

A Review of Past Studies on Strategies Employed by Teachers to Cope with Stress

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Abstract

The review looks at studies on teacher stress and coping mechanisms, so highlighting the several difficulties teachers deal with and the techniques they use to negotiate these pressures. According to the study, teacher stress results from several sources: heavy workloads, student behavior, and the pressures of adjusting to new teaching approaches or curriculum revisions. The studies stress the important part coping strategies play in controlling stress and advancing teacher well-being. Although particular coping mechanisms differ depending on research and situation, a recurring theme is the need of both problem-oriented and emotional focused coping to properly handle the complexity of the teaching career. The results highlight how urgently teacher stress has to be acknowledged and addressed in order to support the growth and application of successful coping mechanisms so promoting a sustainable and healthy teaching force. According to the studies, programs meant to lower teacher stress and boost well-being can help the larger industrialization process as well as help to produce better educational results.

Keywords: Teacher Stress, Coping Mechanisms, Workload, Student Behaviour, Professional Development.

Introduction

The scene of education is changing dramatically under the constant advancement of technology, changing needs of learners, and complexity of a worldwide society [Suru & Mwampulo, 2022]. Teachers are the pillars of the educational system among these developments; they are charged with molding the brains of next generations [Ellovido & Quirap, 2024]. Still, the teaching career has its difficulties [Naparan et al., 2021]. Significant stress can result from the rigors of the classroom combined with the pressure to meet performance criteria and change to new pedagogical approaches [Comety-Mintah et al., 2022]. If left unaddressed, this stress can negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction, well-being, and finally the quality of the instruction they produce [Hussain et al., 2019].

As researchers and teachers both understand the vital need to assist the well-being of those who commit their lives to teaching Ngohayon & Culimay (2023), the investigation of teacher

stress and coping strategies has attracted more and more interest recently. Research on teacher stress exposes a complex interaction of elements influencing the difficulties experienced by teachers (Shakerkhoshroudi et al., 2020). These elements cover a broad spectrum of problems, including heavy work, student behavior problems, the pressures of professional development, and the challenges of changing to new curricula or teaching approaches (Naparan et al., 2021). Burnout, anxiety, and lower job satisfaction are among the several ways that these pressures might show up emotionally and psychologically (Comety-Mintah et al., 2022).

Teachers use a range of coping strategies in face of these difficulties to deal with the complexity of their work (Cheema et al., 2022). Problem-oriented and emotional approaches (Shakerkhoshroudi et al., 2020) can be generally divided among these coping mechanisms. Problem-oriented coping is the proactive approach used to solve the underlying causes of stress by means of time management strategies, professional development chances, or colleague support (Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023). Conversely, emotionally focused coping—through exercise, mindfulness techniques, or social support seeking—focuses on controlling the emotional reactions to stress (Hussain et al., 2019). The individual teacher, the particular stresses faced, and the situation in which these coping strategies are used will all affect their efficacy.

The study on teacher stress and coping strategies emphasizes even more the crucial need of creating a motivating and empowering surroundings for teachers [Jala & Macalisang, 2024]. We can build a more resilient and satisfied teaching workforce by acknowledging the difficulties teachers experience and giving them the tools and resources to properly control stress [Suru & Mwampulo, 2022]. Improved educational results, more student involvement, and a more favorable and sustainable educational environment can follow from this in turn. The studies examined in this literature review provide insightful analysis of the several causes of teacher stress, the coping strategies used by teachers, and the consequences for professional growth and well-being of teachers. Examining these results helps us to better appreciate the complexity of the teaching profession and find ways to assist the welfare of people who commit their life to mold the brains of next generations.

Problem Statement

The literature has extensively recognized the frequency of stress among teachers, which affects their general quality of instruction, instructional effectiveness, and well-being. The studies examined draw attention to the several causes of teacher stress—heavy workloads, disruptive student behavior, the pressures of adjusting to new teaching approaches or curriculum changes, and the particular difficulties the COVID-19 epidemic and the return to in-person learning present. Although earlier studies have illuminated the several coping mechanisms teachers use—problem-oriented and emotional-focused approaches—there is still a need for a more thorough knowledge of the long-term success of these techniques and their effects on teachers' general well-being and professional development. The body of current research also emphasizes how crucial it is to reduce teacher stress by means of focused interventions and support networks so as to produce a sustainable and healthy workforce. On the most efficient treatments and the particular elements supporting the successful execution of stress-reducing initiatives, there is, nevertheless, lack of agreement.

