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## Emotional Distress and Coping Strategies towards Teaching Outcomes

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the level of emotional distress among teachers and their coping strategies within educational settings. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted among secondary school teachers in Magpet, Makilala, and Kidapawan City, Cotabato Province. The study examines teachers' profiles, emotional distress levels, coping strategies, and their impact on teaching outcomes and effectiveness. Findings reveal that while teachers generally experience low levels of anxiety, stress, and depression, they employ a variety of coping strategies, including diverting attention/ignoring stressors, symptom intervention, gaining/sharing information, and seeking emotional support. Significant correlations are observed between emotional distress and coping strategies, with stress notably influencing diverting attention/ignoring stressors and anxiety impacting symptom intervention and seeking emotional support. However, emotional distress does not significantly affect teacher effectiveness. The study also identifies challenges faced by teachers in coping with distress, such as emotional strain, workload pressure, and limited resources, and proposes program designs to address these challenges, including workshops, collaborative efforts, flexible work arrangements, and continuous professional development. Recommendations include implementing supportive programs, fostering collaborative efforts, offering flexible work arrangements, investing in continuous professional development, promoting participatory approaches, and enhancing resource allocation. Overall, the study underscores the importance of supporting teachers' well-being to enhance their effectiveness and promote educational excellence.

### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary education, teaching is both demanding and emotionally challenging (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Teachers must navigate diverse classroom dynamics, adapt to changing educational policies, and address students' unique needs (Livingston, 2017). Understanding teachers' emotional experiences is crucial for improving their well-being and teaching quality. Emotional distress among teachers significantly influences the educational landscape (Ventayen & Ventayen, 2021).

Educational scholars and policymakers acknowledge the critical role teachers play in shaping the future through educating young minds (Day, 2019). Consequently, exploring the emotional dimensions of teaching is imperative for creating a supportive environment that promotes effective teaching practices and positive student outcomes. Despite growing recognition of the emotional challenges teachers face, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive understanding of the coping strategies educators employ in response to emotional distress and their impact on teaching outcomes (Fried, Mansfield, & Dobozy, 2015).

Previous studies have examined isolated aspects of teacher well-being or coping mechanisms, but a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between emotional distress, coping strategies, and teaching outcomes remains underexplored (Herman et al., 2020; Dreer, 2023). This study aimed to fill this gap by exploring the emotional experiences of teachers and the coping strategies they employ (Roman & Maftai, 2023). By identifying the relationship between emotional distress and teaching outcomes, this research enhances understanding of teacher well-being and offers insights for developing support systems and interventions in education.

In light of the aforementioned gaps in the literature, the primary objective of this research was to investigate the emotional distress experienced by teachers and the coping strategies they utilize in response (Clipa, 2018). Additionally, it aimed to examine how these coping strategies may influence various teaching outcomes, including classroom effectiveness, student engagement, and overall job satisfaction (Wang, Lee, & Hall, 2022).

To achieve this, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather a comprehensive dataset. Through a thorough analysis of teachers' emotional experiences and coping mechanisms, this research sought to provide practical implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher training programs, fostering an environment that supports the emotional well-being of educators and, consequently, enhances the overall quality of teaching and learning experiences.

### Statement of the Problem

This study intended to determine the level of emotional distress among teachers and how they cope to lessen or tolerate this problem. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

**Research Questions:****Study 1: Emotional Distress and Coping Strategies Towards Teaching Outcomes**

1. What is the teachers' profile in terms of age, gender, civil status, number of years of teaching experience, and level of education?
2. What is the level of emotional distress in terms of depression, anxiety, and stress among the secondary school teachers?
3. What are the coping strategies used to relieve teachers from emotional distress?
4. What teacher profile has significant intervention on teacher's coping mechanism?
5. Is there a significant relationship between teacher's emotional distress and coping strategies?
6. Is there a significant influence of emotional distress to teacher's coping strategies?
7. Is there a significant influence of emotional distress to teacher outcomes?
8. Is there a significant influence of emotional distress to teacher outcomes when mediated by these coping strategies?

