

Stress-Related Variables And Coping Strategies As Correlates Of Sense And Dimensions Of Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the relationship between stress-related variables and coping strategies as correlates of sense and dimensions of self-efficacy of teachers.

The data gathered on the profile of the teacher according to age most of them are (thirty-one to forty) 31 - 40 years old while when it comes to gender, majority of respondents are female. According to civil status majority of the respondents are in married life. Additional to that, when it comes to educational attainment most of the respondents are with masteral units. For the designation of the teachers, most respondents are teacher I and when it comes to length of teaching experience one to ten (1-10) years are dominant.

There is a significant relationship between stress-related areas (such as work-related stress and time management) and teachers' self-efficacy. Additionally, the dimension of self-efficacy related to emotional state has a significant relationship with stress-related areas. Most coping strategies and self-efficacy dimensions have a significant relationship, except for distancing coping and escape avoidance coping. However, distancing coping and escape avoidance coping are highly related to the dimension of self-efficacy related to emotional state only. There is no significant relationship between the emotional state dimension of self-efficacy and planful problem-solving or positive appraisal coping strategies.

It is recommended that school heads and administrators prioritize addressing work-related stress among teachers. Strategies to manage and reduce work-related stress may be implemented, such as providing support systems, workload management, and training programs that promote stress management skills.

Keywords: Coping Strategies; Teachers' Sense of Efficacy; Dimension of Self-Efficacy; Work-Related Stress

Introduction

Stress is a prevalent issue that affects almost everyone, particularly those who engage in intellectual activities like teaching. Despite its prevalence, recent research has shown that teacher training typically does not include stress-coping strategies (Harris, 2011). Consequently, teachers often feel ill-equipped to respond to stress-related aspects of their job, which can impact their self-efficacy and effectiveness (Kerr, Breen, Delaney, Kelly, & Miller, 2011; Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011).

Teacher stress is typically defined as the unpleasant emotions experienced by teachers as a result of their work. To identify potential stressors, researchers have explored various aspects of the work situation that may lead to stress, such as

job demands or stressors (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Studies over the past 30 years have investigated working conditions and health-related issues in the teaching profession, largely due to the high levels of workplace stress reported (Krause, Dorsemagen, & Alexander, 2011).

Empirical studies have identified several potential stressors for teachers, including student misconduct or discipline problems, time pressure and workload, poor student motivation, large student differences, conflicts with colleagues, lack of administrative support, and value conflicts (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2011a, 2011b). Furthermore, open-ended interviews have revealed stress-related areas that teachers identify, such as work-related stressors, time management, discipline and motivation, professional distress, and professional investment. Additionally, senior teachers may need more time to recover from stress than younger teachers (Skaalvik, 2015).

In light of these findings, this study aimed to explore stress-related variables and identify coping strategies used by school teachers to manage stress. The study also sought to investigate whether stress-related areas correlate with the sense and dimensions of self-efficacy among teachers.

Background of the Study

A teaching job plays a pivotal role in the researcher's life as it gives a sense of fulfillment, identification, and a chance to explore and actualize her potential but on the contrary, the researcher knows that every profession has its own complexities and, in her today's challenging teaching life stress is inevitable.

However, highly reputable, and professionally managed organizations like Elementary Schools in Sto. Tomas South District, Sto. Tomas Batangas are trying to provide a stress-free environment, but they cannot completely secure their employees from the increasing occupational or work-related stress.

Organizations such as schools recognize the importance of providing a stress-free environment for their employees. However, due to the nature of the job, it is challenging to completely eliminate work-related stress. Previous studies have shown that effective management practices can help reduce workplace stress (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2005).

The researcher knows that teaching is considered a highly stressful occupation, with work-related stress levels among teachers being among the highest compared to other professions. Unfortunately, there are very few studies regarding the levels of work-related stress among teachers that is why the researcher wanted to know more if there's a significant relationship between stress-related areas, coping strategies, and style and the sense and dimension of self-efficacy of a teacher.

