

Mental Workload and Coping of Junior High School Teachers

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Abstract:

Teaching is considered one of the most stressful jobs involving supplementary tasks and various skills. This study utilized the descriptive research design, with the 72 Junior high school teachers from the five schools as the respondents. This study aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how mental workloads influence the coping of teachers. The level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers was high. The level of coping of the junior high school teachers, according to the Problem-focused and Emotion-focused, was high. There was a significant relationship between mental workload and the level of coping of junior high school teachers—heavy workloads pressure teachers' effectiveness and ability to fulfill their major teaching duties. Teachers can perform amidst a difficult coping process as the educational landscape transitions to a more interactive pedagogical platform. The teachers can set aside their struggles and do their best to perform. For school heads to improve the staffing system, the distribution of workloads must be equitable, and recognizing their strengths and potential, and strengthening their weaknesses is necessary for delegating tasks. This study recommends additional developmental training and capability building for all teachers to cope with mental workload by utilizing online portals, website navigation, and other academic applications.

Keywords: Coping strategies, mental workload, teacher stress

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Teaching is considered one of the most stressful jobs (Harmsen et al., 2020). As discussed, teachers are said to be doing more work than most professionals only because of their place of work, primary and supplementary tasks, and various skills. These factors can affect how well teachers complete the job (Harmsen et al., 2020; Rivera, 2022). Several implications of workload exist on job performance, as different studies showed poor performance results from failure to manage work-related stress appropriately (Wellness Council of America [WELCOA], 2021). Chronic work-related stress can impact teachers' well-being and thus students' learning achievement (Harmsen et al., 2020; Rivera, 2022).

In the Philippines, public school teachers have multiple roles. This increases the possibility of public-school teachers experiencing stress at work (Mingoa, 2022). Thus, it is challenging for them to handle stress and perform well in their jobs (David et al., 2020; Embang et al., 2022). These reasons include property custodianship, Information and Communications Technology coordination, and research-related work (DepEd Order No. 39, s. 1990; LawPhil Project, 2024).

Coping, such as stress-related seminars and supportive workplace environments, has improved teachers' productivity and alleviated burnout (Baluyos et al., 2019; Sarabia & Collantes, 2020). However, many studies focus only on the correlation between variables, such as workload and stress, or stress and performance (Gonzales, 2022; Prastuti, 2021).

Teachers face increasing responsibilities beyond instruction, including acting as mentors, addressing students' mental health and learning gaps, promoting inclusivity, fostering critical thinking and digital literacy, and collaborating with parents and the wider community. These expanding roles, driven by evolving societal needs, often result in teachers feeling overburdened, necessitating ongoing professional development to adapt and provide holistic support for students' academic, social, and emotional growth in the 21st century.

This study aimed to understand better how mental workloads influence the teachers' coping and propose actionable plans for stress management, workload adjustments, and performance improvement. The outcomes of this study served as the basis for an action plan to enhance stress management through adjustment and stressor modification,

reframing workloads, providing technical assistance, and orienting administrators, educators, learners, and other stakeholders.

Current State of Knowledge

Mental workload among teachers has become a growing concern due to its strong association with stress, anxiety, and depression in the teaching profession. Studies reveal that excessive workload, limited administrative support, and student behavior problems are major contributors to poor mental well-being (Smith & Johnson, 2018; Brown & Jones, 2019). Organizational factors such as school climate, autonomy, and recognition also influence job satisfaction and performance (Lee et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2020; Mohanty, 2015). Supportive work systems and positive school environments enhance teachers' self-efficacy and engagement (Shen et al., 2016; Song et al., 2018), while lack of autonomy and imbalanced workloads can lead to burnout and reduced productivity (Wang et al., 2016; Johari et al., 2018). Overall, effectively managing mental workload through supportive organizational practices is essential for sustaining teachers' mental health and professional performance.

In the Philippines, efforts to address teachers' mental health are reflected in the Philippine Mental Health Law (RA 11036) enacted in 2018. This legislation promotes access to quality mental health services, prohibits discrimination, and integrates mental health programs in schools and workplaces (Lally, Samaniego, & Tully, 2019). However, challenges in implementation persist due to resource limitations and weak inter-agency coordination. Public school teachers continue to experience stress, anxiety, and depression brought by heavy workloads and limited institutional support, emphasizing the need for effective coping strategies and strengthened mental health programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Riolli & Savicki, 2017).