**Research Design**

The research design for this study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena under investigation. The quantitative phase involved the administration of structured surveys to a representative sample. The survey instruments were designed to quantify the prevalence and intensity of emotional distress, identify coping strategies employed by teachers, and gather demographic information. In parallel, the qualitative phase utilized in-depth interviews with a subset of teachers to explore their experiences in greater detail, allowing for a detailed exploration of the emotional distress-coping strategies-teaching outcomes relationship. The qualitative data provided valuable insights into the context, perceptions, and individual variations that quantitative data alone may not capture. The integration of both methods enhanced the robustness and depth of the study's findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

**Respondents of the Study**

The study involved randomly selected secondary school teachers from Magpet National High School, Makilala National High School, and Kidapawan City National High School as respondents. The researcher aimed to randomly select 60-80 teachers from each school, resulting in a total of 200 teacher-respondents participating in the study.

**Sampling Design**

For the sampling method, this study employed a quota sampling technique to ensure balanced representation from participants across each school. This approach was chosen to maintain proportional representation of various demographic groups, such as age, gender, and grade level, within the schools (Etikan & Bala, 2017). By setting specific quotas for each category, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive and diverse range of perspectives, thereby enhancing the generalizability and validity of the findings. The careful implementation of quota sampling helped mitigate potential biases and ensured that key subgroups within the school populations were adequately represented in the research sample (Bryman, 2016).

**Research Instruments**

The data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. There were two sets of instruments: Instrument A was used to assess the degree of emotional distress and Instrument B that assessed the coping strategies of the respondents.

**A. Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS21)**

The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21) was used to measure emotional distress (depression, anxiety and stress). This instrument was originally developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) and further validated by Ali et al. (2021).

The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21) is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. Each of the three DASS-21 scales contains 7 items, divided into subscales with similar content. The depression scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia and inertia. The anxiety scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect. The stress scale is sensitive to levels of chronic nonspecific arousal. It assessed difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset/agitated, irritable/ over-reactive and impatient.

**B. Coping Mechanisms/Stress Management Skills and Well-Being of Teachers Questionnaire**

The next questionnaire is found in Appendix B. This questionnaire is adopted from that by De Asis and Piczon (2015). There are five coping techniques or stress management skills included in the questionnaire: 1) diverting attention/ignoring, 2) symptom intervention, 3) gaining/sharing information and seeking emotional support.

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## Statistical Analysis of the Data

The data on level of emotional distress (depression, anxiety and stress) and coping strategies were presented using descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. To determine the relationship between the level of emotional distress – depression, anxiety and stress, and coping strategies, inferential statistics was used particularly multiple regression analysis. The level of significance was set at 0.05. Computation was done using statistical package for social science (SPSS) program.

### *Study 1: Emotional Distress and Coping Strategies Towards Teaching Outcomes*

#### **Teachers' Profile in terms of Age, Gender, Civil Status, Number of Years of Teaching Experience, and Level of Education**

The first research question aimed to establish the demographic characteristics of the teachers, including their age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and level of education. The findings were elucidated through the use of percentages.

##### **Age**

Table 1 provides an overview of the distribution of teachers' profile in terms of age, with a total sample size of 200 respondents. The majority of teachers fall within the age bracket of 31-40 years, constituting 42% of the total sample. Following closely behind, the age bracket of 20-30 years represents 39.5% of the respondents. Teachers aged 41-50 years make up 12% of the sample, while those aged 51-60 years represent the smallest proportion at 6.5%. This indicates a relatively balanced distribution of teachers across different age brackets, with the majority falling within the middle age range of 31-40 years.

The data suggests that the teaching workforce in the study is diverse in terms of age, which may have implications for understanding and addressing various factors related to distress coping strategies and work performance. Younger teachers in the 20-30 age bracket might bring a fresh perspective and enthusiasm to their teaching but may also lack experience in managing stress effectively. On the other hand, older teachers in the 51-60 age bracket may have accumulated significant experience but could face challenges related to adapting to new teaching methodologies or technology. Understanding these age-related dynamics can inform the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance teachers' well-being and job performance across different age groups.

##### **Gender**

Table 1 illustrates the gender distribution among the teachers participating in the study, with a total sample size of 200. Among the participants, 28.5% are male, while the majority, comprising 71.5%, are female. This indicates a significant gender imbalance within the teaching workforce, with female teachers outnumbering male teachers by a considerable margin.

