

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND COPING STYLES IN RELATION TO JOB PERFORMANCE OF TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN ZONE III, DIVISION OF ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES

Gladys Angelie E. Morales¹ and Emma C. Ventura²

¹Department of Education

²Emma C. Ventura, EdD

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ABSTRACT

Stress is an embedded component in the lives of teachers in the Philippines that affects their job performance. This study was conducted to assess and evaluate the sources and level of occupational stress and coping styles in relation to the teachers' job performance. Descriptive and Correlational design of the research was employed to examine these variables. A population (N=226) of Elementary Teachers from Zone III, Division of Zambales were examined. A self-developed questionnaire was used to know the sources and level of occupational stress, coping styles, and teachers' job performance. Results showed that teachers were occupationally stressed. Teachers used both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping styles. However, there is little or weak relationship between job performance and occupational stress; job performance and coping style mechanism and occupational stress and coping style mechanism. Seminars and workshops for stress management among teachers should be conducted to avoid and lessen their stress levels.

Key Words: Occupational Stress, Coping Styles, Job Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

A teacher is the key player of the educational system, and almost all cultures of the civilized world have considered their teachers in very high esteem. They play significant roles in nation-building by sharpening and molding the character of learners. According to Hanushek & Woessmann (2010), education is one of the essential factors contributing to economic growth. Teachers are primarily responsible for the success of educational institutions, which are the backbone of the economy.

Several studies have recently highlighted teaching as one of the professions with high-stress levels (Fisher, 2011; Chona & Roxas, 2009). According to Kaur (2011), teaching is a physically and mentally challenging occupation because, in addition to his personal and familial commitments, which is are a continuous source of stress, the teacher expends a lot of energy in his daily work in the classroom. Teaching is a demanding job, so there has been a growing interest in teachers' job stress at various schools and institutions (Leung, Siu, & Spector, 2000), and it has become a significant field of interest in research (Antoniou, Ploumpi, & Ntalla, 2013). Stress is a complex and diverse phenomenon, as they mold the country's most valued asset.

In the classroom, teachers have always been the center of attention. Teachers are exposed to different stressors such as working conditions, pressures from learners, parents, and superiors, relationships with colleagues, and workload. Still, ironically their concerns and needs have not

always been addressed in the same way. Teachers' quality of life and overall mental and physical well-being is adversely affected by occupational stress (Kaur, 2011). Rathee (2014) claimed that stress leads to unpleasant emotions like anxiety and depression, impairing the teacher's ability to function at work or cope with daily life. Occupational stress, as experienced by teachers, can influence their quality of work and the quality of the academic services they offer; as such, it can eventually affect the literacy rate of the population. Educational and civil society leaders need to support each other and work as a team to ensure the sustainable growth of educational institutions for socio-economic development. So, to help teachers achieve the above-mentioned decisive responsibility, assessing their current level of occupational stress, knowing and applying the appropriate coping strategies, and identifying their job performance are increasingly important areas of concern for educational sectors and administrative bodies.

The study is significant in the field of research due to its contribution to the body of knowledge about the occupational stress of elementary teachers and how it is related to their job performance. This study is beneficial for policymakers and administrators in educational sectors in creating policies, programs, and activities that will help improve the welfare of the teachers. Also, this might help the teachers to reduce their occupational stress and retain and love their professions; thus, this study was conducted.

2. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-correlational design was utilized in the study. The descriptive method was used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics, level of stress, sources of stress, coping style, and level of job performance. The correlation method was used to test the relationship between occupational stress, coping style, and job performance.

The study was conducted in four districts of Zone III, Division of Zambales, Philippines. The researcher utilized stratified random sampling. First, the researcher used Slovin's formula to determine the sample size to use. Then after getting the sample size, the researcher used the Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Formula to calculate the proportion of participants from each group.

A survey-type questionnaire consisting of three parts was used in this study. The first part assessed the personal information of the respondents; sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, grade level taught, length of years in service, position, and family size.

