



ANCILLARY FUNCTIONS AND STRESS-COPING MECHANISM ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between teachers' ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms on their professional engagement. A survey was conducted to elementary school teachers using modified questionnaires to assess the relationships among the variables. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed to analyze and interpret the collected data. Findings revealed that elementary teachers in the division were highly involved in ancillary functions, they performed tasks beyond and outside their regular teaching responsibilities. Nevertheless, teachers exhibited high level of ability to cope with stress, and could manage their stress efficiently. Moreover, teachers showed high dedication to their job and interest in developing their professional skills through, when in fact they have high degree of professional engagement. In addition, teachers' ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms showed a significant relationship on professional engagement. In particular, stress-coping mechanism such as seeking social support, self-controlling, positive reappraisal and ancillary functions such as committee involvement and subject coordinatorship were the predictors of professional engagement. This implies that teachers who had better stress-coping mechanisms and were more involved in their ancillary functions exhibited higher levels of professional engagement.

KEYWORDS : ancillary functions, stress coping mechanism, professional engagement

INTRODUCTION

Professional engagement is an essential aspect of a teacher's career. It refers to the level of involvement, commitment, and enthusiasm a teacher demonstrates. Engaged teachers are passionate about their profession, committed to their student's success, and continuously seek to develop their skills and knowledge. They go beyond the minimum requirements of their job and actively participate in professional development opportunities, collaborate with colleagues, and engage with their students and their families. Engaged teachers are more likely to positively impact their students' learning outcomes and well-being (National Education Association, 2019).

However, low levels of professional engagement can impact organizational performance. It was found that organizations with low level of engagement lower financial performance and high level of employee turnover and absenteeism. Factors such as job satisfaction, opportunities for growth and development, and effective leadership were significant predictors of employee engagement. Employees who felt valued and supported in their work were more likely to be engaged and committed to the organization (Towers, 2012).

Similarly, ancillary functions are supportive tasks or activities that are not directly related to an employee's primary job responsibilities but are essential for efficient workplace operation. These functions can considerably impact employee well-being, job satisfaction, and professional engagement.

Furthermore, job demands such as workload and time pressure can also impact employee engagement. When employees are faced with high levels of job demands without sufficient resources to cope, they are more likely to experience burnout and disengagement, leading to decreased productivity. It is important to consider job resources, including ancillary functions, as they significantly predict employee engagement and well-being. By prioritizing these resources, organizations can create a positive and supportive work environment that promotes engagement and contributes to individual and organizational performance (Demerouti et al. 2015).

Thus, a high workload is a complex issue that can negatively affect a teacher's well-being, including physical exhaustion

from long work hours, emotional exhaustion from dealing with stress and pressure, and cognitive exhaustion from juggling multiple tasks and responsibilities. These effects can result in reduced job satisfaction and decreased motivation, which can ultimately impact the level of engagement that a teacher has with others, as noted by Brown and Ralph (2015). Teachers who are experiencing these negative effects may be less likely to engage with their students, colleagues, and other stakeholders, which can have a cascading effect on the overall effectiveness of the educational system. It is crucial to address the issue of high workload and provide teachers with the necessary support to manage their workload effectively and maintain their well-being and engagement. Providing adequate resources such as training, equipment, and support can help employees manage job demands and reduce the negative effects of high workloads. This, in turn, can lead to higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity among employees. The heavy workload of teachers, which includes excessive work hours, administrative duties, teaching responsibilities, and other ancillary functions, can be a significant source of stress and burnout.

On the other hand, stress-coping mechanisms are crucial for maintaining both personal and professional well-being, as stress can significantly impact physical and mental health. Developing effective coping mechanisms to manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance is essential.

According to Sonnentag & Fritz (2007), when employees faced high levels of job demands without sufficient opportunities for recovery, they were more likely to experience burnout and disengagement. Recovery experiences, such as relaxation and detachment from work, were positively related to work engagement. Specifically, employees with more positive recovery experiences were more likely to be engaged in their work and have higher levels of job satisfaction.

