

Exploring Correlations Between School Culture, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Stress Coping Mechanisms

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationships among school culture, teacher self-efficacy, and stress coping mechanisms of 250 public-school teachers in the Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered through standardized scales for school culture ($\alpha = 0.85$), teacher efficacy ($\alpha = 0.82$), and stress coping ($\alpha = 0.88$). Results indicated high levels across all variables. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between school culture and coping ($r = 0.728$) and between self-efficacy and coping ($r = 0.167$). Regression analysis identified professional development as a significant predictor of stress coping. The findings suggest that fostering a collaborative culture and enhancing instructional efficacy are vital for teacher resilience.

Keywords: school culture, self-efficacy, stress coping mechanisms, professional development, teacher well-being

INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of educational quality. In the demanding environment of public education, teachers face chronic stressors including heavy workloads and diverse learner needs, which often lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Recent international studies emphasize that teacher resilience is not merely an individual trait but is deeply influenced by organizational factors (Liang et al., 2019; Sahito & Vainikainen, 2020).

School culture—defined by leadership support, collaboration, and growth opportunities—acts as a critical buffer against workplace stress. When teachers work in environments characterized by trust and shared missions, they report higher job satisfaction (Seashore Louis & Lee, 2016). Concurrently, teacher self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to manage instructional tasks, significantly influences how teachers perceive and respond to stress (Morris et al., 2017). This study addresses the need to understand these dynamics within the Philippine context, specifically exploring how environmental and personal factors interact to shape coping behaviors.

FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits a triadic reciprocal interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviors.

Environmental Factor (School Culture), which includes collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, and professional development. Personal Factor (Teacher Self-Efficacy) which encompasses efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Behavioral Response (Stress Coping Mechanisms) which comprises job-related activities, personal characteristics, and interpersonal relationships.

The framework assumes that a supportive school culture reinforces a teacher's efficacy beliefs, which in turn facilitates adaptive coping strategies, such as proactive planning and seeking social support.

Objectives Of Study

The study aims to provide insights that can help school leaders and policymakers create a more supportive environment for teachers. Specifically, it sought to answer the following: 1) ascertain the level of school culture observed by teachers; 2) assess the level of teacher self-efficacy; 3) describe the level of teachers' stress coping mechanisms; 4) find out the relationship between teachers' stress coping mechanisms, school culture, and self-efficacy; and (5) identify which of the variables best predict teachers' stress coping mechanisms.

METHODS

Research Design and Locale

A quantitative, descriptive-correlational design was utilized to analyze the relationships between the variables. The study was conducted in the Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon, involving 11 selected elementary and secondary schools.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 250 teachers selected through purposive sampling. This strategy ensured that the participants were actively employed within the division and representative of both elementary and secondary levels across the target districts.

Instrumentation and Reliability Three standardized instruments were employed:

1. School Culture Scale (Davis, 2015), which assessed leadership and collaboration ($\alpha = 0.85$).
2. Teacher Efficacy Scale (Sebial-Fabricante, 2018), which measured instructional and management confidence ($\alpha = 0.82$).
3. Stress Coping Mechanism Scale (Agor, 2019), which evaluated coping strategies ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Data Analysis Means were used to describe levels of each construct. Pearson Moment Correlation was applied to determine the strength of relationships, and Linear Regression was used to identify the best predictor of coping mechanisms

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the survey, data was extracted using SPSS to find the total mean score for each variable. To look at the relationship between instructional support and school culture that affect teachers' productivity through the use Pearson Moment Correlation and Regression to see which factor best predicts teachers' productivity.

Table 1 Summary Table: School Culture of Teachers (Division of Valencia City)

Sub-Variabes	Mean	QI
Collaborative Leadership	4.30	High
Teacher Collaboration	4.28	High
Professional Development	4.41	High
Overall Mean	4.33	High

Legend:

Range	Qualitative Interpretation
1.00-1.50	Very low
1.51-2.51	low
2.51-3.50	Moderate

3.51-4.50	High
4.51-5.00	Very High

The results show that teachers perceive a high level of school culture (overall mean = 4.33), with particularly strong ratings in professional development (mean = 4.41) and collaborative leadership (mean = 4.30), indicating that leaders value teachers’ ideas, support the school mission, and frequently provide opportunities for growth and shared decision-making. This finding reflects a positive and supportive work environment where teachers trust one another, cooperate in school activities, and regularly engage in collegial planning and dialogue, which are essential conditions for effective stress management. These results are consistent with prior studies showing that collaborative leadership, collegial relationships, and access to professional development significantly strengthen school culture and promote teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment (Seashore Louis & Lee, 2016; Shaukat et al., 2019; Mostafa & Pal, 2018; Min, 2019; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2015).

