A Study on the Prevalence of Teacher Freezing among Secondary School Teachers: A Mixed Method Approach

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Teaching is widely recognized as a noble profession that plays an important role in social and national progress. Teachers are mentors and solution-seekers who must adapt to changing societal demands and the unique needs of the students. As key figures in implementing interventions, innovations, and policies, teachers hold immense responsibility in driving educational reforms forward. This research work intends to investigate the prevalence of teacher freezing among secondary school teachers in Kashmir. Using Mixed Methods Research design, the study employed the Teacher Freezing Scale by Taj (2011) to collect quantitative data from 360 teachers from secondary schools. The qualitative data from school administrators was collected using an 'Opinionnaire'. The study's findings indicate a predominant moderate level of teacher freezing among respondents, with no significant gender-based differences observed. Thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed numerous strategies suggested by heads of schools for overcoming teacher freezing. **Keywords:** Teacher Freezing, Secondary School Teachers, Gender

Introduction

In the present era, teachers serve a role far beyond mere repositories of knowledge for students. They are pivotal in implementing interventions, innovations, and policies, thereby driving educational reforms. Recent research highlights a concerning decline in the status of the teaching profession (Ingram, 2023). This decline is attributed to teachers' perceived reluctance to innovate in critical educational domains such as teaching, research, and socio-psychological aspects, which has drawn criticism from academicians, administrators, parents, community members, and students alike (Kumar and Kamini, 2016).

The term 'teacher freezing,' as stated by Jena (2018), describes a troubling psychological response among teachers facing work-related stressors, which manifests as an underutilization of their intellectual, psychological, social, physical, and moral capacities (Basu and Banerjee, 2018). This phenomenon, characterized by stagnation and underutilization of potential, adversely affects teaching quality, student engagement, and the overall school environment. Freezing can be caused by various factors, such as a heavy workload, difficult students, or lack of support from other stakeholders involved. It is often caused by a lack of preparation or confidence in the teaching abilities. It can also be caused by a lack of understanding of the material or the students. In some cases, it is caused by a fear of making a mistake or of being judged by the students. Various studies suggest a prevalent presence of teacher freezing among secondary school teachers (Rashid & Sofal, 2020; Musheer & Rafaqi, 2018; Vijender & Umender 2018). Different studies indicate no significant gender disparity in teacher freezing levels (Jaseena, 2022; Rajkumari & Rachna, 2022; Musheer & Rafaqi, 2018). However, perspectives from Jena (2018) and Nayak & Dash (2018) propose that gender and other demographic factors could indeed influence this phenomenon. Given these discrepancies in prior research, this research aims to investigate teacher freezing among secondary school teachers, particularly focusing on gender differences and gathering perspectives from school heads. Such insights are essential for developing targeted strategies to sustain teachers' enthusiasm, promote innovation, and enhance teaching effectiveness, positively influencing educational quality and student outcomes.

Operational definitions

a. Teacher Freezing: Teacher freezing refers to the scores obtained by the sample respondents on administering the **Teacher Freezing Scale** developed by **Taj (2011)**.

b. Secondary School Teachers: Teachers teaching classes 9th and 10th in different government secondary schools of Kashmir.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the prevalence of teacher freezing among secondary school teachers.
2. To compare male and female secondary school teachers on teacher freezing.
3. To seek opinions from heads of the schools on teacher unfreezing.

Hypotheses of the study

$H_0$1: "*There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers on teacher freezing.*"

Materials and Methods
Methodology and Design

The researchers conducted the study using a descriptive design. A Mixed-Methods approach was employed. The data for the quantitative part was collected using the '*Teacher Freezing Scale by Taj (2011).*' The data collected from the sample subjects were analyzed using percentages, S.D. and t-test. The data for the qualitative part was collected using the '*Opinionnaire*' designed by the investigators.

Participants

The selection of the sample from the target population was done employing a multistage sampling technique. For the quantitative part of the present study, a sample of 360 teachers consisting of 200 males and 160 females was drawn from secondary schools of Kashmir using a stratified random sampling technique. For the qualitative part, the data was collected from heads of the schools (Sample size =9) using a purposive sampling technique.