In contrast, employees with fewer recovery experiences were more likely to be disengaged in their work. Moreover, ancillary functions and stress coping impacted professional engagement. Specifically, employees with access to practical ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms were more likely to be engaged in their work and have higher levels of job satisfaction (Kumar & Pansari, 2012).

Employee engagement is critical for both organizational performance and employee well-being. Organizations need to prioritize strategies that promote employee engagement, such as providing opportunities for growth and development, recognizing and rewarding good performance, and promoting a positive work culture, as Harter et al. (2017) noted. Engaged employees are more likely to be committed to their work, demonstrate higher productivity, and have fewer absences and lower turnover rates. Additionally, employee engagement is positively associated with job satisfaction, well-being, and overall quality of life. Therefore, employee engagement can have short-term and long-term benefits for organizations and their employees.

Based on the given statement, the researcher aimed to examine the relationship between ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms on teachers' professional engagement. Specifically, the study sought to determine the level of ancillary functions of teachers in terms of subject coordinators; club advisorship; community involvement.; information and communication technology coordinatorship; and committee involvement and further identify the level of stress coping mechanism of teachers in the areas of: playful problem solving; self-controlling; accepting responsibility; positive reappraisal; and seeking social support. Moreover, the study ascertain the level of professional engagement of teachers towards: learners; co-teachers; school administrators; community, and parents.

The variable focus on the study were anchored on the three theories based on the analysis and understanding of the researcher, the study on ancillary functions was anchored on role theory, individuals have multiple roles in their lives, each with its own set of expectations and obligations that can influence their behavior and attitudes. When individuals experience conflict between these roles, such as when the demands of one role interfere with those of another, it can lead to negative outcomes, including stress. Moreover, ancillary functions can be viewed as an additional role that individuals are expected to fulfill alongside their primary job responsibilities. According to Role Theory, when ancillary functions create conflict with primary job responsibilities, such as by taking away time and resources, it can lead to negative outcomes such as reduced professional engagement (Miller, 2011).

On the other hand, the coping mechanism applies the Theory of Social Support. Social support refers to the emotional, informational, and tangible resources provided by others, such as family, friends, and coworkers. These resources can take many forms, including listening, advice, practical assistance, and financial support. Thus, social support can be an important resource for individuals coping with stress, and organizations can help promote social support by fostering a supportive work environment, encouraging social connections among employees, and providing resources to help employees manage stress and cope with difficult situations (Ohen, et al. 1985). Through social support it can buffer the effects of stress and promote effective coping mechanism to an individual.

Moreover, in professional engagement, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is very useful in this study. Hence, individuals have basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and these needs must be satisfied for optimal motivation, well-being, and engagement. This means that when individuals feel that their basic needs are being met, they are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and satisfied with their work (Deci, et al. 2000).

Hence, the framework below presents the influence of the relationship between ancillary functions, stress coping mechanism and teachers' professional development. Figure 1

shows a schematic diagram of the study. It contains three boxes where the first box contains subject coordinatorship, club coordinatorship, community involvement, ict coordinatorship and committee involvement under the teachers' ancillary function.