The data reveals a gender disparity in the teaching profession, with a higher representation of females compared to males. This gender imbalance may have implications for understanding and addressing issues related to distress coping strategies and work performance within the context of the study. Factors such as societal norms, career preferences, and family responsibilities may contribute to the disproportionate representation of genders in the teaching profession. Recognizing and addressing these gender disparities is crucial for promoting gender equity and ensuring that all teachers have equal access to support mechanisms and opportunities for professional development.

##### **Civil Status**

Table 1 displays the distribution of teachers based on their civil status, with a total sample size of 200. Among the respondents, 48% are single, 50.5% are married, and only 1.5% are widowed.

The data reveals that a significant portion of the teachers in the study are either single or married, with the majority being in the latter category. This indicates that the teaching workforce consists mostly of individuals who are either unmarried or in committed relationships. The low percentage of widowed teachers suggests that relatively few respondents have experienced the loss of a spouse.

Understanding the civil status of teachers is essential for contextualizing their experiences and challenges related to distress coping strategies and work performance. For example, married teachers may face different stressors and support needs compared to their single counterparts, such as managing work-life balance and family responsibilities. Similarly, widowed teachers may require unique forms of support to cope with the emotional impact of bereavement while fulfilling their professional duties. By recognizing the diversity of civil statuses among teachers, educators and policymakers can develop targeted interventions and support systems to address the specific needs of different demographic groups within the teaching profession.

##### **Number of Years of Teaching Experience**

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of teachers based on their years of teaching experience, with a total sample size of 200. Among the respondents, 70.5% have 1-10 years of teaching experience, 18.5% have 11-20 years, 6.5% have 21-30 years, 2.5% have 31-40 years, and only 2% have 41 years of experience or more.

The data reveals that the majority of teachers in the study have relatively fewer years of teaching experience, with 70.5% falling within the 1-10 years bracket. This suggests that a significant portion of the teaching workforce comprises relatively young or early-career educators. Conversely, a smaller percentage of teachers have more extensive teaching experience, with only 2% having 41 years of experience or more.

Understanding the distribution of teachers based on their years of teaching experience is crucial for assessing the composition of the teaching workforce and its implications for distress coping strategies and work performance. Early-career teachers may face unique challenges related to adjusting to the profession, while more experienced educators may encounter different stressors associated with tenure, leadership roles, and institutional changes. By considering the diversity of teaching experience among educators, educational stakeholders can tailor interventions and professional development initiatives to meet the varying needs of teachers at different career stages, ultimately promoting their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom.

### **Level of Education**

Table 1 displays the distribution of teachers based on their level of education, with a total sample size of 200. Among the respondents, 68% hold a Bachelor's degree, 30.5% have a Master's degree, and only 1.5% possess a Doctoral degree.

Analyzing the data reveals that the majority of teachers in the study have attained a Bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, comprising 68% of the sample. This suggests that a significant portion of the teaching workforce holds undergraduate qualifications. In contrast, a smaller yet notable percentage of teachers have pursued higher education, with 30.5% having obtained a Master's degree and 1.5% holding a Doctoral degree.

Understanding the distribution of teachers based on their level of education is essential for assessing the qualifications and expertise of the teaching workforce. Teachers with advanced degrees may bring specialized knowledge and skills to their teaching practice, potentially influencing their approach to distress coping strategies and work performance. Conversely, teachers with undergraduate qualifications may benefit from targeted professional development opportunities to enhance their competencies and effectiveness in the classroom. By recognizing the diversity of educational backgrounds among teachers, educational institutions can tailor support programs and initiatives to meet the varying needs of educators, ultimately contributing to their professional growth and overall well-being.

### **Teacher's Level of Emotional Distress**

The second research question aimed to determine the level of emotional distress experienced by the teachers. The findings were delineated through the use of mean and weighted mean measurements.

#### **Anxiety**

Table 2 displays the teacher's level of emotional distress concerning anxiety with a grand mean of 2.14, suggesting that teachers rarely experience symptoms of anxiety as outlined by the indicators.

This data provides valuable insights into the emotional well-being of secondary school teachers. The low grand mean indicates that, on average, teachers in the sample experience minimal anxiety-related symptoms. These findings may suggest that the majority of teachers possess effective coping mechanisms or resilience strategies to manage anxiety in their professional lives. However, it's important to note that even though the grand mean indicates rare occurrences of anxiety symptoms, individual teachers may still experience significant distress, which could impact their overall well-being and job performance.