By means of a thorough investigation on the sources of teacher stress, the coping mechanisms used, and the long-term effects of these strategies on teachers' well-being and professional development, the present study seeks to fill in these voids. The study will also look at the effectiveness of several treatments meant to lower teacher stress and encourage the use of sensible coping strategies. This study will help to create evidence-based strategies and support systems that promote a strong and healthy teaching profession by offering a more complex awareness of teacher stress and coping.

Research Objective

To investigate strategies employed by teachers to cope with stress.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify and assess existing literature on the strategies employed by teachers to cope with stress, highlighting educational strategies and challenges within various teaching environments. This systematic literature review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, consisting of three stages: identification, screening, and inclusion.

In the identification stage, literature was sourced using Google Scholar and ResearchGate, focusing on publications from 2010 to 2023. The search keywords included "teacher stress," "coping mechanisms," "stress management in education," "teaching strategies," and "teacher well-being." The search was limited to English-language studies, and articles were required to investigate teacher stress and coping mechanisms within educational settings.

The screening process involved setting inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria required studies to examine teacher stress related to classroom management, workload, student behavior, or curriculum changes and to analyze coping strategies, focusing on emotional or problem-oriented mechanisms. The studies also had to evaluate teachers' well-being and professional development outcomes connected to stress management strategies. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies that did not focus on teacher stress, addressed non-teaching professions, or lacked quantitative or qualitative data on the effectiveness of coping strategies. Articles focusing solely on student well-being or administrative perspectives without addressing teacher stress were also excluded. After passing the initial identification, the articles were further assessed based on titles and abstracts. Two key themes emerged: the impact of stress on teacher well-being and the strategies used by teachers to manage stress in the classroom and broader educational contexts.

In the inclusion phase, full-text articles meeting the criteria were reviewed, and data were collected on the author(s), year of publication, study source and setting, sample size and demographics, type of stressors (e.g., workload, behavior), coping strategies (e.g., problem-oriented, emotional-focused), and key outcomes.

The PRISMA guidelines were applied rigorously to ensure comprehensive coverage and the quality of the selected studies. The results were synthesized to understand how different coping strategies alleviate teacher stress and improve professional well-being, with a particular focus on long-term effects such as teacher health, job satisfaction, and retention.

Past Studies

A study of 400 Pakistani teachers' stress levels and coping strategies by Hussain et al. (2019). According to Hussain et al (2019), the majority of teachers have high or extremely high levels of stress, which is concerning. Female teachers report much higher levels of stress than male teachers. The three main coping mechanisms that have been identified are actively solving problems, positive reinterpretation, and resorting to religion. As stress levels rise, the study also notes a shift in coping strategies toward problem- and emotion-oriented approaches. The study makes use of a self-created questionnaire that is based on the COPE inventory, and its conclusions are reached through statistical analysis. The results highlight how important it is to address job stress among Pakistani teachers and put in place efficient stress-reduction strategies.

One of the study's drawbacks is its cross-sectional design, which makes it impossible to investigate how stress and coping strategies evolve over time. The use of self-reported data raises the possibility of bias as well. The study's conclusions can't be applied widely because of its singular cultural context focus. Incorporating longitudinal data collection to monitor changes in stress levels and coping mechanisms over time could improve the research. Incorporating qualitative techniques like focus groups and interviews could yield a better understanding of the stress experiences and perceptions of teachers. Moreover, adding physiological stress markers might provide a more impartial evaluation of stress levels.

The stress experiences and coping mechanisms of 189 university teachers in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic are examined in the second article by Nghayon and Culimay (2023). Hussain et al. (2019, says the majority of teachers reported moderate levels of stress, which were mostly caused by issues with their health, their finances, and their jobs. According to the research, there are notable variations in stress experiences according to marital status and gender, with female and single teachers reporting higher levels of stress. The study also emphasizes how approach-style coping techniques—like acceptance and positive reframing—are more frequently used than avoidance-style coping techniques. Surveys such as the Pandemic-Related Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PRPSQ), Stress Index Questionnaire (SIQ), and BriefCOPE are used in the research to collect data using a descriptive survey design. The results highlight the significant impact of the pandemic on the mental health of university teachers and stress the significance of developing efficient coping strategies. The study's conclusions can guide interventions meant to enhance higher education institutions' teachers' stress management and overall well-being.