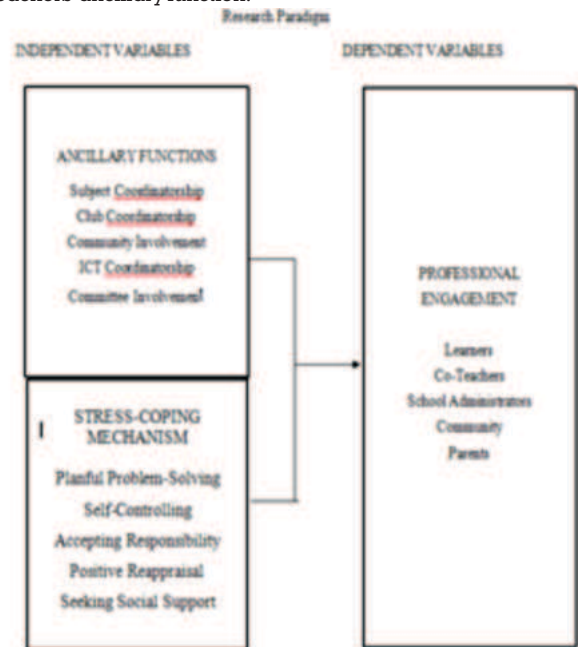


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the study showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teachers' ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms on their professional engagement. Further, the Descriptive Method is used to determine the level of involvement of Basic Education Teachers in ancillary functions, their level of stress-coping mechanisms, and their professional engagement.

This study was conducted at District II and IV in Valencia City Division school year 2022-2023. There were 300 elementary school teachers who were chosen as respondents of the study and were assigned from the 12 schools of the two (2) districts, District II and District VI.

Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation Of Data

The presentation of results is organized and discussed based on the order of the specific problems.

Level Of Teacher's Ancillary Functions

Ancillary functions are functions that support or assist the main function or purpose of a program or system. They are typically used to perform tasks that are necessary for the proper operation of the program but are not directly related to its primary purpose.

Table 1 Ancillary Functions Of Teachers

| INDICATORS | MEAN | QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Subject Coordinatorship | 4.26 | High involvement |
| Committee Involvement | 4.22 | High involvement |
| Club Coordinatorship | 4.21 | High involvement |
| ICT Coordinatorship | 4.20 | High involvement |
| Community Involvement | 4.15 | High involvement |
| OVER-ALL MEAN | 4.21 | High involvement |

| Range | Descriptive Ratio | Qualitative Interpretation |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 4.51 - 5.00 | Strongly Agree | Very high involvement |
| 3.51 - 4.50 | Agree | High involvement |
| 2.51 - 3.50 | Undecided | Moderate involvement |
| 1.51 - 2.50 | Disagree | Low involvement |
| 1.00 - 1.50 | Strongly Disagree | Very low involvement |

The high level of involvement in ancillary functions among teachers can have several implications, such as teachers are willing to go above and beyond their primary teaching responsibilities to support the organization's goals and objectives. They have a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to their work. Teachers who are actively involved in various roles and responsibilities can serve as positive role models for their students. This was affirmed by the study of Lai & Kwok (2012), that teacher involvement in ancillary functions was positively associated with teacher job satisfaction and motivation. Teachers who are involved in decision-making processes and have a say in how their school is run are more satisfied and motivated in their work. This may also improve communication and collaboration among teachers, leading to greater organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, teacher's job satisfaction and motivation were positively associated with student achievement since they are more effective in facilitating student learning and achievement. In like manner, the importance of ancillary functions can improve teaching practices, enhance teacher professional development, and ultimately benefit the students. This can also contribute to the effectiveness of teaching (Rusell, 2012).

Level of Teachers' Stress-Coping Mechanism

A stress coping mechanism is a strategy or technique that a person uses to deal with the physical and emotional effects of stress. Effective stress coping mechanisms can help an individual to manage and reduce stress, and to maintain their emotional well-being.

Table 2 shows that teachers have a high level of stress-coping mechanism with an overall mean of 4.21.