The next part is the researcher's designed questionnaire to identify the sources and level of stress, and coping style. The last part of the questionnaire was adopted to identify the level of the job performance of elementary grade teachers in Zone III, Division of Zambales.

The study followed the following process: First, the research questionnaire was created and validated. Then, obtaining permission and approval from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and the school heads of the different schools through the endorsement letter of PRMSU Graduate School. After that, administration of the survey questionnaires. The researcher had personally asked permission from the teachers if they were willing to participate in the study.

The data were analyzed using the SPSS version 20 computer software. The statistical tools used in the analysis and interpretation of data and hypotheses testing include Percentage and Frequency Distribution, Weighted/Arithmetic Mean, Likert Scale, ANOVA, and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Table 1 shows teachers' frequency and percentage distribution socio-demographic characteristics. As seen, more teachers are females (85.50%, n=177), where they outnumbered their male counterparts. Also, the majority age group is 41 years old and above (50.70%, n=105). Most respondents are from middle age to elderly age (Dyussenbayev, 2017, as cited in WHO, 2015). Most are married in terms of marital status (71.00%, n=147). BEED and BSED (45.90%, n=95) for the highest educational qualification. Most teachers handle Grade 5 pupils with (16.90%, N=35). In terms of length of service, most teachers were engaged in the teaching service for 16 years and above (37.68%, n=78). Most of them occupied Teacher 1 position (57.00%, n=118). The findings manifest the dominance of the Teacher-1 position, an entry-level teaching position in the Department of Education. It also implies that the profile of the teachers within the four districts shows a significant number of seasoned teachers who were still in the primary level position since they entered the profession. Furthermore, most teachers' family size primarily consists of 4-5 members (51.70%, n=107), the average household in the Philippines (NSO, 2009).

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondents' Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	177	85.50
	Male	30	14.50
Age Mean=38.64 years old	21-30 years old	40	19.30
	31-40 years old	62	30.00
	41 years old and above	105	50.70
Civil Status	Single	50	24.20
	Married	147	71.00
	Separated	3	1.40
	Widowed	7	3.40
Highest Educational Attainment	BEED/BSED Bachelor's Degree	95	45.90
	With masteral units	92	44.40
	Masteral Degree Holder	17	8.20
	With PhD/EdD units	3	1.40
Grade Level Taught	Kindergarten	17	8.20
	Grade I	33	15.90
	Grade II	29	14.00
	Grade III	30	14.50
	Grade IV	35	16.90
	Grade V	34	16.40
	Grade VI	29	14.00
Length of Service Mean=11.16 years	Below 3 years	32	15.46
	4 - 6 years	29	14.01
	7 - 9 years	13	6.28
	10 – 12 years	33	15.94

	13-15 years	22	10.63
	16 years and above	78	37.68
Position	Teacher I	118	57.00
	Teacher II	38	18.40
	Teacher III	31	15.00
	Master Teacher I	11	5.30
	Master Teacher II	8	3.90
	Master Teacher III	1	.50
Family Size Mean= 4 members	2-3	67	32.40
	4-5	107	51.70
	6 and above	33	15.90

3.2 Occupational Stress of Teachers

Table 2 Perception of Teachers towards Occupational Stress

Occupational Stress		OWM	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Working Environment	2.81	Agree	3
2	Working Relationship	2.90	Agree	1
3	Job Content	2.83	Agree	2
4	Career Development	2.58	Agree	4
	Grand Mean	2.78	Agree	

Table 2 shows the Summary table on responses of the teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Occupational Stress.

The teacher-respondents were "Agreed" on Working Relationship with a mean of 2.90 and ranked first followed by Job Content, 2.83; Working Environment, 2.81 and ranked 3rd and Career Development with a mean of 2.58 and ranked fourth. The computed grand mean on the responses towards dimensions on Occupational Stress was 2.78. The data demonstrate that teachers' stress level is relatively high. Teachers' stress is due to many work-related factors, such as too many paper works, additional non-teaching-related activities, crowded classes, and incompetent superiors; personal factors, which include relationships; and economic factors, which involve inadequate salary and high cost of living (Rabago-Mingoa, 2017). The result is parallel to the findings of Hasan (2014) using a study of occupational stress of primary school teachers observed that the primary school teachers have found to be highly stressed.