The study's shortcomings include its narrow focus on a single institution and comparatively small sample size, which may limit how broadly applicable its conclusions can be. The intricacy and nuanced nature of teachers' experiences with stress and coping mechanisms may not be adequately captured by the use of closed-ended questionnaires. A larger and more varied sample, the use of open-ended questions or interviews to collect qualitative data, and follow-up research to determine the pandemic's long-term effects on teachers' wellbeing could all improve the study.

In summary, both studies highlight the serious problem of teacher stress and the significance of developing healthy coping strategies. While the second article focuses specifically on stress experiences among Filipino university teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the first

article concentrates on general job stress among Pakistani school teachers. The results of both studies point to the prevalence of emotion- and problem-oriented coping mechanisms, which suggests that teachers should take the initiative to manage their stress. The frequent use of religious coping, a tactic not specifically discussed in the first article, is also noted in the second article. Furthermore, gender differences in stress experiences are found in both studies, with female teachers reporting higher levels of stress. The conclusions drawn from these two studies highlight the necessity of focused interventions aimed at reducing teacher stress and fostering useful coping strategies, which will ultimately enhance teachers' well-being and productivity in the classroom.

Examining the difficulties and coping mechanisms of multigrade teachers in the Philippines, Naparan et al (2021), The study notes three levels of difficulty: intrinsic (related to teachers), extrinsic (at the school level), and system (beyond school). Among the intrinsic difficulties are low allowances, stress, language barriers, and unpreparedness for multigrade instruction. Among extrinsic difficulties are distance, lack of resources, safety issues, workload, and student absenteeism. System challenges include poor training and lack of support for stakeholders. The study also emphasizes coping mechanisms including self-conditioning, time management, prayer, and technology use. Using a transcendental phenomenological approach, the study gathers information by means of 14 seasoned multigrade teachers' interviews. The results highlight the various difficulties these teachers experience as well as their resiliency in adjusting and coping.

The small sample size and concentration on a particular area of the study have limits that might restrict the generalizability of its conclusions. Although the qualitative character of the data offers great insights, it may also bring possible subjectivity in interpretation. Expanding the sample size and geographic scope, including quantitative measures to complement the qualitative data, and investigating the long-term effects of these obstacles and coping mechanisms on teachers' well-being and professional development could help to strengthen the research.

Shakerkhoshroudi et al (2021), looks at the coping mechanisms Iranian EFL teachers use to handle classroom management restrictions. Two main coping mechanisms—problem-oriented and emotional—are found in the study. Problem-oriented strategies call for trying to solve the issue, working harder at tasks, strengthening bonds, and controlling student behaviour. Emotion-oriented techniques call for seeking help, emphasizing good points, and participating in leisure activities. Combining qualitative data from 22 teachers' interviews with quantitative data from a questionnaire answered by 100 teachers, the study uses a mixed-methods approach. The results highlight the need of professional development in this field since experienced teachers seem to apply coping mechanisms more wisely than new teachers.

The study's shortcomings include its emphasis on a single context and possible sample self-selection bias. Dependency on self-reported data may also bring possible biases. Expanding the sample size and cultural context, including observational data to complement the self-reported data, and investigating the long-term effects of these coping mechanisms on teachers' well-being and instructional effectiveness could help to strengthen the research.

All things considered, these papers advance knowledge of teacher stress and coping strategies in various learning environments. They draw attention to the several difficulties teachers deal with and the need of creating good coping techniques. The studies also highlight the need of more research to solve the found restrictions and investigate the long-term effects of stress and coping on teachers' well-being and professional development.