Table 2 The Stress-coping Mechanism Of Teachers

| INDICATORS | MEAN | QUALITATIVE STATEMENT |
|--------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| Positive Reappraisal | 4.51 | Very high level |
| Self-Controlling | 4.41 | High level |
| Accepting Responsibility | 4.41 | High level |
| Seeking Social Support | 4.22 | High level |
| Playful Problem Solving | 4.19 | High level |
| OVER-ALL MEAN | 4.21 | High level |

| Range | Descriptive Rating | Qualitative Interpretation |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 4.51 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree | Very high level |
| 3.51 – 4.50 | Agree | High level |
| 2.51 – 3.50 | Undecided | Moderate level |
| 1.51 – 2.50 | Disagree | Low level |
| 1.00 – 1.50 | Strongly Disagree | Very low level |

This was evident that among the five (5) indicators, positive reappraisal has the highest mean of 4.51. This shows that teachers release their stress by encouraging and upholding themselves with some positive traits and thoughts. Planful problem-solving got the lowest mean of 4.19 which indicates that teachers lack skills when it comes to planning how to address and solve problems but still exhibit a high level. However, teachers still displayed a high level of coping stress in terms of self-controlling, accepting responsibility, and seeking social support, which also shows a good indicator. This has an implication for the teachers, especially in delivering instructions. This implies that managing stress is significant for both teachers and educational institutions. It is important for teachers to manage their stress effectively to ensure that it does not negatively impact their teaching or professional engagement. Therefore, practicing and applying positive coping behaviors can enhance their self-esteem and personal growth, particularly in dealing with stress. Seeking support from others and redirecting one's attention to other things are some of the coping strategies that many teachers use to manage stress and other health issues. To effectively manage stress, teachers require support and training in effective coping strategies that can promote their well-being. Educational institutions can assist by providing such support and training, which can enable teachers to deliver high-quality instruction and improve student outcomes. This was

supported by Aldrup et al. (2017) that discussing problems with their family members, friends, or colleagues, psychological counseling, taking part for a part in training programs for personal development and resilience, avoiding situations or persons who generate stress, spending free time in nature, extending physical relaxation exercises, changing jobs, eating healthy foods and taking pills and reflection on the situation are ways or mechanism to alleviate stress. Moreover, according to Sun et al. (2015), positive reappraisal coping mediated the relationship between social support and depressive symptoms. Specifically, individuals who reported higher levels of social support were more likely to use positive reappraisal coping strategies, such as finding meaning in a difficult situation or focusing on the positive aspects of a stressful event. In turn, the use of positive reappraisal coping strategies was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms, even after controlling for other factors such as age, gender, and education level.

Level of Teachers' Professional Engagement

Professional engagement refers to the level of commitment and involvement that an individual demonstrates in their work or profession.

Table 3 The Professional Engagement Of Teachers

| INDICATORS | MEAN | QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION |
|-----------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Learners | 4.67 | Very high level |
| Co-Teachers | 4.67 | Very high level |
| Parents | 4.59 | Very high level |
| Community | 4.56 | Very high level |
| School Administrators | 4.51 | Very high level |
| OVERALL MEAN | 4.60 | Very high level |

| Range | Descriptive Rating | Qualitative Interpretation |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 4.51 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree | Very high level |
| 3.51 – 4.50 | Agree | High level |
| 2.51 – 3.50 | Undecided | Moderate level |
| 1.51 – 2.50 | Disagree | Low level |
| 1.00 – 1.50 | Strongly disagree | Very low level |

Table 3 revealed that teachers have a very high level of professional engagement toward learners, co-teachers, parents, community, and school administrators. This has an overall mean of 4.60. It is evident that teachers exhibit a strong commitment to their profession and are highly engaged with various stakeholders in the education system. They are committed enough in creating a positive and supportive learning environment. By being engaged with these various stakeholders, teachers can build strong partnerships that support student learning and success.

This implies that teachers are highly engaged, and they are more likely to be motivated to improve their teaching practices and to develop positive relationships with their students, colleagues, and other stakeholders. This can have a positive impact on student learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the school.

This was supported by the study of the National Institute for School Leadership in 2012, which showed that effective schools are characterized by strong relationships between teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. Similarly, a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2015) emphasized that collaboration among teachers can lead to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes. Further, a study by the National Center for Education Statistics (2021) found that teacher collaboration and engagement with parents and the community were positively associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and retention. Building a culture of collaboration and trust to improve student outcomes is important.