The result showed that Working relationships ranked 1st in the sources of stress of teachers. This result was supported by the study of Spiridon (2019), the most salient stressors are associated with the quality of social interaction at work, mainly with students (e.g., problems with students' behavior). Furthermore, "administrative and organizational issues at school" as well as "perspective and prestige of teaching profession" have been reported as stressors in the teaching profession (Kamtsios & Lolis, 2016; Mouzoura, 2005).

3.3 Coping Styles of Teachers

Table 3 .Perception of Teachers towards Coping style Mechanism

Dimensions on Job Performance		OWM	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Problem-Focused	2.06	Very Often	2
2	Emotion-Focused	2.26	Very Often	1
	Grand Mean	2.16	Very Often	

Table 3 shows a summary table on the perception of the teacher-respondents towards dimensions on Coping Style Mechanism.

Based on the results, the teacher-respondents assessed “Very Often” on the use of emotion-focused as coping style with a mean of 2.26 and ranked 1st while problem-focused with a mean of 2.06 and ranked second. The computed grand mean on the responses of the teacher-respondents towards coping style mechanism was 2.16 with a qualitative interpretation of “Very Often.” The data were clearly manifest that the teacher-respondents opted for the use of emotion-focused as a stress-coping mechanism as they are relieved from getting emotional support from others, being comforted and understanding from someone, and blaming themselves on the things that happened. It is to be noticed that teachers use different coping strategies for managing their stress and preventing their jobs from the after-effects of stress (Austin, et.al, 2005). The teacher has to manage the stressful situation by adopting the right strategy of coping. It’s very useful for organizations to understand what coping styles employees are adopting and whether that style is appropriate or not because wrong style and high stress maybe lead to performance deficiency (Tiwari, 2018)

3.4 Job Performance of Teachers

Table 4 Perception of Teachers towards Dimensions on Job Performance

Dimensions on Job Performance		OWM	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Diversity of Learners	3.91	Proficient	5
2	Content Pedagogy	4.03	Proficient	4
3	Planning, Assessing, reporting Learners’ Outcomes	4.11	Proficient	2
4	Learning Environment	4.16	Proficient	1
5	School Home and Community Linkages	4.07	Proficient	3
	Grand Mean	4.01	Proficient	

Table 5 shows the Summary table on responses of the teacher-responses towards Dimensions on Job Performance.

The teachers assessed “Proficient” in the job performance as to Learning Environment manifested on the mean value of 4.16 and ranked 1st followed by Planning, Assessing, reporting learner’s outcome, 4.11 and ranked 2nd; School Home and Community Linkages, 4.07 and ranked 3rd; Content Pedagogy, 4.05 and ranked 4th and Diversity of Learners with mean of 3.91 and ranked 5th. The computed grand mean on the responses towards job performance was 4.01 with qualitative interpretation of “Proficient”.

Teachers' job performance has resulted in a proficient level. It signifies that the teachers have demonstrated advanced knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and complete knowledge and grasp of the standards. The main responsibility of teachers is to teach the learners the essential competencies. It is also one of the aspects that will determine teachers' effectiveness and the level of achievement of learners.

3.4 Test of Relationship

3.4.1 Job Performance and Occupational Stress

Table 5 Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Job Performance and the Occupation stress

Sources of Correlations		Job Performance	Occupational Stress
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.159*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.022
	N	207	207
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	0.159*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.022	
	N	207	207
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 5 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Job Performance and Occupational stress.

There is little or weak relationship between Job Performance and the Occupation stress manifested on the computed Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value of 0.159*. The computed Significant or P-value of 0.022 is lower than 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance; therefore, the Null Hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant relationship.