Stress experienced by Sto. Tomas South District teachers is a subject of interest in recent years. Various factors have been identified linked with teachers' work-related stress. The researcher believes and acknowledges (Morgan & Kitching, 2007) proposal that teaching as a profession is a demanding job that requires highly intellectual activities however, there are various intellectual symptoms of stress that can affect people in the profession, and these can have negative adverse effects on the teachers' efficacy.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), developed by Fimian (2011), measured the strength of different stressful events related to the roles of teachers and how they perceived those stressors. Stressful events included: work-related stress, time management, discipline and motivation, professional distress, and professional investment (Fimian & Fastenau as cited in Skaalvik 2011).

While according to Kyriacou's (2001) research, there is a list of main sources of stress faced by teachers as teaching pupils who lacked motivation, maintenance of discipline, time pressures and workload, and coping with changes that could also affect teachers' efficacy as earlier research work had shown. In addition to that, stress has been proven to hinder efficacy at work and can affect performance outcomes, self-modeling, verbal encouragement, and the emotional state of the teacher (Copper, 2002), and teachers are often exposed to a high level of stress as reported by Reglin & Reitzammer (2008).

It can be argued that perceived teaching self-efficacy is positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction. (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006; Caprara, et. al, 2003). In relation to that, it was presented in the study by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2007) that the satisfaction derived from classroom performance is positively correlated with teaching self-efficacy belief. It could also be stated that there exists a positive correlation between the self-efficacy belief related to teaching and attitude (Demirel & Akkoyunlu, 2010).

In recent studies, self-efficacy strongly influences pupils' achievement levels (Pajares, 2002). Therefore, it is very important to provide teachers with high levels of sense of efficacy beliefs and develop practices to train quality and successful pupils. There exist positive correlations between teachers' sense of efficacy beliefs in their capabilities and their dimension of self-efficacy to students' academic achievements and motivations (Graham, Harris, Fink & McArthur, 2001).

In this study, findings related to the relationship between stress-related variables and coping strategies and styles of teachers as correlates of teacher sense and dimension of self-efficacy will be examined and will be evaluated.

Table 1. Test of Relationship Between the Extent of Stress-related areas and the Self-efficacy of the Teachers

Self-Efficacy of the Teachers	Stress-Related Areas				
	Work-Related Stress	Time Management	Discipline and Motivation	Professional Distress	Professional Investment
Teachers' Sense of Efficacy					
Efficacy for Instruction	.332**	.157	-.024	.102	-.050
Efficacy for Motivation	.323**	.126	-.080	.049	-.031
Efficacy for Classroom Management	.313**	.097	-.083	.056	-.056
Dimensions of Self-Efficacy					
Performance Outcomes	.282**	.197*	.005	.124	-.013
Self-Modeling	.289**	.254**	.120	.084	.039
Verbal Encouragement	.364**	.253**	.085	.169	.072
Emotional State	.253**	.445**	.445**	.507**	.548**

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 displays the correlation between the extent of stress-related areas and the self-efficacy of teachers in various dimensions. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task successfully. The stress-

related areas are work-related stress, time management, discipline and motivation, professional distress, and professional investment.

This also shows how the sense of efficacy of teachers and dimensions of self-efficacy of teachers exceeds at the r-value, and how these stress relates areas dominantly shows significant relationship.

Starting from the indicator efficacy for instruction with the work-related areas at ($r=.332^{**}$), time management ($r=.157$, discipline and motivation ($r= -.024$), professional distress ($r=.102$) and professional investment ($r=-.050$).

There is a highly significant relationship exists between Work-related stress and self-efficacy of teachers. This statement indicates that there is a relationship between work-related stress and self-efficacy among teachers. This suggests that higher levels of work-related stress are associated with lower self-efficacy beliefs. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that job stress can negatively impact teachers' self-efficacy, leading to reduced job satisfaction and performance. Research has shown that job stress can have a negative impact on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, leading to lower job satisfaction and performance. A study by Tuckey and colleagues (2012) found that job stress was negatively correlated with self-efficacy among teachers in Australia. Another study by Huang and colleagues (2019) in China also found that work-related stress was negatively associated with teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Overall, the literature supports the idea that work-related stress can impact teachers' self-efficacy.

