी सहयोग गर्छ यसले कसरी

What do you like the most and what is the easiest to do in your job?

Which of your responsibilities as a principal do you find the most challenging to your abilities as a leader?

तपाइलाइ आफ्ना पेशामा मन पर्ने पक्ष के हो र काममा कुन पक्ष तपाइलाइ सहज लाग्छ
प्रधानाध्यापक मध्येकै कुन जिम्मेवारी तपाइलाइ संघर्षशील लाग्छ

What kind of support is the most important for a principal in a school nowadays?

Do you think that stressful situations/stressors will increase, decrease, or stay the same in your work and why?

प्रधानाध्यापकको लागि कस्ता किसिमका सहयोग आजको समयमा अतिनै आवश्यकहुन्छ

What kind of leaders will be needed as principals in the next 10 years?

अबको दश वर्षका लागि कस्तो किसिमका नेतृत्व आवश्यक छ

If you could have a magic wand, for what kind of stressful situations/stressors would you like to see a change and/or get some sort of support for, and what would you propose?

यदी तपाइसँग कुनै जादुको छडी थिया भने कसत तनाव अवस्था र तनावहरुलाइ परिवर्तन गर्न वा सहायता लिन के कुरा अघि सार्नु हुन्थ्यो

Is there anything you wish people knew about your job that you have not told me already?

तपाइले मलाई साट्न बाँकी कामका केही पक्ष वा विषयस्तु छन त

Appendix B:

PLAN FOR FIELD PREPARATION AND INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS

Research questions

Interview guide

The narrative inquiry

Audio record and written text

Raw transcript

Checking for saturated information

Working in transcript

Start narrative data analysis

Coding

Categorizing

Formulation of theme based on shard story

Prepared the final dissertation report.