Using a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey design, Comety-Mintah et al (2022), investigates among pre-service teachers in Ghana the effects of stress and coping strategies. Data from 150 second-year and third-year students is gathered for the study using questionnaires modified from the Dental Environmental Stress (DES) questionnaire and the Brief COPE inventory. The study focuses especially on the effect of stress on academic performance and the coping mechanisms used by pre-service teachers. With gender and program-related differences noted, the results expose notable effects of stress including tiredness, headaches, and insomnia. The study also emphasizes how mostly the participants use adaptive coping mechanisms. The study emphasizes the need of encouraging good stress management strategies and adds insightful analysis on the difficulties experienced by pre-service teachers.

The methodological decisions in this research have some restrictions that demand thought. The cross-sectional design prevents the study of how coping strategies and stress change with time, so possibly hiding the dynamic character of these events. Using adapted questionnaires and depending on self-reported data could introduce possible biases and restrict the generalizability of the results. By including longitudinal data collecting to monitor changes in stress levels and coping mechanisms and by using qualitative techniques including interviews or focus groups to better grasp pre-service teachers' experiences and viewpoints, the study might be strengthened. Investigating the efficacy of various coping mechanisms in reducing stress and advancing well-being among pre-service teachers would help to strengthen the research as well. The cross-sectional design of the study limits it in that it forbids the analysis of how coping strategies and stress change with time. Furthermore adding possible biases and restricting the generalizability of the results are the dependence on self-reported data and the use of modified questionnaires. Incorporating longitudinal data collecting to track changes in stress levels and coping mechanisms and using qualitative techniques to better grasp pre-service teachers' experiences and viewpoints would help to improve the research. Investigating the efficacy of various coping mechanisms in reducing stress and advancing well-being among pre-service teachers could help to strengthen the study as well.

Cheema et al (2022), looks at how 315 primary school teachers in Tehsil Sargodha, Pakistan, cope with stress. The paper investigates how demographic elements including gender, location, experience, and qualifications interact with coping mechanisms. According to Cheema et al (2022), men teachers often use more coping mechanisms than women. Teachers with lesser degrees also employ more coping mechanisms than those with more degrees. Furthermore lacking any notable variations in coping mechanisms depending on location, professional background, or experience is the study. Seeking social support, religious support, acceptance, focused venting of emotions, and restraint coping are the most often used coping mechanisms. Using a survey approach and a self-developed stress coping strategy

scale for primary teachers, the study Particularly in relation to Pakistani primary schools, the results emphasize the need of knowing and managing teacher stress.

The fact that Cheema et al (2022), depends on a self-developed scale and a convenience sample limits generalizability and comparability of the results. Using established stress coping scales and a more representative sample would help the study to be more robust. Including qualitative techniques would also help the study to better grasp the views of stress and coping as well as the experiences of teachers. Furthermore, the study might be strengthened by looking at how well various coping mechanisms help primary school teachers to reduce stress and foster well-being.

Suru et al (2022), investigates among secondary school teachers in Tanzania the sources, consequences, and coping mechanisms linked to job stress. The study points up several causes of stress: low pay, unmet expectations, postponed promotions, and poor working conditions. The study also shows how stress affects teachers' performance; it shows absenteeism, turnover, and lower motivation among other things. The study underlines even more the coping mechanisms teachers use, classified as positive (e.g., socializing, religious activities), neutral (e.g., acceptance of the situation), and negative (e.g., less effort, drug abuse). Using a phenomenological research style, the study gathers information by means of in-depth interviews and focus group debates. The results highlight the urgent need of tackling teacher stress and encouraging good coping strategies to enhance performance in the workplace and help Tanzania's industrialization process to flourish.

The qualitative character of Suru et al (2022), and its emphasis on a particular area could restrict the generalizability and objectivity of the conclusions by themselves. Expanding the geographic scope of the study and adding quantitative measures to complement the qualitative data could help the research to be improved. Examining the long-term effects of stress and coping mechanisms on teachers' professional development and well-being would also help the research. Furthermore, the study could be strengthened by looking at how well various coping mechanisms help secondary school teachers reduce stress and advance their well-being.

When one compares these two pieces with the past six, all eight studies highlight the widespread problem of stress among educators and future teachers in various environments. Together, they draw attention to the several difficulties teachers deal with and the great need of creating and using good coping mechanisms. The studies underline also the need of more research to solve the noted constraints and investigate the long-term effects of stress and coping on teachers' well-being and professional growth. Building on these results will help future studies guide the creation of focused interventions to assist teachers in controlling stress and enhancing their general well-being, so supporting the larger industrialization process and helping to produce better educational results.