Table 2. Test of Relationship Between Perceived Level of Observation on Coping Strategies and the Self-Efficacy of the Teachers

Self-Efficacy of the Teachers	Coping Strategies							
	Planful Problem- Solving	Self- Controlling	Seeking Social Support	Confrontive Coping	Distancing	Accepting Responsibility	Positive Appraisal	Escape Avoidance
Teachers' Sense of Efficacy								
Efficacy for Instruction	.614**	.534**	.442**	.301**	.102	.559**	.618**	.073
Efficacy for Motivation	.586**	.550**	.474**	.334**	.111	.599**	.609**	.049
Efficacy for Classroom Management	.563**	.529**	.410**	.296**	.084	.520**	.561**	.080
Dimensions of Self-Efficacy								
Performance Outcomes	.602**	.581**	.401**	.309**	.162	.509**	.579**	.041
Self-Modeling	.558**	.591**	.434**	.301**	.138	.597**	.542**	.153
Verbal Encouragement	.597**	.586**	.427**	.362**	.135	.504**	.571**	.170
Emotional State	.093	.275**	.210*	.437**	.413**	.245**	-.018	.702**

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

Table 2 presents the results of a test that aims to investigate the relationship between the perceived level of observation on coping strategies and the self-efficacy of teachers. The data are presented in the form of correlations between the self-efficacy of teachers and their coping strategies.

The coping strategies are listed in the columns, and they include planful problem-solving, self-controlling, seeking social support, confrontive coping, distancing, accepting responsibility, positive appraisal, and escape avoidance. The self-efficacy of teachers is presented in the rows, and it is categorized based on efficacy for instruction, motivation, classroom management, and dimensions of self-efficacy, including performance outcomes, self-modeling, verbal encouragement, and emotional state.

The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation (at the 0.01 level) between the self-efficacy of teachers and their coping strategies, with the strongest correlations observed in planful problem-solving, self-controlling, and seeking social support. In contrast, there were weaker correlations observed in confrontive coping, distancing, accepting

responsibility, positive appraisal, and escape avoidance.

These results suggest that the perceived level of observation on coping strategies is positively related to the self-efficacy of teachers, particularly in the areas of instruction, motivation, classroom management, and dimensions of self-efficacy. These findings may have implications for the development of teacher training programs aimed at enhancing their coping strategies and improving their self-efficacy.

There is a highly significant relationship exists between Coping Strategies and Self-Efficacy of the Teachers Except Distancing and Escape Avoidance. However, the two constructs are highly significant related to Dimensions of Self-efficacy as to Emotional State only.

The following literature supports the idea that there is a relationship between coping strategies and self-efficacy among teachers. Coping strategies are defined as the cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage stressors (Folkman & Lazarus, 2000), while self-efficacy refers to one's belief in their ability to accomplish a specific task. A study by Yildirim and Celik (2019) found that teachers who used coping strategies such as problem-solving and seeking social support had higher levels of self-efficacy.

Table 3. Test of Relationship Between the Stress-Related Areas and Perceived Level of Observation on Coping Strategies

Stress-Related Areas	Coping Strategies							
	Planful Problem-Solving	Self-Controlling	Seeking Social Support	Confrontive Coping	Distancing	Accepting Responsibility	Positive Appraisal	Escape Avoidance
Work-Related Stress	0.073	.263**	.277**	.278**	.220*	.248**	.200*	.244*
Time Management	0.057	.236*	.234*	.282**	.338**	0.178	0.067	.394**
Discipline and Motivation	-0.097	0.182	0.18	.263**	.360**	0.049	0.04	.426**
Professional Distress	0.084	.203*	0.181	.353**	.358**	0.119	0.041	.415**
Professional Investment	-0.033	0.148	.238*	.444**	.449**	0.12	-0.072	.527**

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

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 3 presents the results of a test of the relationship between stress-related areas and coping strategies, as perceived by the participants. The stress-related areas considered are work-related stress, time management, discipline and motivation, professional distress, and professional investment. The coping strategies assessed are planful problem-solving, self-controlling, seeking social support, confrontive coping, distancing, accepting responsibility, positive appraisal, and escape avoidance.