Teaching remains one of the most demanding professions, with junior high school teachers particularly vulnerable to occupational stress. Common stressors include workload, time pressure, administrative tasks, lack of resources, and student misbehavior (Travers & Cooper, 2017; Huang et al., 2018). Prolonged exposure to these factors often results in burnout, fatigue, and decreased teaching effectiveness (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019; Waters & Loton, 2020). To cope, teachers employ strategies such as social support, time management, mindfulness, and self-care (Guglielmi et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Trus, 2019), though maladaptive behaviors like avoidance may exacerbate stress (Montgomery & Rupp, 2018). Promoting adaptive coping mechanisms and institutional support systems is therefore vital in improving teachers' mental well-being and job satisfaction.

Beyond daily work pressures, teachers also face stress related to curriculum reforms, technological changes, and crisis-driven educational adjustments. In South Africa, curriculum transformation led to dissatisfaction among teachers, underscoring the importance of empowerment in curriculum implementation (Ascione, 2020). Similar challenges were observed in Indonesia and Palestine, where teachers adapted to online and mobile-based learning despite limited technological resources and experience (Biddix et al., 2016; Hodges, 2020; International Telecommunication Union, 2019). These global trends mirror the experiences of Filipino educators during the COVID-19 pandemic, where flexible learning modalities were adopted to sustain education amidst restrictions.

Recent studies highlight that teachers utilize a range of coping strategies to address mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, and depression. These include problem-focused coping—actively managing stressors through collaboration and task prioritization (Smith & Johnson, 2018)—and emotion-focused coping, which regulates emotional responses through mindfulness and social support (Brown & Jones, 2019; Martinez & Lee, 2020). Self-care practices, including exercise, rest, and personal hobbies, further promote resilience and reduce burnout (Waters & Loton, 2020; Davis & White, 2017). Collectively, these coping mechanisms enhance teachers' mental health, job performance, and professional satisfaction.

Finally, studies conducted across various contexts confirm that teachers' adaptability and resilience were crucial during periods of educational transition, particularly amid the COVID-19 crisis. In the Philippines, flexible learning approaches encouraged by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) under the spirit of Bayanihan enabled teachers to maintain educational continuity despite challenges (De Vera, 2020). Many teachers coped through peer collaboration, virtual learning engagement, and purposeful activities (Talidad, 2020). Overall, the literature emphasizes that promoting supportive environments, enhancing coping capacities, and institutionalizing mental health programs are vital to sustaining teachers' well-being and professional effectiveness in an evolving educational landscape.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (1984) and Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression. The Transactional Theory emphasizes that coping involves cognitive appraisal, where individuals evaluate a situation through primary and secondary appraisals. Primary appraisal determines whether a situation poses a threat or challenge, while secondary appraisal assesses available resources to manage it. From these appraisals emerge coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping, which seeks to manage or resolve

stressors directly, and emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional responses to stress. Lazarus and Folkman highlight that coping and emotional reactions are shaped by one's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, underscoring the importance of cognitive processes in understanding how individuals adapt to stress. This theory provides a strong basis for examining how teachers evaluate and respond to workplace stressors, including workload, student behavior, and administrative demands, and how these evaluations influence their coping styles and well-being.

Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression complements this framework by emphasizing how cognitive distortions contribute to emotional distress. Beck's cognitive triad—negative thoughts about the self, the world, and the future—explains how individuals' perceptions influence their susceptibility to depression and anxiety. In the context of teaching, negative self-cognition may involve self-doubt and perceived inadequacy; negative world-cognition reflects pessimistic views of the work environment and lack of support; and negative future-cognition represents uncertainty and hopelessness about career prospects. This study integrates both theories to explore how cognitive appraisals and coping mechanisms interact to influence teachers' mental health. It examines how junior high school teachers utilize cognitive, problem-focused, and emotion-focused coping strategies to manage depression, stress, and anxiety, and how these approaches affect their job satisfaction, resilience, and overall well-being. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between mental workload, cognition, and coping among teachers in the educational setting.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the levels of mental workload and the coping of Junior high school teachers in a large-sized division in an urbanized city in Southern Negros during the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions. 1) the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of classroom management, teaching loads, administrative tasks and paperwork, ancillary tasks; 2) the level of coping of the junior high school teachers according to the area of problem focused, emotion focused; 3) the significant difference in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers when grouped according to the variables; 4) the significant difference in the level of coping of the Junior high school teachers when grouped according to the aforementioned variables; and 5) the significant relationship between the level of mental workload and the level of coping of Junior high school teachers.