The lived experiences of public school teachers in the Philippines during the return to in-person classes following the COVID-19 epidemic are investigated in Jala and Macalisang (2024). Using a qualitative research design—more especially, the transcendental phenomenological approach and thematic analysis technique—the study explored the

difficulties and coping strategies teachers faced during this period of transition. The results showed that among the several pressures teachers experienced—work overload, difficulties with classroom management and student behavior, and worries about low literacy skill development—were those related to their profession. Teachers used differentiated instruction, group learning, and a focus on holistic wellness to help them negotiate these difficulties. Emphasizing the creation of successful teaching strategies, more parent involvement, and the building of personal and professional resilience, the study suggests a stress-coping plan.

The small sample size and emphasis on a single institution of the study could restrict the generalizability of its results. Though it offers rich insights, the qualitative character of the data could also bring possible subjectivity in interpretation. Expanding the sample size and geographical scope, including quantitative measures to complement the qualitative data, and investigating the long-term effects of these difficulties and coping mechanisms on teachers' well-being and professional development could help the study to be strengthened.

The occupational stress and coping strategies of public elementary teachers in Opol-West District, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, y Ellovido and Quirap (2024) looks at Using a descriptive-correlational approach and a survey instrument to compile information from 145 teachers, the study The study investigates the relationship between occupational stress—derived from living circumstances, working conditions, and subject-related conditions—and coping strategies, classified as either emotion-focused or problem-focused. The results show that teachers feel modestly stressed in all three dimensions. The study also finds a noteworthy correlation between occupational stress and both problem- and emotion-oriented coping strategies. The study comes to the conclusion that teachers' aspirations for professional development can lead to stress and advises applying techniques to reduce work-related pressures, so supporting professional development and stress management and problem-solving.

When one compares these two papers with the past eight, all ten studies point to the widespread and complex nature of stress experienced in the teaching field. They draw attention to the several causes of stress, which range from financial worries and the difficulties adjusting to new courses or teaching strategies to workload and student behavior. The studies also stress the need of coping strategies in controlling tension and advancing teacher well-being. Although the particular coping mechanisms used differ depending on the research and situation, one recurring theme is the need of both problem-oriented and emotional-oriented coping mechanisms to properly negotiate the complexity of the teaching career. Emphasizing the critical need to address teacher stress and offer support for successful coping strategies to foster a healthy and sustainable teaching workforce, the results of these studies offer insightful analysis for educators themselves, administrators, and legislators.

Conclusion and Research Gaps

Literature on teacher stress and coping strategies exposes a number of holes that have to be filled. The body of current research mostly consists in quantitative studies, which might not completely reflect the complexity and nuances of teachers' lived experiences (Jala &

Macalisang, 2024; Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023). Teachers may not always precisely evaluate or reveal their stress levels and coping mechanisms, thus depending too much on self-reported data through surveys and questionnaires can also bring limits (Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023).

Moreover lacking are long-term studies looking at the consequences of stress and the efficacy of coping strategies over time (Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023). The bulk of studies concentrates on particular settings or populations, such public school teachers or teachers in particular regions, so restricting the generalizability of findings (Cheema et al., 2021; Jala & Macalisang, 2024; Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023; Suru et al., 2022). Further study is needed on how society and cultural elements affect teacher stress and coping strategies (Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023; Suru et al., 2022).

More study on the efficacy of different interventions and support systems in assisting teachers in managing stress and building adaptive coping mechanisms is also much needed (Cheema et al., 2021; Ellovido & Quirap, 2024; Ngohayon & Culimay, 2023; Suru et al., 2022). Further research is warranted on the effects of teacher stress on student learning outcomes and the general school environment as well (Commey-Mintah et al., 2022; Ellovido & Quirap, 2024).

Research on the coping mechanisms used by pre-service teachers and the elements influencing their stress levels and coping mechanisms is finally lacking (Commey-Mintah et al., 2022). By means of a more thorough knowledge of teacher stress and coping strategies resulting from addressing these gaps in research, more successful interventions and support systems to so improve teacher well-being and raise the quality of education will result.

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