

Social Relationships and Psychological Capital as Predictors of Academic Stress among Social Studies Teachers: A Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

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Abstract

Academic stress was a significant concern for Social Studies Teachers. This study explored the relationship between social relationships, psychological capital, and academic stress through the lens of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory. Data acquired from 100 Social Studies teachers in public schools were analysed using a descriptive-correlational design, specifically linear regression. The findings showed that social relationships and psychological capital had a positive and significant correlation with academic stress, partially supporting the Job Demand–Resource Theory. Notably, 62% of the variance in academic stress was attributed to other factors not examined in this study. Future research may explore the complex relationship between job demands, job resources, and academic stress, focusing on social relationships and psychological capital. Addressing institutional factors, fostering mental well-being, and integrating stress-reduction measures into education may enhance learning experiences and contribute to the fulfilment of quality education as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: social relationships; psychological capital; academic stress; social studies teachers; multiple liner regression

1. Introduction

Academic stress among teachers is a major concern as it negatively impacts their well-being, job performance, and satisfaction, often leading to burnout, decreased motivation, and lower teaching effectiveness. Factors such as workload, job demands, and psychological resources significantly influence the stress levels teachers experience. A study in the UK revealed that 65.5% of teachers experienced burnout due to academic stress, indicating critical exhaustion levels among many educators (Ferguson et al., 2021). In Asia, teachers in Indonesia report high levels of academic stress due to factors like limited professional support, class size, student behavior, and challenging working conditions (Karim, 2021; Santos & Kim, 2020). Similarly, in the Philippines, teachers face stress from systemic challenges, including large class sizes, limited resources, and constant educational reforms (Agyapong et al., 2022; Hester et al., 2020). In the Davao region, teacher suicides linked to overwhelming stress further highlight the severity of the issue (Clarion & Plarisan, 2023). Despite the growing body of research on academic stress, little is known about how social relationships and psychological capital predict stress levels in different educational contexts. Research exploring the combined impact of these factors is limited, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Addressing this gap is essential for developing

targeted interventions that support teachers' mental health, reduce burnout, and improve job performance (Garcia-Martinez et al., 2021).

1.1. Rationale

The objective of this study is to understand how social relationships and psychological capital predict this stress in modern educational contexts. Few studies have explored the combined influence of these factors in different cultural and institutional settings. Given the persistent stress levels reported by teachers, especially during and post-pandemic, there is a pressing need for research that investigates how both social relationships and psychological capital interact to alleviate academic stress (Garcia-Martinez et al., 2021). Addressing this gap is critical to formulating targeted interventions that improve teachers' well-being and reduce burnout as education demands continue to grow.

This research intends to provide information that would be useful for school administrators to help them further their understanding of their teacher's academic stress with an aim to achieve improved well-being of teachers. This is also aligned with the Holy Cross' Mission and Vision to cultivate quality education for all and nurture a culture of excellence and holiness. Further, administrators may gain insights into the teacher's academic stress and provide them with appropriate interventions that would help deal with the academic stress. Moreover, this would be of great importance to the following:

School Administrators. By determining the common cause of academic stress, teachers can perform personal interventions to help them handle academic stress.

Teachers. The study could guide the faculty on how to become Stress-free for them to deliver engaging, innovative, and effective lessons. This enhances students' learning experiences, fostering better academic outcomes.

Future Researchers. This study could be used as a basis for future research related to interventional studies after the investigation of the causes of academic stress among teachers.

Global Benefits. This study could be used to develop personalized interventions that improve psychological capital and social support systems, resulting in a more sustainable and resilient educational workforce that aligns with global and institutional goals as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 Quality Education.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study determines the influence of social relationships and psychological capital on academic stress among Social Studies teachers. Specifically, it attains the following objectives:

1. To determine the levels of social relationships among Social Studies teachers in terms of assertion of needs, bidirectional communication, conflict resolution, interpersonal closeness, and emotional expression; psychological capital in terms of hope, efficacy, resiliency, optimism, and empathy; academic stress in terms of emotional demand, controlled demand, social demand, physical demand, and economic demand.
2. To determine the significance of the correlation between social relationships, psychological capital, and the academic stress among Social Studies teachers.
3. To determine the significance of the combined degree of influence of social relationship and psychological capital on Academic Stress.
4. To determine the significance of the strengths of social relationships and psychological capital to predict the academic stress of Social Studies teachers.

1.3. Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between social relationships and the academic stress of social studies teachers.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between psychological capital and academic stress for social studies teachers.

H₀₃: Social relationships and psychological capital do not significantly predict the academic stress of social

studies teachers.