Methodology:

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive research design. The descriptive research design is a scientific method that involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. Descriptive research is often used as a precursor to quantitative research designs, and the general overview gives some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing quantitatively (Shuttleworth, 2021). Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. Descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the research aims to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories (McCombes, 2020). A descriptive research design is valuable to this study as it provides facts and scientific judgment. Also, this design is appropriate for the study as it helps reveal patterns and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed, present situations, and determine the prevailing issues, making adequate and accurate interpretation of the data.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of seventy-two (72) junior high school teachers selected from five schools within one of the districts in the Schools Division of Southern Negros. Using stratified simple random sampling, the selection ensured adequate representation from each subgroup of the teacher population. This method allowed the inclusion of participants who could meaningfully share their experiences and insights related to the study's focus. Among the participating schools, one was an urban institution with a large student population, while the others were rural high schools. The study covered seventy-two (72) out of eighty-eight (88) total teachers from the cluster. The distribution of respondents was as follows: School A – 7 (9%), School B – 27 (38%), School C – 22 (31%), School D – 11 (15%), and School E – 5 (7%), totaling 72 respondents or 100% of the sample.

Instruments

To measure the mental workload of junior high school teachers in one of the divisions in Southern Negros, the researcher utilized a self-made questionnaire that underwent full validity and reliability testing. The instrument

consisted of three parts: Part I gathered respondents' profiles, including age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average monthly family income; Part II assessed mental workload through 20 items distributed across four areas—classroom management, teaching loads, administrative tasks, and paperwork or ancillary tasks; and Part III measured coping strategies through 17 items categorized under problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. All items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Always). The instrument's validity was established through face validation by three expert jurors, yielding a mean rating of 4.71, interpreted as "Excellent." Reliability was confirmed through a dry run involving 30 teachers from another district, with Cronbach's Alpha used to determine internal consistency. The computed reliability coefficients for both the mental workload and coping sections were 0.927, also interpreted as "Excellent," indicating that the instrument was both valid and highly reliable for the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Several steps were followed in conducting the study: first, a letter request was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent and the School Head seeking approval to conduct the study. The questionnaires were administered to target respondents after the approval was secured. The printed hard copies were distributed to the teachers after school hours.

The hard copies of the questionnaires were gathered, recorded, and analyzed after 3 days. The data gathered from the respondents' responses were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The raw data were transformed into numerical code guided by a coding manual. This allowed easier computer processing, statistical derivations, and tabular presentation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the encoded data in the computer.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 also used a descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of mental workload of the junior high school teachers in terms of Classroom Management, Teaching Loads, Administrative Tasks, Paper Work, and Ancillary Tasks.

Objective No. 2 also used a descriptive analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of mental workload of the junior high school teachers when grouped according to the variables.

Objective No. 3 also used a comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U-Test to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of mental workload of the junior high school teachers when grouped according to the variables.

Objective No. 4 also used a comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U-Test to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of coping of the public high school teachers when grouped and compared according to the variables.

Objective No. 5 also used a relational analytical scheme and Spearman rho to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the level of mental workload and the level of coping of the junior high school teachers.

Ethical Consideration

This study adheres to established ethical standards in educational research to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of all participants. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, including teachers, school heads, and other personnel involved. Participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Consent forms outlined the voluntary nature of participation and clarified that no incentives or coercive measures were used.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. Personal identifiers were removed from all data sets, and responses were coded to prevent traceability to individual participants or institutions. Data were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher for academic purposes. Findings were reported in aggregate form to avoid disclosing sensitive or identifiable information.

Results and Discussion:

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Table 1

Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Classroom Management

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. ensuring the activities are aligned with the learning objectives and provide opportunities for practice and application.	3.53	High Level
2. providing engaging instruction to foster a love for learning	3.32	Moderate Level
3. differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom	3.57	High Level
4. managing disruptive behavior in my classroom	3.42	Moderate Level
5. choosing activities that are appropriate for the age and learning styles of the students.	3.83	High Level
Overall Mean	3.53	High Level