The values in the table represent the correlations between each stress-related area and each coping strategy. A positive correlation indicates that as the perceived level of stress in a particular area increases, the use of a specific coping strategy also increases. In contrast, a negative correlation indicates that as the perceived level of stress increases, the use of a specific coping strategy decreases.

The table shows that there are significant positive correlations between most stress-related areas and coping strategies, particularly self-controlling at .263**, seeking social support .277**, positive appraisal .200**, and escape avoidance .244*. However, the strength of the correlations varies across stress-related areas and coping strategies. For instance, time management shows significant positive correlations with self-controlling .236*, seeking social support .234*, positive appraisal 0.067, and escape avoidance .394**, while professional investment displays significant positive correlations with

all coping strategies except distancing.

Overall, the table suggests that different stress-related areas require different coping strategies, and that individuals may use multiple coping strategies to manage stress. The results may be useful in developing interventions to help individuals cope with stress in different areas of their lives.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of findings gathered by the researcher using an adopted and modified instrument. It also includes the conclusions derived from the findings, the recommendations based and aligned with the conclusions drawn.

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to find the relationship between stress-related variables and coping strategies as correlates of sense and dimensions of self-efficacy teachers.

The study reveals the following findings:

1. Teacher profile: mostly aged 30-40, majority female and married, many with master's units, majority Teacher I position, dominant teaching experience of 1-10 years
2. Coping strategies: moderate practice of planful problem-solving, self-control, seeking social support, and confrontive coping; moderate practice of distancing coping and accepting responsibility coping
3. Work-related stress, time management, and emotional state have highly significant relationships with self-efficacy.
4. Coping strategies have a significant relationship with self-efficacy except for distancing coping and escape avoidance coping
5. Emotional state dimension of self-efficacy shows no significant relationship with planful problem-solving and positive appraisal coping strategies

Conclusion

The findings gathered in the study led to the formulation of the following conclusion.

1. The study suggests that work-related stress has a significant relationship with the self-efficacy of teachers, particularly in the areas of time management and emotional state, thus hypothesis is sustained. Coping strategies also have a significant relationship with the self-efficacy of teachers, with the exception of distancing and escape avoidance, which are only related to emotional state.
2. However, there is no significant relationship between emotional state and planful problem solving or positive appraisal coping strategies, thus hypothesis is also sustained. Finally, the study suggests that several coping strategies, including self-controlling, seeking social support, positive appraisal, and escape avoidance, have a significant relationship with most stress-related areas.
3. Overall, the study highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between stress-related variables, coping strategies, and self-efficacy among teachers to help them effectively manage stress and improve their overall well-being.

Recommendation

In the light of the conclusions of the study the following recommendations are set forth:

1. It is recommended that school heads and administrators prioritize addressing work-related stress among teachers. Strategies to manage and reduce work-related stress may be implemented, such as providing support systems, workload management, and training programs that promote stress management skills. This could potentially lead to an increase in teacher self-efficacy and, in turn, results to better academic performance among students.
2. School heads and administrators may consider incorporating coping strategies that have been found to be significantly related to stress-related areas, particularly self-controlling, seeking social support, positive appraisal, and escape avoidance. These strategies may help teachers manage stress-related areas better and ultimately lead to improved self-efficacy and academic performance among students.
3. Teachers may be encouraged to practice coping strategies that have been found to be highly significant in improving their self-efficacy, such as self-controlling, seeking social support, and positive appraisal. Coping strategies that have been found to be related to emotional state, such as distancing and escape avoidance, may also be considered but with caution, as they have been shown to have a negative effect on teacher self-efficacy.
4. Teachers may be educated about the importance of emotional regulation and the role it plays in their self-efficacy. Coping strategies that promote emotional regulation, such as planful problem solving and positive appraisal, may be emphasized and practiced.

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