1.4. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job demands (such as workload and emotional pressures) lead to stress and burnout, whereas job resources (like social support and personal resilience) help mitigate these stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In the context of this study, social relationships act as key job demands, providing emotional support and reducing job strain (Jolly et al., 2021). Psychological capital acts as a JR Resources function as a personal resource, enhancing teachers' ability to cope with academic stress (Grove et al., 2018; Ma, 2023). When both social relationships and psychological capital are strong, they can act as buffers against academic stress, aligning with the JD-R model's premise that resources alleviate the negative impact of job demands. Thus, this framework is instrumental in understanding how these two variables may predict and reduce academic stress among social studies teachers.

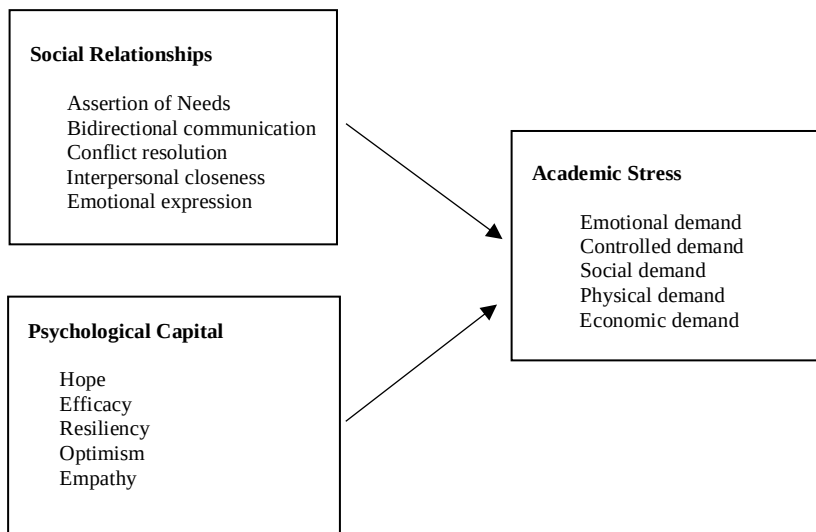


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlation design because it obtains information about the status of a phenomenon (Shuttleworth, 2008). The respondents are Social Studies teachers from the public secondary high school. Random sampling technique (Creswell, 2015) was employed which included only the respondents teaching in the school year 2023 to 2024. The questionnaires on Social Relationships (Berscheid et al, 1989), Psychological Capital (Avey et al, 2009), Academic Stress (Charitonenko S. et al, 2018). The data were analysed using Mean, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis. Finally, this study was subjected to the ethical guidelines of the Society of Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE) ensuring that no potential harm is inflicted on everyone involved.

2.2 Research Locale

The respondents of this study were drawn from public secondary high schools in the Division of Davao City, Region XI. This division is centrally located within Region XI and has a reputation for providing high-quality education, particularly in the field of social studies. The choice of Davao City as the study site was motivated

by the presence of numerous social studies teachers in the region who were relatively new and still adjusting their social relationships and psychological capital concerning managing academic stress.

2.3. Research Respondents

The researcher employed a random sampling technique to identify the respondents for this study. According to Creswell (2015), random sampling involves selecting a sample of observations from a population to make inferences about that population. This technique was deemed most suitable for the study as it minimizes bias and ensures proper representation, thereby supporting the scientific rigor of respondent selection. Using this method, the researcher selected 100 junior high school social studies teachers from public secondary high schools in the Division of Davao City, Region XI, for the school year 2023 to 2024 as the study's respondents. This sample size was considered adequate for statistically analysing the data and addressing the research questions and issues presented in the study.

2.4. Research Instrument

The researcher selected appropriate instruments to measure the study variables. The Social Relationships Questionnaire by Berscheid et al. was adapted to suit the context of social studies teachers, with modifications to improve relevance. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Psychological capital was assessed using an adapted version of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire by Avey et al. This instrument measured hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism, and empathy, comprising 25 items rated on the same five-point Likert scale for consistency in data analysis. Academic stress was evaluated using a questionnaire by Charitonenko, which assessed emotional, controlled, social, physical, and economic demands. Participants rated their experiences on the five-point Likert scale, enabling a comprehensive analysis of academic stress among social studies teachers. The questionnaire underwent expert validation and pilot testing to establish reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency, with values above 0.70 considered reliable and items scoring below 0.70 revised (Mohamad et al., 2015). The Level of Social Relationships Questionnaire achieved a reliability score of 0.911, indicating excellent internal consistency. The Psychological Capital Questionnaire scored 0.960, also demonstrating excellent consistency. The Academic Stress Questionnaire scored 0.890, reflecting very good internal consistency. Overall, the entire survey questionnaire attained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.969, signifying excellent reliability.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of Social Relationships, Psychological Capital, and Academic Stress of Social Studies Teachers. The presentation of data is aligned with the statement of the problem.