The level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of Classroom Management was assessed, revealing a high overall level of mental workload with a mean score of 3.53. Several items demonstrated high levels of mental workload. For instance, choosing activities that are appropriate for the age and learning styles of the students scored a mean of 3.83. At the same time, they believed that differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom yielded a mean of 3.57. Additionally, ensuring the activities are aligned with the learning objectives and provide opportunities for practice and application at a high level with a 3.53. Though slightly lower, other indicators still reflect strong tendencies toward mental workload. The managing disruptive behavior in the classroom, with a mean of 3.42, while providing engaging instruction to foster a love for learning, scored 3.32 as the lowest mean. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers experienced a high level of workload in classroom management. Teachers frequently reported experiencing a high workload, especially in classroom management. The result implied that workload stems from various factors, including the demands of lesson planning, curriculum development, student evaluation, and maintaining a productive learning environment. The pressure to manage student behavior, address diverse learning needs, and handle administrative tasks contributes to this heavy workload. Teachers often face challenges in managing student behavior, which can be disruptive and time-consuming. The pressure to cover a large amount of material and prepare students for standardized tests can create time crunches and limit opportunities for personalized instruction. Addressing all students' individual learning styles and needs, including those with special needs, can be demanding. By addressing the root causes of high workload and implementing effective strategies for workload management, schools can create a more supportive and sustainable environment for teachers, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

The findings of Tarraya, H. (2023) revealed that heavy workloads influence teachers' overall effectiveness and efficiency in classroom management. Moreover, these issues need to be addressed critically to augment the resources the government can provide to improve access and quality of education, since education is vital in sustaining the Philippines' economy. Based on the findings of this analysis, the following strategies and actions are suggested: policymakers shall have a comprehensive review and analysis of the policy; reduce workloads; improve the data management system; improve the staffing system; hire additional non-teaching personnel; and quality teachers' mentoring programs through professional learning communities. The findings of Jomud et al. (2021) revealed that teachers have a high workload. Their burnout level is also high. Teachers' work performance, on the other hand, is very satisfactory. Workload has a significant impact on the level of burnout experienced by teachers. Workload has an impact on teachers' performance as well. To avoid stress and burnout, it is recommended that every school administrator adhere to proper workload assignment.

It is suggested that these policies on teachers' working hours must be reviewed and restructured based on the current setup of learning delivery and learners' evolving types and needs. The current situation requires different mechanisms to maximize resources and deliver the best possible quality of learning. There is a need for policy and advocacy monitoring to identify gaps in the development and implementation of policies, outline areas for improvement, provide valuable information to advocates and policymakers, and hold institutions that implement policy accountable for their activities. Hence, the researcher sees that it is valuable to re-examine the policies and re-evaluate their effectiveness, efficiency, economy, equity, and impact. Moreover, it recommends possible actions to improve and maximize its benefits not only for the teachers but also for the benefit of learners, the school, and the community.

Table 2

Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Teaching Loads

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. lacking adequate resources like teaching materials and technology for learning	3.49	Moderate Level
2. mentally fatigued after teaching a class or a series of classes	3.33	Moderate Level
3. maintaining focus and concentration while teaching	3.57	High Level
4. need to work extra hours to prepare for classes or to grade assignments	3.36	Moderate Level

5. allocating your time to preparing for classes, grading assignments, and other related tasks	4.46	High Level
Overall Mean	3.64	High Level

The level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of teaching load was evaluated, revealing a high overall level of mental workload with a mean score of 3.64. Items demonstrated high levels of mental workload. For instance, allocating your time to preparing for classes, grading assignments, and other related tasks scored a mean of 4.46, while maintaining focus and concentration while teaching yielded a mean of 3.57. Though slightly lower, other indicators still reflect strong tendencies toward mental workload. Lacking adequate resources like teaching materials and technology for learning, needing extra hours to prepare for classes or grade assignments, and being mentally fatigued after teaching a class or a series of classes while providing engaging instruction to foster a love for learning are interpreted as moderate level. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers experienced a high level of workload in teaching loads.

Teachers are indeed experiencing high levels of workload and its associated challenges. Research indicates that excessive workload significantly contributes to teacher stress, burnout, and even leaving the profession. Teachers were burdened with teaching loads and paperwork, data collection, and other administrative duties that take away from instructional time. Lack of adequate resources, including sufficient staffing and materials, can exacerbate workload issues in teaching and learning.

The teaching hours have been increasingly sidelined by the heavy workload and many other responsibilities and roles that teachers play. Teachers are often tasked with administrative and ancillary work, including paperwork, training and seminars, budget-related tasks, disaster response, health, etc. Aside from these, teachers were likewise expected to participate in various government programs, such as mass immunization activities, deworming, conditional cash transfers, feeding programs, population census-taking, anti-illegal drug efforts, and elections, to name a few (David et al., 2019).