In light of these findings, it's crucial for educational institutions to continue prioritizing the mental health and well-being of teachers. Providing support systems, resources for stress management, and opportunities for professional development aimed at enhancing resilience can contribute to creating a positive work environment conducive to teacher flourishing.

#### **Stress**

The table presents the levels of emotional distress among teachers in terms of stress. The grand mean score of 2.44 suggests that, on average, teachers reported experiencing stress symptoms "rarely" across the seven indicators.

These findings indicate that while teachers generally experience stress symptoms at a low frequency, certain challenges, such as overreacting to situations, may be more prevalent among them. Understanding these specific manifestations of stress can inform targeted interventions and support initiatives to address teachers' emotional well-being.

#### **Depression**

Table 2.3 presents the level of emotional distress among teachers in terms of depression. Overall, the grand mean score for depression was 2.31, indicating that teachers reported experiencing depressive symptoms rarely.

This analysis highlights the varying degrees of depressive symptoms experienced by teachers, with some symptoms being more prevalent than others. The data suggest that while teachers may not experience depressive symptoms frequently, certain indicators, such as difficulty initiating tasks and feelings of sadness, are more commonly reported. This insight is crucial for understanding the emotional well-being of teachers and identifying areas where targeted support and interventions may be needed to promote their mental health and overall job satisfaction.

### **Coping Strategies of Teachers**

The third research question aimed to determine the coping strategies employed by teachers. The findings were elucidated through the use of both mean and weighted mean measures.

### **Diverting Attention / Ignoring**

Table 3 presents the level of coping strategies employed by teachers in terms of diverting attention or ignoring. Overall, the grand mean score of 3.61 indicates that teachers generally employ skilled coping strategies in diverting attention or ignoring stressors in their work environment.

These findings imply that teachers recognize the importance of maintaining a positive mindset and reframing their thoughts when faced with challenging situations. By focusing on solutions rather than dwelling on problems, teachers may experience reduced levels of distress and improved overall well-being. Additionally, the emphasis on engaging in enjoyable activities, such as spending time with friends or participating in hobbies, highlights the importance of self-care in the teaching profession.

Overall, the results underscore the significance of implementing coping strategies that promote resilience and emotional well-being among teachers. By incorporating these strategies into their daily lives, teachers can better cope with the demands of their profession and ultimately provide a more supportive learning environment for their students.

### **Symptom Intervention**

The data presented in Table 3 also illustrates the coping strategies employed by teachers in terms of symptom intervention with a grand mean of 3.98, indicating a skilled level of coping.

Overall, the results suggest that teachers employ a range of coping strategies to intervene in symptoms of distress, with an emphasis on proactive problem-solving and self-care. These findings underscore the importance of promoting coping skills and self-care practices among teachers to support their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom.

### **Gaining/Sharing Information**

Table 3 presents the teacher's level of coping strategies concerning gaining and sharing information to address distress with a grand mean of 3.66, indicating a skilled level of coping.

The findings suggest that teachers employ a range of coping strategies related to gaining and sharing information to address distress effectively, emphasizing the significance of interpersonal support and knowledge exchange in teacher well-being.

### **Seeking Emotional Support**

Table 3 illustrates the teacher's level of coping strategies concerning seeking emotional support to address distress with a grand mean of 3.88, indicating a skilled level of coping in this domain.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers employ a diverse range of coping strategies related to seeking emotional support, drawing on spirituality, social connections, and self-care practices to manage emotional distress. These findings align with the findings of Turner et al.'s (2020) study that teachers contribute to workplace social support through eudaimonic and altruistic behaviors, thereby bolstering their own well-being, collegial relationships, pedagogical practices, professional development, and overall school operational practices. This study underscores the significance of comprehending teachers' roles in providing social support and the subsequent positive impacts of such supportive behaviors within educational settings. Furthermore, research indicates that prayer is linked to reduced levels of burnout among teachers (Chirico, 2017; Chirico et al., 2020; LaBarbera & Hetzel, 2015).

### **Intervening Variable on Teachers' Coping Mechanism**

The fourth research question aimed to determine which profile has significant intervention on teachers' coping mechanism. The results were illustrated using correlation analysis.