Semke & Sheridan (2012), effective partnership is based on mutual trust and respect and shared responsibility for the education of the children and young people at the school. Similarly, the highly regarded impact of effective partnerships

between schools and the broader community emerged as a key finding in research examining teacher perspectives and practice of sustainability, which identified partnerships as an essential ingredient of enduring sustainability projects in primary schools (Green & Somerville, 2014).

Correlation Analysis of Ancillary Functions and Stress-coping Mechanism Towards Professional Engagement

The study examined the correlation between ancillary functions, stress-coping mechanisms, and teachers' professional engagement. The findings of this analysis are shown in Table 5

Table 4 Correlation Analysis On Ancillary Functions And Stress-coping Mechanism Towards Professional Engagement

| VARIABLES | R-Value | P-Value |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| STRESS-COPING MECHANISM | 0.828 | 0.000** |
| Seeking Social Support | 0.318 | 0.000** |
| Self-Controlling | 0.359 | 0.000** |
| Positive Reappraisal | 0.229 | 0.000** |
| ANCILLARY FUNCTIONS | 0.367 | 0.000** |
| Committee Involvement | 0.117 | 0.001** |
| Subject Coordinatorship | 0.068 | 0.044** |

** p < 0.01

It was manifested that there is a positive or significant relationship between ancillary functions, stress-coping mechanisms, and professional engagement. Specifically, seeking social support, self-controlling, and positive reappraisal under the stress-coping mechanism and committee involvement and subject coordinatorship from ancillary functions, which has R-values ranging from 0.068 to 0.359 and a P-value of 0.000.

This implies that educators who participate in committee work or serve as subject coordinators, and those who can manage stress and utilize effective coping strategies, tend to exhibit higher levels of professional engagement with their students and other individuals involved in their work. Furthermore, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms on professional engagement is, therefore, rejected.

The study of Allen & Pianta (2012) supported that teachers who engage in leadership activities are more likely to feel committed to their work, experience higher levels of job satisfaction, and exhibit a sense of personal investment in their students' success. Creating a supportive work environment that fosters teacher leadership and provides opportunities for collaboration and professional development is important. In like manner, addressing teacher stress and promoting effective coping strategies as essential components of efforts to promote teacher well-being and professional engagement. By promoting teacher well-being and engagement, educational institutions can help ensure that teachers are able to provide high-quality education to students and contribute to the broader goals of improving educational outcomes (Karatekin 2020).

Based on the results also, the null hypothesis that "there is no significant relationship between ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms on teachers' professional engagement" can be rejected.

Multiple Regression Analysis between Ancillary Functions and Stress Coping Mechanism to Professional Engagement

Table 5 shows the regression analysis of two variables against teacher's professional engagement with ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanism.

The effects of the independent variables, namely: stress-coping mechanisms with seeking social support, self-

controlling, positive reappraisal, and ancillary functions with committee involvement and subject coordinatorship, were confirmed through the regression analysis and discussed in this section.

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis Between Ancillary Functions And Teachers' Stress-coping Mechanism On Professional Engagement

| Variables | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|--------|-------------------------|
| (Constant) | 1.316 | .130 | | 10.153 | .000 |
| Seeking Social Support | .176 | .022 | .318 | 8.018 | .000 |
| Self-Controlling | .281 | .030 | .359 | 9.459 | .000 |
| Positive Reappraisal | .166 | .023 | .299 | 7.240 | .000 |
| Committee | .082 | .025 | .117 | 3.269 | .001 |
| Subject Coordinatorship | .039 | .019 | .068 | 2.019 | .044 |
| R= .853 ^a | R ² = .728 | F= 157.156 | | | Sig = .000 ^b |