Research suggests that teacher workload directly impacts student outcomes, as stressed and burned-out teachers may be unable to provide the best learning experience. Schools must invest in resources that can reduce teacher workload, such as technology, support staff, and smaller class sizes. School leaders must actively listen to teachers' concerns about workload and address them meaningfully.

Table 3

Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Administrative Tasks and Paperwork

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. pressure to meet deadlines or productivity targets	4.18	High Level
2. lacking resources like technology, support to effectively manage workload	4.50	Very High Level
3. lacking support receive from supervisor or colleagues regarding workload	4.22	High Level
4. experiencing interruptions or distractions while working on administrative tasks	3.79	High Level
5. providing support to the advocacies of our school leadership like in sports programs or culture and the arts.	4.18	High Level
Overall Mean	4.18	High Level

The level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of administrative tasks and paperwork was assessed, revealing a high overall level of mental workload with a mean score of 4.18. The item demonstrated very high levels of mental workload, lacking resources like technology and support to manage the workload, with a mean of 4.50. For instance, lacking support from supervisors or colleagues regarding workload scored a mean of 4.22, and pressure to meet deadlines or productivity targets, and providing support to the advocacies of the school leadership, like in sports programs or culture and the arts, yielded a mean of 4.18. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers experienced a high level of workload in Administrative Tasks and Paperwork.

The result implied that teachers struggle with a high level of mental workload to meet the deadlines with all the required paperwork in a school that lacks resources like technology to support teachers. On the other hand, Ilyassova (2018) obtained different results from her case study on workload intensification, which shows that although heavy workloads lead to some negative outcomes like high emotional stress and feelings of tiredness that hamper the teachers' capability to teach, it also offers practical experience for teachers, particularly on their professional growth and development. The findings of Tarraya (2020) support this claim because teacher leadership, in which teachers take on administrative and leadership roles, encourages teachers to be leaders, analytical thinkers, proactive, and to initiate progressive practices. Moreover, teaching effectiveness does not depend on the tasks and functions given

to the teachers; hence, they still achieve satisfactory ratings even though they are bombarded with designation and responsibility (Magalong & Torreon, 2021).

Table 4

Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Ancillary Tasks

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. connecting with benefactors to provide ample school support.	4.32	High Level
2. developing instructional materials and designing lesson plans.	4.74	Very High Level
3. supervising extracurricular activities like clubs and sports, and engaging in community outreach.	3.88	High Level
4. manage and assessing student behavior to provide guidance on academic and personal matters.	3.96	High Level
5. attending workshops, conferences, and trainings to enhance their skills and knowledge.	4.25	High Level
Overall Mean	4.23	High Level

The level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of Ancillary Tasks was evaluated, indicating a high overall level of mental workload with a mean score of 4.23. Items demonstrated very high levels of mental workload in developing instructional materials and designing lesson plans, with a mean of 4.74. Other indicators, though slightly lower, reflect strong tendencies toward mental workload.

Attending workshops, conferences, and trainings to enhance their skills and knowledge rate with 4.25; while connecting with benefactors to provide ample school support rated with 4.32 as interpreted as with high level. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers experienced high level of workload in terms of Ancillary Tasks.

Teachers experienced a high workload related to ancillary tasks, which can negatively impact their teaching performance and well-being. These tasks, which are in addition to their core teaching duties, include administrative work, paperwork, attending seminars, and participating in various government programs. The heavy workload from these tasks can lead to stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction. Results have shown that teachers are often burdened with excessive paperwork and administrative demands, taking away time from their primary role of teaching and impacting their work-life balance.

The findings of Tarraya (2020) support this claim because teacher leadership in teachers taking on administrative and leadership roles which encourages teachers to be leaders, analytical thinkers, proactive, and initiate progressive practices. Moreover, teaching effectiveness does not depend on the tasks and functions given to the teachers, hence, they still achieve satisfactory ratings despite the fact that they are bombarded with designation and responsibility (Magalong & Torreon, 2021). These findings suggest that the amount of workload truly influences teaching learning effectiveness. This is supported by the claims of David et al (2019) that the actual teaching hours have been increasingly sidelined by the heavy workload and the multitude of other responsibilities and roles that teachers play.