The data in Table 4 reveals correlations between different teacher profiles and coping mechanisms. Age demonstrated a negative correlation with Diverting Attention/Ignoring and Gaining/Sharing Information, indicating that younger teachers tended to utilize these coping mechanisms less frequently. Gender exhibited a negative correlation with Diverting Attention/Ignoring and a positive correlation with Seeking Emotional Support, suggesting that females were less inclined to ignore problems but more likely to seek emotional support. Civil Status, on the other hand, demonstrated positive correlations with all coping mechanisms, including Symptom Intervention, implying that married teachers tended to engage more in coping strategies compared to their single counterparts. Experience displayed negative correlations with Symptom Intervention and Seeking Emotional Support, indicating that teachers with more experience were less likely to intervene with symptoms and seek emotional support. Lastly, Level of Education revealed positive correlations with all coping mechanisms, suggesting that teachers with higher educational attainment tended to utilize coping strategies more frequently.

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## **Relationship between Teachers' Emotional Distress and Coping Strategies**

The fifth research question aimed to determine the relationship between teacher's emotional distress and coping strategies. The results were clarified using Pearson's correlation coefficient, denoted as  $r$ .

### Anxiety and Teachers' Coping Strategy

The table below displays the correlations between emotional distress and coping strategies, measured using Spearman's rho. There is a significant positive correlation between anxiety and diverting attention/ignoring coping strategy ( $\rho = 0.156, p = 0.027^*$ ), indicating that as anxiety increases, the tendency to divert attention or ignore the problem also increases. Conversely, there is a significant negative correlation between anxiety and symptom intervention coping strategy ( $\rho = -0.166, p = 0.019^*$ ), suggesting that higher levels of anxiety are associated with a lower inclination to engage in symptom intervention strategies. However, there are no significant correlations between anxiety and gaining/sharing information ( $p = 0.318$ ) or seeking emotional support ( $p = 0.432$ ) coping strategies.

These findings suggest that teachers experiencing higher levels of anxiety may be more inclined to divert attention or ignore problems while less likely to actively intervene in their symptoms. However, anxiety does not appear to significantly influence the propensity to seek information or emotional support.

### Stress and Teachers' Coping Strategy

The table presents the correlations between emotional distress, specifically stress, and coping strategies measured using Spearman's rho. There is a highly significant positive correlation between stress and diverting attention/ignoring coping strategy ( $\rho = 0.262, p = 0.000^{**}$ ), indicating that as stress levels increase, individuals are more likely to resort to diverting attention or ignoring the source of stress. However, there is no significant correlation between stress and symptom intervention coping strategy ( $p = 0.296$ ), suggesting that stress levels do not significantly influence the tendency to actively intervene in addressing symptoms.

Additionally, there are no significant correlations between stress and gaining/sharing information ( $p = 0.980$ ) or seeking emotional support ( $p = 0.482$ ) coping strategies, indicating that stress levels do not significantly impact the propensity to seek information or emotional support as coping mechanisms.

These findings suggest that individuals experiencing higher levels of stress may rely more on coping strategies that involve diverting attention or ignoring stressors rather than actively addressing symptoms. However, stress levels do not appear to significantly influence the inclination to seek information or emotional support as coping mechanisms.

### Depression and Teachers' Coping Strategy

The data in the table below indicates that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between depression and the coping strategy of diverting attention/ignoring ( $r = .214^{**}, p = .002$ ). This suggests that teachers experiencing higher levels of depression are more likely to utilize diverting attention or ignoring as coping mechanisms. However, there is no significant correlation between depression and symptom intervention ( $r = -.090, p = .204$ ), gaining/sharing information ( $r = -.041, p = .563$ ), or seeking emotional support ( $r = -.019, p = .793$ ).

The significant positive correlation between depression and diverting attention/ignoring coping strategy implies that teachers with higher levels of depression tend to use these strategies more frequently. This may suggest an avoidance-based coping mechanism where teachers attempt to distract themselves from their depressive symptoms rather than addressing them directly. However, the lack of significant correlations with symptom intervention, gaining/sharing information, and seeking emotional support suggests that these coping strategies may not be strongly associated with depression in this context.