Teachers’ occupational stress has been known as linked to their job performance. The study's findings support the study of Amoako et al. (2017) about occupational stress and how it affects work performance. Using a convenience sampling technique, the researchers selected 109 Aspet A Company Limited employees as samples. The study revealed that work-related stress enhances employees' performance positively and significantly. The researchers argued that as the work-related stress of employees increases, the performance of employees tends to increase and vice versa. In contrast to the study of Senthilkumar (2018) that high levels of stress will

negatively impact our physical and mental health, resulting in bad performance and to Yaacoub & Long (2015), when teachers experience high levels of occupational stress, it will affect their performance to be less productive and effective.

3.4.2 Job Performance and Coping style Mechanism

Table 6 Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Job Performance and the Coping style Mechanism

Sources of Correlations		Job Performance	Coping Style
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.156*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.025
	N	207	207
Coping Style	Pearson Correlation	0.156*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.025	
	N	207	207
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 6 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Job Performance and the Coping style Mechanism.

There is little or weak relationship between Job Performance and the coping style mechanism manifested on the computed Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value of 0.156*. The computed Significant or P-value of 0.025, which is lower than 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant relationship.

Previous research revealed that, even in the presence of stress, problem-focused coping enhances teachers' performance and satisfaction (Vinothkumar et al., 2016). In another study, problem-focused coping was found to be mediated between teachers' stress levels and job performance, and problem-focused coping mediated between teachers' stress levels and job performance (Sundberg & Sandberg, 2011). In contrast, Parveen et al. (2018) discovered that emotion-focused coping did not regulate the relationship between teachers' stress levels and job performance in instructors.

3.4.3 Occupational Stress and Coping Style Mechanism

Table 7 Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Occupational Stress and the Coping style Mechanism

Sources of Correlations		Coping Style	Occupational Stress
Coping Style	Pearson Correlation	1	0.260**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	207	207
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	0.260**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

N	207	207
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Table 7 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test the relationship between Occupational Stress and the Coping style Mechanism.

There is little or weak relationship between Job Performance and the coping style mechanism and the occupational stress manifested on the computed Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value of 0.260**. The computed Significant or P-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance. Therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a significant relationship.

The findings suggest that teachers coped and managed their stress situations well using emotion-focused and problem-focused coping styles. This finding is consistent with Lazarus' (1999) notion that coping has been seen as a powerful mediator of the emotional outcome of a stressful encounter, which is the effort used to manage psychological stress.

Finally, it is hoped that collaborative efforts will be formed among researchers, teachers, and administrators to enable the education system to use and develop what has been discovered by studies like this about Filipino teachers' occupational stress and coping styles to improve teachers' performance.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the summary of the research conducted, the researcher came to the following conclusion: The majority of teachers are females (85.50%, n=177, from the age group is 41 years old and above (50.70%, n=105), married (71.00%, n=147), BEED and BSED (45.90%, n=95), handling Grade 5 pupils with (16.90%, N=35), engaged in the teaching service for 16 years and above (37.68%, n=78), occupied Teacher 1 position (57.00%, n=118), and primarily belongs to a family size of 4-5 members (51.70%, n=107).

The data demonstrate that teachers' stress level is relatively high. Teachers' stress is due to many work-related factors, such as too many paper works, additional non-teaching-related activities, crowded classes, and incompetent superiors; personal factors, which include relationships; and economic factors, which involve inadequate salary and high cost of living (Mingoa, 2017). Furthermore, teachers used both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping styles to manage stressful situations. Additionally, teachers' job performance has resulted in a proficient level. It signifies that the teachers have demonstrated advanced knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and complete knowledge and grasp of the standards.

There is no significant difference in the perception of occupational stress when grouped according to profile variables of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, position, length of service, and the number of family sizes. Likewise, there is no significant difference in the perception of stress coping style mechanism when grouped according to profile variables of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, position, length of service, and family sizes. Also, there is no significant difference in job performance perception when grouped according to profile variables of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, position, length of service, and family size, respectively. Lastly, there is little or weak relationship between job performance and occupational stress; job performance and coping style mechanism and occupational stress and coping style mechanism.

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