Table 5

Level of Coping of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Problem Focused

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. proactively plan my lessons to ensure I have enough time to teach.	4.19	High Level
2. seek advice from experienced colleagues when facing a challenge.	4.19	High Level
3. ask for support from the school principal or administration.	4.64	Very High Level
4. try to adapt my teaching methods to better meet the needs of my students.	3.76	High Level
5. prioritize tasks to complete my workload within a given timeframe.	3.96	High Level
6. use time management strategies to organize my day effectively	4.15	High Level
7. seek support from parents/guardians to address specific concerns.	4.64	Very High Level
8. try to find creative ways to make my lessons more engaging.	3.76	High Level
9. participate in professional development activities to enhance my skills.	3.96	High Level
10. actively seek resources (books, online articles) to address specific issues.	4.15	High Level
Overall Mean	4.14	High Level

The level of coping of the Junior high school teachers in the area of Problem Focused was evaluated, revealing a high overall level of mental workload with a mean score of 4.14 interpreted as with high level of coping. The coping of the teachers in terms of problem focused, teachers asked for support from the school principal or administration and seek support from parents/guardians to address specific concerns were rated 4.64 interpreted as very high level. To

asked for administrative support as a teacher, be prepared with specific, observable issues, present solutions or suggestions to address problems, and request a meeting to discuss how the principal can provide resources, professional development, or support in fostering a more positive and collaborative school environment to manage stress and improve well-being. Other indicators demonstrated high levels of coping. The following were also the coping of the teachers that included making proactively plans for my lessons to ensure I have enough time to teach; and seeking advice from experienced colleagues when facing a challenge. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers were trying their best to cope with all the challenges of heavy workloads in teaching and learning process.

These teachers were able to cope up with challenges due to brainstorming with co-teachers, previous experience, and positive thinking, explored the factors faced by teachers in curriculum implementation. Findings revealed that the curriculum transformation process, contributed to the dissatisfaction of teachers regarding the implementation of the new curriculum. Recommendations were formulated by empowering teachers, for the effective implementation of the curriculum. (Bhandari, 2020). But the lack of sophisticated technology and experience in developing an online learning platform is the main challenge that faced educators and academic institutions worldwide. Moreover, according to the International Telecommunication Union (2019), although 93% of the world's population lives within covered Internet zones, about 53% only utilizes the Internet which is considered as an ancillary obstacle facing the continuity of the educational process (Union, 2019) by teachers to cope with depression, anxiety, and stress.

One coping mechanism that has been found to be effective in managing mental health challenges among teachers is social support. Teachers often rely on support from colleagues, friends, and family to share their concerns, seek advice, and receive emotional validation (Guglielmi et al., 2019; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Social support can provide a buffer against the negative effects of mental health challenges, as it can foster a sense of belonging, reduce feelings of isolation, and provide opportunities for problem-solving and emotional expression.

Another coping mechanism commonly employed by teachers is self-care. Taking care of one's physical, emotional, and mental well-being through activities such as exercise, mindfulness, and leisure pursuits can help teachers manage stress, anxiety, and depression (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Waters & Loton, 2020). Engaging in self-care activities can promote relaxation, boost mood, and improve overall well-being, allowing teachers to better cope with the demands of their profession. Furthermore, problem-focused coping, which involves actively addressing and solving the source of stress or problem, has been found to be effective in managing mental health challenges among teachers (Guglielmi et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Problem-focused coping strategies may include seeking professional help, setting boundaries, and prioritizing tasks to manage workload and reduce stress.

One common coping strategy identified in recent literature is problem-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing the stressful situation and finding solutions to resolve it. For example, a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2020) found that elementary teachers used problem-focused coping strategies, such as seeking support from colleagues, engaging in collaborative lesson planning, and utilizing available resources, to address challenges related to classroom management and student behavior. This approach allows teachers to take control of the situation and work towards resolving the stressor.

Table 6
Level of Coping of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area Emotion Focused

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I ...</i>		
1. Writing down thoughts and feelings can help process emotions and gain perspective	3.76	High Level
2. Practicing mindfulness or meditation can help calm the mind and regulate emotions	3.96	High Level
3. Focusing on the positive aspects of a situation can help shift perspective and reduce negative emotions.	4.15	High Level
4. Talking to friends, family, or a therapist can provide emotional support and help process feelings	4.64	Very High Level
5. Changing one's perspective on a situation can help reduce negative emotions	3.76	High Level
6. Engaging in activities like art, music, or dance can provide an outlet for emotional expression.	3.96	High Level
7. Practicing forgiveness, both of oneself and others, can help release negative emotions and promote healing.	4.15	High Level
Overall Mean	4.06	High Level

Table 6 presents level of coping of the Junior high school teachers in the area Emotion Focused teachers. The overall mean score is 4.06, interpreted as very high level. Item No. 4, got the highest mean score of 4.64 which states talking to friends, family, or a therapist can provide emotional support and help process feelings interpreted as very high level. Among the coping of teachers were stated in item 3 and 7 focusing on the positive aspects of a situation

can help shift perspective and reduce negative emotions and practicing forgiveness, both of oneself and others, can help release negative emotions and promote healing with a mean of 4.15 interpreted as high level.