Table 1. Descriptive Table

Domains of Social Relationships of Social Studies Teachers	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Assertion of Needs	.485	4.05	High
Bidirectional Communication	.438	4.43	Very High
Conflict Resolution	.455	4.37	Very High
Interpersonal Closeness	.522	4.23	Very High
Emotional Expression	.518	4.22	Very High
Overall	.391	4.31	Very High
Domains of Psychological Capital of Social Studies Teachers	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Hope	.463	4.16	High
Efficacy	.495	4.26	Very High

Resiliency	.498	4.11	High
Optimism	.523	4.15	High
Empathy	.488	4.35	Very High
Overall	.378	4.21	Very High
Domains of The Academic Stress of Social Studies Teachers			
	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Emotional Demand	.568	3.83	High
Controlled Demand	.482	4.22	Very High
Social Demand	.575	4.21	Very High
Physical Demand	.582	3.89	High
Economic Demand	.693	3.85	High
Overall	.400	3.97	High

Table 1 summarizes the levels of Social Relationships, Psychological Capital, and Academic Stress among Social Studies teachers. Social relationships scored very high with a mean of 4.31, particularly emphasizing bidirectional communication. Psychological capital also scored very high, with a mean of 4.21, with empathy being the highest indicator. Academic stress, with a mean of 3.97, was notably high, especially due to controlled and social demands, highlighting the challenges teachers face in balancing various responsibilities.

Table 2. Table of Correlation

	Academic Stress			
	r	p-value	Decision on H ₀ @0.05 level of significance	Interpretation
Social Relationship	0.483	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant
Psychological Capital	0.614	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant

Social relationships ($r = 0.483$) show a moderately low positive correlation with academic stress among Social Studies teachers, with a statistically significant p-value (0.000). Psychological capital ($r = 0.614$) also has a moderate positive correlation with academic stress, indicating a significant relationship ($p = 0.000$). This suggests that higher social relationships and psychological capital may contribute to increased academic stress due to greater social obligations and professional demands.

Table 3. Table of degree of Influence

Academic Stress among Social Studies Teachers							
Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
Constant	1.16	.379		3.105	0.002		
Social Relationships	.070	.119	.069	.590	0.557	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Psychological Capital	.591	.123	.563	4.789	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant

R=0.616; R²=0.380; F=29.683; p-value=0.000

Table 3 shows that social relationships ($B = 0.070$, $\beta = 0.069$, $p = 0.557$) have no significant impact on academic stress among Social Studies teachers, as the p-value exceeds 0.05, meaning they do not significantly

predict academic stress. In contrast, psychological capital ($B = 0.591$, $\beta = 0.563$, $p = 0.000$) is a significant predictor, with the p-value below 0.05, indicating that higher psychological capital is strongly linked to lower academic stress. The overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 29.683$, $p = 0.000$), highlighting psychological capital as the dominant factor in reducing stress, while social relationships do not play a direct role.

Table 4. Strength of Prediction

The Regression Model in Predicting Academic Stress of Social Studies Teachers

$$AS = (0.070) SR + (0.591) PC + 1.176$$

Where:

AS – Academic Stress

SR – Social Relationships

PC – Psychological Capital

Table 4 shows the Strength of Prediction. It contained the **psychological capital**, which significantly predicted the academic stress of Social Studies teachers, with a regression coefficient of **0.591**. This means that for every unit increase in psychological capital, academic stress increases by **0.591 units**, assuming other variables remain constant. In other words, psychological capital contributed significantly to the level of academic stress experienced by Social Studies teachers. This finding suggests that teachers with higher psychological capital, which includes factors such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, may experience increased stress due to their higher expectations and professional responsibilities. On the other hand, **social relationships** had a regression coefficient of **0.070**, indicating that for every unit increase in social relationships, academic stress increases by **0.070 units**, holding other variables constant. However, this relationship was not statistically significant, meaning that social relationships had a minimal and insignificant impact on the academic stress of Social Studies teachers.

