

# MEDIATING EFFECT OF COPING STRATEGIES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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## ABSTRACT

*The quality of life of an individual depends on the comfort that one receives based of his daily activities. Stress is always a factor that defines the quality of life of an employee. This study aimed to determine the influence between occupational stress and the quality of life among school principals as mediated by their coping strategy for school year 2019 – 2020. This study used the descriptive – correlation method. A survey instrument was used to get data from among the 300 school principals in the Congressional District 2 and 3 of DepEd Cotabato Division. The study disclosed that among the variables presented the level of occupational stress of the school administrators was moderately high. The school administrators responded an often degree in terms of their quality of life based on the findings. The level of the assessment of coping strategies of school administrators was on the moderate extent. The occupational stress significantly influenced the quality of life among the school administrators. The coping strategies significantly mediated on the occupational stress in terms of physical, emotional, and mental stress. Further, the coping strategies significantly mediated the quality of life only on emotional well – being of the school administrators.*

**Keyword:** Occupational Stress, Coping Strategies, Quality of Life, descriptive-correlational, Cotabato Division, Philippines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is always associated with different factors. In the 1960s, the concept of the quality of life was given attention with the desire of reverberating the organizational concerns. Competent school administrators will make the organizational system successful. The strong arm and the quality of any educational system depend largely on the administrator's daily grind [1]. Quality of Work Life has different meanings to different people. Employees elucidate it as more square deal sharing of profits, job safeness, and healthy and humane working conditions.

It may have a favorable or unfavorable working environment for the wage earners and the quality of appositeness between employees and the total working environment [2]. In 1989, Robbins defined the quality of work life as a process by which an organization reciprocates to employees' concerns by developing machinery that allow wage earners to share their approximation in decision making that will outline their lives at work. When a

school administrator derives fulfillment at work, he can perform at his best. A vigorous quality of life is very essential for school administrators to be gratifying and successful. Quality of Life has become integral to the school administrator's potency and satisfaction in the framework of student learning. If school administrators and teachers enjoy the quality of life, it will also improve student behavior [3].

The advancement of high-speed work life has brought a lot of stressors and stress for teachers and as well as school administrators. It is a common fact of life that educators have been confronted with occupational stress. If school leaders face stress, they hardly remain possible to keep their job safe from its harmful effects. Most likely, work performance is the instantaneous area affected by occupational stress and the equanimity with their work [4].

However, the school administrators are not only old warhorse in their jobs, therefore, it is difficult to believe that during challenges, they helplessly let their stress affect their job achievements without making any mediation and take a step ahead and select the best fit coping strategy to continue accomplishing their targets [5].

Individuals foster different ways of coping when faced with stressful circumstances which are related to the personal determinant, circumstantial demands, and available resources, and characteristic of the situation which aim to make restitution of the settings brought about by stress. The reason why, coping strategies try to perpetuate the well-being, and undervalue the harmful effects of the stressful locality. From this lexicon, the coping strategy used by individuals has acquired relevance in researchers on occupational stress because it can both embellish and curtail the effects of stressful events [6]. Especially, students and administrators have various experiences in coping with stress [7]; [8]; [9].

There are a lot of studies made on the impact of the quality of life on the occupational/work stress among teachers, however, only a few studies were conducted involving the school managers. Thus, this study was conceptualized and aimed at determining the relationship that links between occupational stress and the quality of life which can be mediated through the best fit coping strategy among the school principals.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to determine the influence between occupational stress and the quality of life among school principals as mediated by their coping strategy. This study used the descriptive – correlation method. A survey instrument was used to get data from among the 300 school principals in the Congressional District 2 and 3 of DepEd Cotabato Division. Descriptive survey method was used to gather information about current existing during the conduct of the study. The data gathered during the survey were organized, tallied, tabulated, summarized, analyzed, and interpreted using the descriptive statistics which included weighted mean and regression. The proposed hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis at 5% level of significance.

## 3. RESULTS

### Mean level Summary of Occupational Stress

Table 1 presents the mean level summary of occupational stress. The table presents that the highest is on role stress followed by mental stress, then emotional stress and the lowest is on physical stress which all described as moderately high but different mean ratings. The overall weighted mean rating is 2.90, described as moderately high.

The results indicate that the school administrators are affected by the occupational stress. This implies that occupational stress of the school administrators increases when they do not feel supported by their teachers or as if they have little control over work processes. Further, this harms the physical and emotional responses when there is a conflict between work demands on the school administrators and the amount of control over meeting these demands.