Data Analysis
I.Analysis of Quantitative Data

Table 1 *Percentage distribution of teacher freezing*

Range of Scores	Levels of Teacher Freezing	N	%age
311 and above	Low	70	19.4
264 to 310	Moderate	246	68.3
263 and below	High	44	12.2
Total		360	100

It can be observed from **Table 1** that 68.3% of the secondary school teachers are moderately freezed, 19.4% of the sample subjects are high freezed and 12.2% of the sample subjects are low freezed.
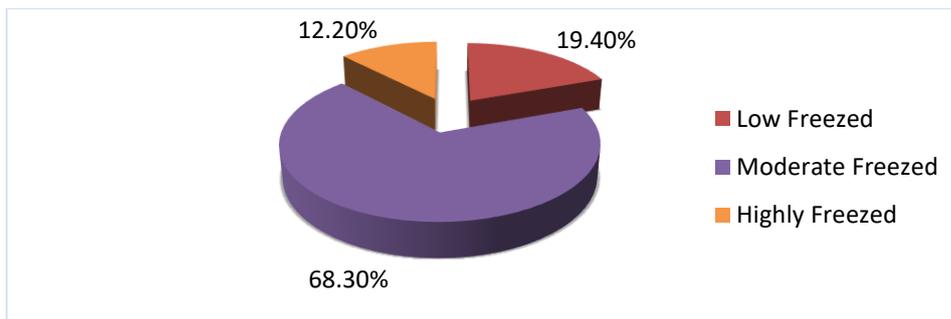

Fig. 1 *Percentage Distribution of Teacher Freezing*

Table 2 *Teacher freezing among secondary school teachers based on gender*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Male	200	300.49	34.59		Insignificant
Female	160	296.31	29.62	1.23	

It can be observed from **Table 2** that the difference between the mean scores of the two groups is not significant as reflected by a t-value of 1.23.
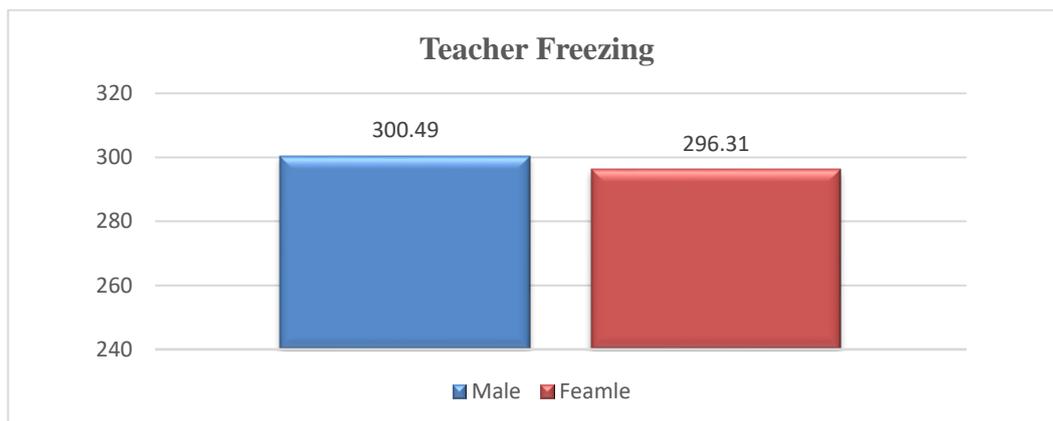
Fig. 2 *Comparison of teacher freezing based on gender*

II. Analysis of Qualitative Data

The opinionnaires collected from the heads of the schools were read and reread to deduce the common themes from their opinions regarding *"the remedial measures for breaking the inertial frame of teachers for achieving maximum academic productivity."* The themes derived through thematic analysis, done manually, are substantiated by the content from the school heads' opinions.

• Self-Motivation and Love for the Profession

This can be stated as the ability of teachers to drive their own learning and professional growth without external prompts or supervision. It involves setting goals, taking initiative, and staying committed to continuous improvement, all while maintaining a positive attitude and passion for the profession. Self-motivated teachers are more likely to be resilient, take ownership of their development, and adapt to changing circumstances in the classroom.

Respondents 1, 5, 8, and 9 emphasized the importance of self-motivation and developing a love for one's profession to overcome inertia.

"Developing a profound passion for one's profession is crucial for overcoming inertia. This can be achieved by identifying and focusing on the aspects of the job that bring joy and fulfillment, thereby fostering a deeper sense of motivation and drive." **Respondent 8**

• Consultation and Networking

It refers to the process of seeking advice, guidance, and support from peers, mentors, or experts in the field. This collaborative approach helps teachers stay updated on best practices, address challenges, and improve their teaching methods.