The result entailed stress among junior school teachers can have negative effects on their mental health and well-being. Chronic stress has been associated with increased risk of burnout, depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders among teachers (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978; Waters & Loton, 2020). These negative outcomes not only impact teachers' personal well-being but can also affect their job performance and quality of teaching, which can ultimately impact student outcomes. In addition to the sources and effects of stress, research has also explored coping mechanisms used by public high school teachers to manage stress. Coping can be adaptive or maladaptive and play a crucial role in teachers' ability to effectively manage stressors. Coping strategies such as seeking social support, engaging in self-care activities, and using problem-focused coping have been found to be effective in helping teachers manage stress and reduce its negative impact on their mental health and well-being (Guglielmi et al., 2019; Ingersoll & Strong, 2021).

The impact of stress on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction has also been investigated. Studies have found that high levels of stress among teachers can lead to increased burnout, emotional exhaustion, and decreased job satisfaction (Klassen et al., 2017; Montgomery & Rupp, 2018). Furthermore, stress in the teaching profession has been linked to negative mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress (Kyriacou, 2018; Trus, 2019).

In response to stress, teachers have been found to utilize various coping strategies. Coping strategies such as seeking support from colleagues, engaging in self-care activities, and using problem-focused coping strategies, such as planning and time management, have been identified as effective strategies to manage stress in the teaching profession (Trus, 2019; Wong et al., 2020). However, some teachers may also use maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance or denial, which may have negative long-term consequences for their well-being (Montgomery & Rupp, 2018).

Table 7

Difference in the Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Classroom Management when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	39.06	559.000	0.267	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	34.21				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	40.05	461.000	0.297		Not Significant
	Higher	51	35.04				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	39.06	559.000	0.267		Not Significant
	Longer	38	34.21				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	33.45	518.000	0.118		Not Significant
	Higher	32	40.31				

Table 7 indicates the difference in the level of in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of classroom management when grouped and compared according to variables.

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.118 to 0.297 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as "not significant".

Therefore, the hypothesis that states "there is no significant difference in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of classroom management when grouped and compared according to age, highest educational attainment, and length of services, and average family monthly income" was "accepted".

The result of the study implies that, irrespective of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income of the respondents, their ability to cope with the changing methods of instructional delivery in the classroom remains high. Furthermore, this result indicates that the teachers, regardless of their demographic groupings, have a high mental workload in classroom management. Teaching has been associated with increased stress (Carroll et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). High teacher stress is associated with physical and mental health problems and can have negative occupational consequences. The latter are associated with professional burnout and turnover of qualified teachers (Puhakka et al., 2021; Gearhart et al., 2022). Therefore, well-being is important for teachers, the school community, and future society (Yu et al., 2022).

Table 8

Difference in the Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Teaching Loads when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	35.93	626.500	0.820	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	37.01				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	36.52	535.000	0.995		Not Significant
	Higher	51	36.49				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	35.93	626.500	0.820		Not Significant
	Longer	38	37.01				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	36.31	632.500	0.930		Not Significant
	Higher	32	36.73				

Table 8 indicates the difference in the level of in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of Teaching Loads when grouped and compared according to variables.

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.820 to 0.995 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as "not significant".

Therefore, the hypothesis that states "there is no significant difference in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of Teaching Loads when grouped and compared according to age, highest educational attainment, and length of services, and average family monthly income" was "accepted".

The result of the study implies that irrespective of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income of the respondents, their ability to cope with the changing instructional delivery methods remains high. Furthermore, this result indicates that teachers have a high mental workload regardless of their demographic groupings.

Table 9

Difference in the Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Administrative tasks and paperwork when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	38.19	588.500	0.510	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	34.99				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	40.67	448.000	0.271		Not Significant
	Higher	51	34.78				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	38.19	588.500	0.510		Not Significant
	Longer	38	34.99				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	35.04	581.500	0.501		Not Significant
	Higher	32	38.33				

Table 9 indicates the difference in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of administrative tasks and paperwork when grouped and compared according to variables

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.271 to 0.510 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as "not significant".