Lazarus and Folkman (2014) stated that occupational stress can be caused by both good and bad experiences. Stress is considered as a good thing when caused by physical danger. It is also the reaction perceived by the body when people experience excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. They further stated that it arises when they worry that they can no longer cope. In this sense, stress often occurs when people are working beyond their capacities or are subjected to situations with which they cannot adequately cope [10].

**Table 1. Mean Level Summary of Occupational Stress**

<b>Occupational Stress</b>	<b>Sub - Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
Role Stress	3.17	Moderately High
Mental Stress	2.83	Moderately High
Emotional Stress	2.89	Moderately High
Physical Stress	2.71	Moderately High
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>Moderately High</b>

### Mean Level Summary of the Degree of Quality of Life

Table 2 presents the mean level summary of the degree of quality of life. The table depicts that the highest is on family relation then spiritual well – being which both described as always. It is followed by emotional well – being, social well – being, then life satisfaction. The lowest is on physical well – being which all described as often but have different mean ratings. The overall weighted mean rating is 4.22, described as often.

The results imply that the degree of the quality of life of the school administrators is healthy, happy, comfortable and able to participate in or enjoy life events which can be viewed as multidimensional encompassing emotional, physical, spiritual, and social well – being and also their life satisfaction and family relation despite of the occupational stress they have experienced.

Mohammadi, et.al. (2016) said the quality of work life is a process by which an organization responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work. A school administrator who enjoys the work and derives satisfaction alone can perform in best manner. The fulfilment of personal needs and goals leads to satisfaction of well - being and happiness [11].

**Table 2. Mean Level Summary of the Degree of Quality of Life**

<b>Quality of Life</b>	<b>Sub – Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
Life Satisfaction	4.15	Often
Physical Well – being	4.03	Often
Spiritual Well – being	4.31	Always
Emotional Well – being	4.19	Often
Social Well – being	4.18	Often
Family Relation	4.47	Always
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>Often</b>

### Mean Level Summary Assessment of Coping Mechanism

Table 3 present the mean level summary assessment of coping assessment. It shows that both coping mechanism such as active coping mechanism and passive coping mechanism have the same mean value which all described as moderately extent. The overall weighted mean rating is 3.40, described as moderately extent.

The results imply that the school administrators take an action, a series of actions, or a thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying their reaction to such a situation. Their coping strategies typically involve a conscious and direct approach to problems that the school administrators employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events.

Arnolds (2017) shared that coping involves behaviours to minimize or avoid being harmed by occupational distress and strain. While a variety of coping strategies or activities have been identified, the effectiveness of each varies with the psychological makeup of the individual and with the work environment [12].

Holahan and Moos (2017) also shared that coping strategies are either behavioral or psychological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it, while avoidant coping strategies “lead people into activities (such as alcohol use) or mental states (such as withdrawal) that keep them from directly addressing stressful events. Active coping is considered a better way to deal with stress, while avoidant coping is considered as a psychological risk factor for adverse responses to stressful life events [13].

**Table 3. Mean Assessment Summary of Coping Mechanism**

Coping Mechanism	Sub – Mean	Description
Active Coping Strategy	3.40	Moderate Extent
Passive Coping Strategy	3.40	Moderate Extent
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

### **Influence of School Heads' Occupational Stress on their Quality of Life**

The occupational stress significantly influenced to quality of life of the school administrators. The coping strategies have significantly mediated an effect on the occupational stress in terms of physical, emotional, and mental stress. Further, the coping strategies have significantly mediated an effect on the quality of life only on emotional well – being of the school administrators. In a study conducted by Pagocag and Lumapenet (2022) teachers' stressor is found to be correlated with teachers' achievement and learners' performance [14].

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were hereby formulated.

1. The school administrators have moderately high level of occupational stress which means that the school administrators were affected by the occupational stress.
2. The degree of the quality of life of school administrator was described as often which means that their quality of life was healthy, happy, comfortable and able to participate in or enjoy life events which can be viewed as multidimensional encompassing emotional, physical, spiritual, and social well – being and also their life satisfaction and family relation despite of the occupational stress they have experienced.
3. The coping mechanism of school administrators was moderately extent which means that they take an action or a series of actions, or a thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying their reaction to such a situation. Their coping strategies typically involve a conscious and direct approach to problems that the school administrators employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events.
4. The occupational stress of the school administrators have significant contribution to their quality of life.
5. The coping strategies were mediating effect on the occupational stress and quality of life of school administrators.

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