The constant value of **1.176** in the equation represents the baseline level of academic stress when both social relationships and psychological capital were equal to zero. This suggests that even in the absence of these variables, there were inherent factors contributing to the academic stress of teachers. This regression model highlighted that **psychological capital** was a more substantial predictor of academic stress compared to **social relationships**, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to help teachers manage their internal psychological resources effectively.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that social studies teachers reported very high levels of academic stress in terms of controlled and social demands, with high levels of physical, economic, and emotional demands. Pearson's analysis showed a significant, moderately low positive relationship between social relationships and academic stress, indicating that as social relationships increase, academic stress also rises, likely due to added social obligations. Similarly, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between psychological capital and academic stress, suggesting that teachers with higher psychological capital experience more stress due to increased demands and responsibilities. Multiple linear regression analysis indicated that psychological capital significantly predicted academic stress, while social relationships did not. This highlighted the greater influence of psychological capital on stress levels, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for psychological capital and the failure to reject the null hypothesis for social relationships.

DISCUSSION

Social Studies teachers exhibit high levels of Social Relationships and Psychological Capital, with strong communication and empathy. However, they also face significant academic stress, particularly from

controlled and social demands. Strong interpersonal skills and psychological resilience help manage these challenges. Effective teacher-student relationships, including two-way communication and conflict resolution, reduce academic stress and enhance student engagement (Hagenauer et al., 2024; Allen et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence and proactive conflict resolution further foster a respectful classroom environment (Vallente & Lourenco, 2020).

Psychological Capital—empathy, self-efficacy, hope, and optimism—enhances resilience and job satisfaction while reducing stress (Aldrup et al., 2022; Calkins et al., 2021). These traits improve teacher well-being and student success. Academic stress, driven by workload, social demands, and financial pressures, affects job satisfaction and increases burnout risk (Musson & Loomis, 2024; Zhao et al., 2022). Additional support is needed to maintain work-life balance and long-term engagement (Agyapong et al., 2022; Grant-Smith et al., 2021).

The study reveals a moderately low positive correlation between social relationships and academic stress among Social Studies teachers, suggesting that as teachers' social relationships increase, their academic stress also rises. This relationship may stem from the heightened social obligations and expectations associated with these relationships, which can contribute to increased stress in educational settings. This finding aligns with existing research suggesting that social interactions can lead to elevated stress levels among teachers (Demir, 2018).

Similarly, a moderate positive correlation between psychological capital and academic stress was found. Psychological capital, which encompasses hope, resilience, and efficacy, is associated with higher academic stress among educators. Teachers with higher psychological capital might experience increased stress due to the greater demands and responsibilities they take on. Previous studies also highlight the relationship between psychological capital and stress, indicating that greater psychological resources can lead to higher stress levels in educational contexts (Zhang et al., 2019).

The regression analysis shows that psychological capital has a significant influence on academic stress among Social Studies teachers, acting as a predictor of stress. Higher psychological capital helps teachers manage challenges but may also raise academic stress by increasing their professional expectations. Teachers with strong psychological capital tend to set higher goals for themselves, which can inadvertently lead to stress. However, the social relationships' impact on academic stress was found to be insignificant. This suggests that the quality of relationships, rather than their mere existence, plays a more crucial role in reducing stress (Li et al., 2021; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012).

Finally, the predictive analysis supports that psychological capital significantly predicts academic stress, with a strong positive relationship. Teachers with better psychological capital tend to have increased academic stress due to the higher expectations they set for themselves. In contrast, the regression coefficient for social relationships indicates that while social relationships do have some impact on stress, this effect is not statistically significant. This finding reinforces the idea that the quality and depth of social relationships are more important than the mere quantity in influencing stress levels among teachers (Flanagan, 2024; Ditzen et al., 2014).

4. Conclusion

Based on the results, it is concluded that the social relationships variable is positively and significantly correlated with academic stress. This inference confirms the positive and significant relationship between Job Demand and the Stress and burnout. Whereas the psychological capital variable which is also found to have a positive and significant correlation with academic stress negates the assertion of the theory that Job Resources negatively correlates with stress and burnout. Given these two arguments the result of this study partially supports the overall fundamental concept of the theory of Job Demand–Resource stating that job demands (such as social relationship) leads to stress and burnout, whereas job resources (such as Psychological Capital) help mitigate these stressors. In addition, based on the combined degree of influence of the two predictive variables

which is 38%, it is concluded that 62% of the variance in the criterion variable is attributed to other variables not covered in this study

5. Recommendation

This study recommends further research into the relationship between job demands, resources, and stress in academic settings, particularly focusing on how social relationships and psychological capital influence stress. Interventions promoting healthier social dynamics and addressing the complexities of psychological capital could help reduce burnout. The study also suggests considering other factors, like institutional support and student workload, in future research. Finally, to align with the Sustainable Development Goal of Quality Education, educational systems should integrate strategies that improve mental well-being and create a more supportive learning environment.

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