### Influence of Teacher's Emotional Distress on their Coping Strategies

The sixth research question aimed to identify the significant influence of teachers' emotional distress on their coping mechanisms. This investigation employed multiple regression analysis to derive its findings.

#### Teachers' Emotional Distress on Diverting Attention/Ignoring

Table 6 displays the influence of emotional distress on teacher's coping strategies, specifically in terms of Diverting Attention/Ignoring.

The multiple regression analysis reveals that stress appears to have a statistically significant positive influence ( $\text{Beta} = 0.238, p < 0.05$ ) on coping strategies related to diverting attention or ignoring. This indicates that higher levels of stress are associated with a greater tendency for teachers to employ diversionary or ignoring tactics to cope with emotional distress. However, anxiety ( $\text{Beta} = -0.083, p > 0.05$ ) and depression ( $\text{Beta} = 0.139, p > 0.05$ ) do not show statistically significant associations with coping strategies related to diverting attention or ignoring.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.084, suggesting that approximately 8.4% of the variability in teacher's coping strategies related to diverting attention or ignoring can be explained by the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression.

These findings suggest that while stress plays a significant role in influencing teachers' coping strategies related to diverting attention or ignoring, anxiety and depression may not have a significant direct impact on these particular coping mechanisms. Further research may be necessary to explore additional factors that contribute to teachers' coping strategies.

Orzechowska et al. (2013) found that individuals suffering from depression often resort more to avoidance and denial tactics when facing stressful circumstances. However, Dijkstra and Homan (2016) argue against the use of avoidance coping, considering it maladaptive as it typically worsens stress without effectively addressing the underlying stressors.

### ***Teachers' Emotional Distress on Symptom Intervention***

Table 7 presents the influence of emotional distress on teacher's coping strategies, specifically in terms of symptom intervention.

The data reveal that anxiety shows a statistically significant negative influence (Beta = -0.277,  $p < 0.05$ ) on coping strategies related to symptom intervention. This suggests that higher levels of anxiety are associated with a reduced tendency for teachers to engage in symptom intervention as a coping mechanism. However, stress (Beta = 0.177,  $p > 0.05$ ) and depression (Beta = 0.064,  $p > 0.05$ ) do not exhibit statistically significant associations with coping strategies related to symptom intervention.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.027, indicating that approximately 2.7% of the variability in teacher's coping strategies related to symptom intervention can be explained by the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression.

The F-test for the overall model ( $F = 1.793$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) indicates that the model as a whole is not statistically significant, suggesting that the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression may not significantly predict coping strategies related to symptom intervention in teachers.

### ***Teachers' Emotional Distress on Gaining/Sharing Information***

Table 8 illustrates the impact of emotional distress on teacher's coping strategies related to gaining/sharing information.

The results reveal that anxiety shows a negative but non-significant influence (Beta = -0.189,  $p > 0.05$ ) on coping strategies related to gaining/sharing information. This suggests that anxiety levels may not significantly affect the propensity of teachers to engage in gaining/sharing information as a coping mechanism. Similarly, stress (Beta = 0.172,  $p > 0.05$ ) and depression (Beta = -0.001,  $p > 0.05$ ) do not exhibit statistically significant associations with coping strategies related to gaining/sharing information.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.015, indicating that approximately 1.5% of the variance in teacher's coping strategies for gaining/sharing information can be accounted for by the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression.

The F-test for the overall model ( $F = 0.985$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) indicates that the model as a whole is not statistically significant, suggesting that the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression may not significantly predict coping strategies related to gaining/sharing information in teachers.

These findings imply that other unexplored factors may play a more substantial role in determining teachers' coping strategies for gaining/sharing information. Further research may be necessary to identify and understand these factors comprehensively.

### ***Teachers' Emotional Distress on Seeking Emotional Support***

Table 9 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis investigating the influence of emotional distress on teacher's coping strategies concerning seeking emotional support.

The results reveal that anxiety exhibits a negative and significant influence (Beta = -0.266,  $p < 0.05$ ) on coping strategies related to seeking emotional support. This suggests that higher levels of anxiety are associated with a reduced tendency among teachers to seek emotional support.