Dependent Variable: PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The results indicate that the three sub-variables of stress-coping mechanism namely, seeking social support, self-controlling, and positive reappraisal - have a strong predictive effect on teachers' competence. Meanwhile, among the ancillary functions, only committee and subject coordinatorship were found to have a significant predictive effect on teachers' professional engagement. The table displays the beta coefficients for each of the sub-variables, with seeking social support (Beta=0.318), self-controlling (Beta=0.359), positive reappraisal (Beta=-0.299), committee (Beta=0.117), and subject coordinatorship (Beta=0.068) all having a significant and strong influence on predicting professional engagement. Among these predictors, self-controlling has the highest Beta of 0.359, and therefore, it is considered the best predictor of professional engagement.

It was also revealed that the R² value is 0.728, indicating that seeking social support, self-controlling, positive reappraisal, committee involvement, and subject coordinatorship are significant contributors to teachers' professional engagement. This means that 72.8% of the variability in professional engagement can be explained by these variables. The remaining 27.2% of the variability is attributed to other variables that were not included in the study.

Based on the table, we can also get a predictive model for professional Engagement respectively as follows:

$$Y = 1.316 + 0.176X_1 + 0.281 X_2 + 0.166 X_3 + 0.082 X_4 + 0.039 X_5$$

where:

1.316 is constant

Y = Professional Engagement

X₁ = Seeking Social Support (Stress-coping mechanism)

X₂ = Self-Controlling (Stress-coping mechanism)

X₃ = Positive Reappraisal (Stress-coping mechanism)

X₄ = Committee Involvement (Ancillary function)

X₅ = Subject Coordinatorship (Ancillary function)

The equation above shows that there is a positive linear relationship between seeking social support, self-controlling, positive reappraisal, committee involvement, subject coordinatorship, and teachers' professional engagement. This indicates that the higher the level of indicators, the higher the level of teachers' professional engagement. The lower the level of indicators, the lower the level of teachers' professional engagement. Thus, the null hypothesis that there are no variables that best predict a teacher's professional engagement is rejected. Hence, this corroborate the study of Duan & Zhang (2012), accordingly teachers who feel empowered are more likely to feel committed to their work, experience higher levels of job satisfaction, and exhibit a sense of personal investment in their students' success. Thus, creating a supportive work environment that fosters teacher empowerment and provides opportunities for collaboration and professional development is important. Meanwhile, the study of Li et al. (2017) states that teachers who feel empowered to make decisions and have control over their

work while also having manageable job demands and sufficient resources are more likely to feel engaged and committed to their profession. Psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability mediate the relationship between perceived autonomy and teacher engagement.

Further, teachers who engage in leadership activities such as mentoring, committee work, and curriculum development are more likely to feel empowered and committed to their profession, which can foster a sense of collective efficacy among the teaching staff. Collective efficacy is positively associated with student achievement, indicating the importance of creating a positive work environment that fosters teacher leadership (Goddard et al. 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Basic education teachers are highly involved in their ancillary functions. This means that they are fulfilling their responsibilities and duties as assigned by their superiors and are aware of their job descriptions, including the importance of completing tasks in a timely manner.

Teachers have a high level of stress coping mechanism, indicating that they can effectively manage their emotions during stressful or difficult situations. This is beneficial for the education of learners, as teachers can prioritize their own health and effectively cope with stress during the teaching and learning process. Additionally, this coping ability enables teachers to maintain a positive attitude and continue to effectively educate their learners, despite any challenges they may face. Teachers are highly engaged with their learners, co-teachers, school administrators, community, and parents. This high level of engagement is beneficial in achieving excellence, support, and success within the school. Additionally, it fosters strong connectivity between stakeholders, which can be attributed to good communication and partnerships. There is a significant relationship found between teachers' ancillary functions and stress-coping mechanisms. Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Self-controlling under the stress-coping mechanism is the indicator that best predicts professional engagement. However, seeking social support, positive reappraisal, committee and subject coordinatorship were also a predictor of professional engagement. Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected.

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