Respondents 1, 5, and 7 suggested that consultation and networking with teachers, experts, or peers can help overcome inertia.

"Engaging in meaningful consultation and networking with experienced teachers is an effective strategy to overcome inertia. By tapping into the knowledge and perceptions of colleagues who have successfully steered similar challenges, teachers can gain guidance and practical solutions for addressing their obstacles to progress" **Respondent 1**

"Initiating a change and collaborating with colleagues who share similar goals is a crucial strategy for overcoming inertia. By pooling resources, expertise, and knowledge, teachers can create a collective momentum that drives progress and fosters success. This collaborative approach not only enhances the effectiveness of individual efforts but also promotes a culture of shared responsibility and collective achievement." **Respondent 7**

• Breaking the Routine

Breaking routine in teaching refers to the process of intentionally modifying established classroom routines and procedures to improve student engagement, learning outcomes, and overall classroom management.

Respondents 1, 6, and 9 recommended breaking the routine and taking breaks to refresh and recharge.

"Taking regular breaks and engaging in activities that promote relaxation and rejuvenation is essential for maintaining mental and emotional well-being…" **Respondent 6**

"Taking time off from work to refresh and recharge, teachers can better manage the demands of their profession and return to their duties with increased energy, focus, and motivation." **Respondent 9**

• Recognition and Incentives

Recognition and incentives are essential components of the teaching profession, as they motivate and reward teachers for their hard work and dedication. Recognition in teaching refers to the acknowledgment and

appreciation of a teacher's efforts, achievements, and contributions to the educational process. Incentives in teaching refer to the rewards or benefits that teachers receive for their hard work and dedication.

Respondents 2, 5, and 8 suggested providing recognition and incentives to teachers for their work, which can help overcome inertia.

"*Implementing a system of district-level awards to recognize and celebrate the achievements of top-performing teachers can be a good initiative for fostering a culture of excellence and overcoming inertia. By publicly acknowledging the contributions of teachers who demonstrate exceptional teaching practices and student outcomes, educational institutions can incentivize their faculty to continually improve and innovate in their work.*" **Respondent 2**

- **Infrastructure and Resources**

Infrastructure and resources provide the physical and organizational structures that support the teaching and learning process.

Respondents 3, 4, 7, and 9 emphasized the importance of adequate infrastructure and resources for smooth functioning of institutions.

"*Ensuring the availability of essential resources and infrastructure is essential for the smooth operation of institutions. This includes providing adequate financial, human, technological, and other resources to support the goals of the institution. The absence of these resources can lead to frustration and inertia among staff and students.*" **Respondent 3**

- **Leadership Accountability**

Accountability is important in leadership because it helps ensure that your team is working towards a common goal and that they are following through with their commitments. It involves taking ownership of mistakes, being transparent, and fostering a culture of trust and responsibility within an organization.

Respondents 3, 4, and 8 suggested that leadership accountability from teachers and institutions can help overcome inertia.

"*Leadership accountability is an important factor in enhancing academic production. By holding teachers accountable for their performance, we can foster a culture of ownership and excellence. This approach not only promotes individual accountability but also encourages collective responsibility and a shared commitment to academic success.*" **Respondent 4**

- **Innovations, Technology and Training**

These are essential components of the teaching profession that enhance the quality of professional development for teachers and improve learning outcomes. Respondents 1, 3, 8 and 9 suggested introducing new innovative methods of teaching and learning to overcome inertia. "*Incorporating cutting-edge, innovative teaching methods is a vital approach for overcoming inertia and fostering a dynamic, engaged faculty. By continuously exploring and implementing the latest pedagogical techniques and technological advancements, educational institutions can empower their teachers to deliver engaging, effective, and transformative learning experiences for students.*" **Respondent 3**

"*Providing comprehensive training and support for new technology is crucial for ensuring effective adoption and utilization. This includes ensuring that individuals have the necessary skills and resources to effectively utilize the technology, thereby maintaining their motivation and engagement. Adequate training and support can help to address any technical challenges or concerns......*" **Respondent 9**

- **Evaluation and Reflection**

Evaluation refers to the process of assessing and judging the quality of teaching and learning, typically through various methods such as student feedback, peer observations, and self-assessment. The goal of evaluation is to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices and to inform improvements in instruction and student outcomes. Reflection is the process of thinking critically about one's own teaching practices, including the effectiveness of instructional strategies, student engagement, and personal growth.