On the other hand, stress shows a positive and significant influence (Beta = 0.299,  $p < 0.05$ ) on coping strategies related to seeking emotional support. This indicates that higher levels of stress are linked to an increased inclination among teachers to seek emotional support. However, depression does not demonstrate a statistically significant association (Beta = -0.019,  $p > 0.05$ ) with coping strategies for seeking emotional support.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.036, indicating that approximately 3.6% of the variance in teacher's coping strategies for seeking emotional support can be explained by the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression.

The F-test for the overall model ( $F = 2.443$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that the model as a whole is statistically significant, suggesting that the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression significantly predicts coping strategies related to seeking emotional support in teachers.

These findings underscore the importance of considering emotional distress factors, particularly anxiety and stress, in understanding and addressing teachers' coping strategies for seeking emotional support.

### ***Significant Influence of Emotional Distress to Teacher Effectiveness***

The seventh research question aimed to identify the significant influence of teachers' emotional distress to their effectiveness in terms of IPCRF rating. This study used multiple regression analysis to extract its findings.

Table 10 illustrates the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of emotional distress on teacher effectiveness, as measured by IPCRF performance rating.

Upon looking at the standardized coefficients (Beta values), none of the emotional distress variables show statistically significant associations with teacher effectiveness. Anxiety (Beta = -0.119,  $p > 0.05$ ), stress (Beta = 0.148,  $p > 0.05$ ), and depression (Beta = -0.108,  $p > 0.05$ ) do not have significant effects on teacher effectiveness.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 0.016, indicating that approximately 1.6% of the variance in teacher effectiveness can be explained by the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression.

The F-test for the overall model ( $F = 1.037, p > 0.05$ ) indicates that the model as a whole is not statistically significant, suggesting that the combined influence of anxiety, stress, and depression does not significantly predict teacher effectiveness as measured by IPCRF performance rating.

These results imply that emotional distress factors, including anxiety, stress, and depression, may not directly impact teacher effectiveness as evaluated through IPCRF performance ratings. Other factors not considered in this analysis may play a more substantial role in determining teacher effectiveness.

### ***Significant Influence of Emotional Distress to Teacher Effectiveness when Mediated by Coping Strategies***

The eight research question aimed to determine the significant influence of emotional distress to teachers' effectiveness when mediated by coping strategies. This study used Zobel mediation test to extract its findings.

#### ***Indirect Effect***

The table presents the indirect effects of emotional distress on teacher effectiveness as mediated by coping strategies, specifically diverting attention, symptom intervention, sharing information, and seeking emotional support.

For anxiety, the indirect effects on teacher performance through diverting attention, symptom intervention, sharing information, and seeking emotional support are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Z scores (ranging from -0.8439 to 0.4492) and corresponding p-values (ranging from 0.399 to 0.653). This suggests that anxiety does not significantly influence teacher effectiveness through these coping strategies.

Similarly, for stress, the indirect effects on teacher performance through the four coping strategies are also not statistically significant, with Z scores ranging from -0.4887 to 0.8483 and p-values ranging from 0.396 to 0.625. This indicates that stress does not significantly impact teacher effectiveness through diverting attention, symptom intervention, sharing information, or seeking emotional support.

For depression, the indirect effects on teacher performance through diverting attention, symptom intervention, sharing information, and seeking emotional support are also not statistically significant. The Z scores range from -0.2740 to 0.6489, and the corresponding p-values range from 0.516 to 0.867. This suggests that depression does not significantly influence teacher effectiveness through these coping strategies.

#### ***Direct Effect***

The table presents the direct effects of coping strategies and emotional distress on teacher effectiveness, as well as their corresponding Z scores and probabilities.

For the coping strategies, the direct effects on teacher performance are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Z scores and probabilities. The Z scores range from -0.5041 to 0.9014, and the corresponding probabilities range from 0.367 to 0.614. This suggests that diverting attention, symptom intervention, sharing information, and seeking emotional support do not have a significant direct impact on teacher effectiveness.

Regarding emotional distress, anxiety and stress do not have statistically significant direct effects on teacher performance, with Z scores of 1.5187 and 1.4042, respectively, and probabilities of 0.129 and 0.160, respectively. However, depression has a statistically significant negative direct effect on teacher performance, as indicated by a Z score of -2.361 and a probability of 0.018. This suggests that higher levels of depression are associated with lower teacher effectiveness.