Table 2 Summay Table: Teacher Efficacy

Sub-Variables	Mean	QI
Efficacy in Student Engagement	3.54	High
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	3.62	High
Efficacy in Classroom Management	3.56	High
Overall Mean	3.57	High

Legend:

Range	Qualitative Interpretation
1.00- 1.50	Very Low
1.51- 2.50	Low
2.51-3.50	Moderate
3.51-4.50	High
4.51-5.00	Very High

The findings reveal that teachers report high levels of self-efficacy across all dimensions, with overall mean efficacy of 3.57 (“some influence”) in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Teachers feel particularly confident in adjusting lessons to students’ levels, providing alternative explanations, and motivating learners, although they experience relatively lower efficacy in reaching the most difficult students, suggesting areas for focused support. This pattern aligns with literature indicating that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more willing to use varied instructional strategies, foster student engagement, and manage classrooms effectively, which in turn is associated with lower stress, greater job satisfaction, and improved student outcomes (Morris, Usher, & Chen, 2017; Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2014; Senler, 2016; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Table 3 Summary Table: Stress Coping Mechanisms of Teachers.

Sub-Variables	Mean	QI
Job-Related Activities	3.81	High
Personal Characteristics	3.82	High
Interpersonal Relationships	3.92	High
Overall Mean	3.85	High

Legend:

Range	Qualitative Interpretation
1.00- 1.50	Very Low
1.51- 2.50	Low

2.51-3.50	Moderate
3.51-4.50	High
4.51-5.00	Very High

The results indicate that teachers often employ a range of effective stress coping mechanisms (overall mean = 3.85), with interpersonal relationships (mean = 3.92) receiving the highest ratings, followed by personal characteristics (mean = 3.82) and job-related activities (mean = 3.81). Teachers frequently plan ahead, clearly define tasks, rely on spiritual practices such as prayer, set personal deadlines, maintain organization, and seek support from colleagues through conversation and teamwork, highlighting a multifaceted coping pattern that combines proactive work behaviors, internal resources, and social support.

These findings echo recent literature showing that proactive coping (e.g., planning, organizing tasks), personal resources (e.g., self-discipline, spirituality), and supportive interpersonal relationships are critical in reducing teacher stress and enhancing well-being and job satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2018; Klassen & Tze, 2014).

Table 4 The significant relationship existed between Stress Coping Mechanism, School Culture, and Self-Efficacy

VARIABLES	Teachers' Productivity- Overall Mean	PROBABILITY
School Culture	0.728	0.001**
Collaborative leadership	0.149	0.018*
Teachers' collaboration	0.174	0.086
Professional development	0.173	0.006**
Teacher Efficacy	0.167	0.008**
Efficacy in Student Engagement	0.140	0.027*
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	0.132	0.037*
Efficacy in Classroom Management	0.054	0.397

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

Correlation analysis shows a strong, significant relationship between school culture and teachers' stress coping mechanisms ($r = 0.728$, $p = 0.001$), while teacher efficacy also has a significant positive correlation with coping ($r = 0.167$, $p = 0.008$). Within school culture, collaborative leadership and professional development display significant links with coping, and within self-efficacy, student engagement and instructional strategies are significantly related, suggesting that supportive organizational conditions and strong efficacy beliefs in key instructional domains both contribute to more adaptive coping. These results are reinforced by prior studies demonstrating that positive school climate, supportive leadership, professional development, and high teacher efficacy jointly reduce stress, enhance job satisfaction, and improve teachers' capacity to handle work demands (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2018).

Table 5 Variables Best Predict Stress Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.116	0.267		11.665	0.000
	Professional development	0.167	0.060	0.173	2.772	0.006
a. Dependent Variable: Stress Coping Mechanism						
R = 0.173; R ² = 0.030; F = 7.685; p = 0.006						

Regression analysis identifies professional development as a significant predictor of teachers' stress coping mechanisms ($B = 0.167$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that higher levels of perceived professional development are associated with better coping, even though the explained variance is modest ($R^2 = 0.030$). This suggests that while many factors influence coping, structured and continuous professional learning opportunities provide teachers with concrete skills, strategies, and confidence that enhance their resilience in dealing with classroom and organizational challenges.

These findings are in line with research showing that high-quality professional development—particularly those focusing on instructional, emotional, and social competencies—reduces stress and burnout, increases efficacy and job satisfaction, and contributes to a more positive school culture (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2018; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that a positive school culture and high self-efficacy are foundational to effective stress management among teachers. Professional development emerged as a key institutional lever that can be targeted to improve teacher resilience. School leaders should prioritize creating collaborative spaces and continuous learning opportunities to sustain teacher well-being and instructional quality.

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