Respondents 1, 3 and 5 suggested that regular assessments and evaluations can help overcome inertia.

"*Instituting a comprehensive system of regular performance evaluations for teachers is a crucial step in overcoming inertia. By systematically assessing and providing feedback on teachers' knowledge, skills, and classroom practices, educational institutions can empower their faculty to identify areas for growth and maintain a strong focus on continuous improvement.*" **Respondent 3**

Respondents 1, 2, 5 and 7 emphasized the importance of self-evaluation and reflection to overcome inertia.

"*Engaging in a thoughtful, honest self-evaluation is necessary in overcoming inertia. By taking the time to objectively assess one's current situation, identify areas for growth, and determine the elements within their control, individuals can develop targeted strategies to address their shortcomings and unlock new pathways for progress.*" **Respondent 5**

Table 3 *Frequency of Respondents for Each Theme*

Theme	Frequency
Self-Motivation and Love for Profession	4
Consultation and Networking	3
Breaking the Routine	3
Recognition and Incentives	3
Infrastructure and Resources	4
Leadership Accountability	3
Innovations, Technology and Training	4
Evaluation and Reflection	7

Fig. 3. *Factors deduced through Thematic Analysis*

Self-Motivation and Love for the Profession

Consultation and Networking

Breaking the Routine

Recognition and Incentives

Infrastructure and Resources

Leadership Accountability

Innovations, Technology and Training

Evaluation and Reflection

Themes

Discussion

The present investigation aimed to study the prevalence of teacher freezing among secondary school teachers, analyzed teacher freezing based on gender and sought the opinion from 'Heads of the Schools' to suggest strategies for unfreezing the teachers. The results of the study revealed that the majority of teachers are moderately freezed. The t-test analysis showed the difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers is not significant. This suggests both male and female teachers experience similar levels of teacher freezing due to the nature of their work and the challenges they face in the educational environment. Organizational factors such as high job demands and lack of social support can contribute to teacher freezing, and these factors may affect both male and female teachers equally, leading to similar experiences of teacher freezing regardless of gender. The results are in line with the studies by **Musheer & Rafaqi (2018) and Kumar & Kamini (2016)**. The analysis of the opinions obtained from the 'Heads of Schools' revealed several key strategies that collectively contribute to overcoming inertia among teachers. '*Self-motivation and Love for the Profession*' emphasizes the importance of developing a profound passion for one's profession. This can be achieved by identifying and focusing on the aspects of the job that bring joy and fulfillment. '*Consultation and Networking*' highlights the value of engaging in meaningful consultation and networking with experienced teachers to gain guidance and practical solutions for addressing obstacles to progress. The theme '*Breaking the Routine*' involves taking regular breaks and engaging in activities that promote relaxation to maintain mental and emotional well-being. The theme '*Recognition and Incentives*' suggests providing recognition and incentives to teachers for their work. Adequate availability of '*Infrastructure and Resources*' is also emphasized as the strategy to support the goals of the institution. The theme '*Leadership accountability' highlights* the role of leadership in enhancing academic production. The theme '*Innovations, Technology, and Training*' suggests introducing new innovative methods of teaching and learning. The theme, '*Evaluation and Reflection*' emphasizes the importance of regular assessments and evaluations for empowering teachers to identify areas for growth and continuous improvement. These strategies collectively

aim to create a dynamic and supportive environment that encourages proactive engagement, thereby breaking the inertial frame among teachers and promoting a culture of excellence in education.

Conclusion

Teacher freezing manifests as a lack of teachers' dedication and enthusiasm in carrying out the duties assigned to them, lack of engagement in research projects, reluctance to accept any responsibility, and failure to participate in any school or work initiatives. This is detrimental to students, school and especially teachers' productivity. This piece of research focused on examining teacher freezing among secondary school teachers in Kashmir. The findings illustrate that while male and female teachers experience similar levels of freezing, different factors significantly influence their professional inertia. Strategies proposed by school administrators emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation, collaborative learning, adequate resources, supportive leadership, innovative pedagogies, and continuous professional development. These strategies are important for unfreezing teachers from stagnant practices and promoting a culture of excellence in education. Educational stakeholders must prioritize these strategies to cultivate a dynamic and supportive environment that enriches the educational experience for students.

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