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## **Summary**

The study investigates the emotional distress levels among teachers and their coping mechanisms, aiming to understand its impact on teaching outcomes and effectiveness. It encompasses various research questions, exploring teachers' profiles, prevalence of emotional distress, coping strategies, and challenges they face. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews conducted in Magpet, Makilala, and Kidapawan City, Cotabato Province, with secondary school teachers as respondents.

Findings reveal that most teachers are aged 31-40, predominantly female, married, with 1-10 years of experience, and hold Bachelor's degrees. While emotional distress levels are generally low, coping strategies vary, with teachers employing techniques like diverting attention, symptom intervention, and seeking emotional support.

Correlation analyses show significant relationships between emotional distress and coping strategies, particularly regarding anxiety and stress. Stress notably influences diverting attention, while anxiety negatively affects symptom intervention and seeking support. Depression correlates positively with diverting attention but not significantly with other coping strategies.

The correlation pathway analysis illustrates positive correlations between anxiety/stress and certain coping strategies, while depression negatively correlates with teacher performance ratings. Challenges faced by teachers include emotional strain, workload pressure, and limited resources, prompting proposed program designs like workshops, collaborative efforts, and flexible work arrangements to address these issues and enhance work performance.



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## Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the emotional distress levels among teachers, their coping strategies, and the resultant impact on teaching outcomes and effectiveness. Through a comprehensive investigation, several key findings emerge. Firstly, the majority of teachers are within the age range of 31-40, predominantly female, married, with 1-10 years of teaching experience, and holding Bachelor's degrees. Overall, teachers report experiencing low levels of anxiety, stress, and depression, indicating a generally resilient cohort. Coping strategies vary among teachers, with prevalent use of techniques like diverting attention, symptom intervention, and seeking emotional support, proposing a thoughtful approach to managing emotional distress. Significant correlations are observed between emotional distress factors such as anxiety, stress, and depression; and specific coping strategies, highlighting the interconnectedness between psychological well-being and coping behaviors. Emotional distress, particularly stress and anxiety, significantly influences certain coping mechanisms, such as diverting attention and seeking support, underscoring the importance of addressing emotional well-being in the educational context. Interestingly, emotional distress does not significantly affect teacher effectiveness, indicating that while teachers may experience emotional challenges, they are still able to maintain a certain level of professional performance. Additionally, teachers face challenges such as emotional strain, workload pressure, and limited resources, prompting the proposal of program designs aimed at enhancing work performance through workshops, collaborative efforts, and flexible work arrangements. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of addressing teachers' emotional well-being to support their professional development and ensure optimal teaching outcomes.

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## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several key recommendations emerge to strengthen the well-being and effectiveness of teachers within educational settings. Firstly, there is a pressing need to implement supportive programs geared towards enhancing teachers' emotional resilience and coping mechanisms. These programs should encompass a variety of initiatives, including workshops, training sessions, and wellness programs, all aimed at equipping teachers with the skills to manage stress and navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, fostering collaborative efforts among teachers and school administrators is essential. Peer support groups, mentorship programs, and regular check-ins can provide valuable avenues for teachers to receive emotional support and share coping strategies.

Secondly, offering flexible work arrangements is crucial to accommodate the diverse needs and responsibilities of teachers. Flexible scheduling, remote work options, and initiatives to reduce workload during peak stress periods can significantly alleviate work-related stress and promote a healthier work-life balance. Furthermore, investing in continuous professional development opportunities is essential to empower teachers with the latest skills and strategies. Training in stress management, resilience-building, and effective teaching techniques can enhance teachers' confidence and effectiveness in the classroom.

Moreover, promoting participatory approaches in program design and implementation is key. Involving teachers in decision-making processes ensures that support interventions are tailored to their specific needs and preferences, thereby increasing their effectiveness. Additionally, enhancing resource allocation to address challenges like workload pressure and limited resources is critical. Increased funding for educational institutions, access to counseling services, and infrastructure improvements can significantly support teachers' well-being and job satisfaction.

Lastly, fostering a culture of open communication and transparency within educational institutions is paramount. Creating an environment where teachers feel comfortable expressing their concerns and seeking support can help reduce stigma around mental health issues and encourage early intervention. By implementing these recommendations, educational stakeholders can create a nurturing and supportive environment that enables teachers to thrive personally and professionally, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and overall educational excellence.

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