Therefore, the hypothesis that states "there is no significant difference in the level of mental workload of the public high school teachers in the area of administrative tasks and paperwork when grouped and compared according to age, highest educational attainment, and length of service, and average family monthly income" was "accepted".

Table 10

Difference in the Level of Mental Workload of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Ancillary Tasks when grouped and compared according to variables

Grouped and compared according to variables							
Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	36.43	643.500	0.977	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	36.57				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	35.93	523.500	0.880		Not Significant
	Higher	51	36.74				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	36.43	643.500	0.977		Not Significant
	Longer	38	36.57				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	36.78	629.000	0.900		Not Significant
	Higher	32	36.16				

Table 10 indicates the difference in the level of mental workload of the Junior high school teachers in the area of ancillary tasks when grouped and compared according to variables

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.880 to 0.977 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as “not significant”.

Therefore, the hypothesis that states “there is no significant difference in the level of mental workload of the public high school teachers in the area of ancillary task when grouped and compared according to age, highest educational attainment, and length of services, and average family monthly income” was “accepted”.

Table 11

Difference in the Level of Coping of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of problem-focused when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	35.07	597.500	0.578	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	37.78				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	37.62	512.000	0.767		Not Significant
	Higher	51	36.04				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	35.07	597.500	0.578		Not Significant
	Longer	38	37.78				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	37.53	599.000	0.636		Not Significant
	Higher	32	35.22				

Table 11 indicates the difference in the level of coping of the junior high school teachers in the problem-focused area when grouped and compared according to variables.

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.578 to 0.767 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as “not significant”.

This implies that the demographic profile provides teachers with the same outlook and opinion when assessing their own coping with emotion-focused. This suggests that the demographic profile has no significant impact on the ability of the teachers to cope with emotional focus. This further means those teachers have the exact coping mechanism in problem-focused situations.

Table 12

Difference in the Level of Coping of the Junior High School Teachers in the Area of Emotion Focused when grouped and compared according to variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	34	34.90	591.500	0.532	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	38	37.93				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	21	37.48	515.000	0.796		Not Significant
	Higher	51	36.10				
Length of Service	Shorter	34	34.90	591.500	0.532		Not Significant
	Longer	38	37.93				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	40	37.60	596.000	0.612		Not Significant
	Higher	32	35.13				

Table 12 indicates the difference in the level of coping of the Junior high school teachers in the area of emotion-focused coping when grouped and compared according to variables.

When grouped according to all variables of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, all the computed *p*-values ranging from 0.532 to 0.796 were higher than the 0.05 level of significance, which is interpreted as "not significant".

This implies that the demographic profile provides teachers with the same outlook and opinion when assessing their own coping with emotion-focused. This suggests that the demographic profile does not significantly impact the teachers' ability to cope with emotional focus. This means those teachers have the same level of emotional focus and coping mechanisms.

Table 13

Relationship between the Level of Mental Workload and the Level of Coping of the Junior High School Teachers

Variable	Rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of Mental Workload	0.404	0.000	0.01	Significant
Level of Coping				

Table 13 presents the relationship between the level of mental workload and the level of coping of the Junior high school teachers. The computed rho-value was 0.404, and the *p*-value was 0.01, which were lower than the 0.05 level of significance, interpreted as significant. Thus, the hypothesis that states a significant relationship exists between the level of mental workload and the level of coping of the public high school teachers was rejected.

The study's result implies that the workload level of public schools influences their coping. This means that the teachers can perform well despite trying to cope personally or as a group. The ability of the teachers to perform, despite some coping issues, will be a plus factor for the education of public elementary school children. This is also an indication that most teachers are empowered. The teacher workload policy impacts teachers, learners, schools, and the community. Moreover, it affects the teachers as professionals and their personal lives. Wijaya & Prastuti (2021) concluded that most teachers experience burnout, which means that teachers experience work exhaustion or burnout mentally or physically because of increased job demands with lower coping stress abilities.

The result revealed that most teachers experience burnout, a symptom of emotional exhaustion and low self-esteem. All teachers have sufficient or moderate coping stress abilities, meaning that all teachers can cope with all situations and perceived demands by being able to withstand the pressure from their environment. Some teachers illustrate coping with stress by focusing on problems, and some focus on emotions. All teachers have a moderate to heavy workload, meaning they acquire a mental or physical workload considered heavy. The workload experienced by teachers is divided into mental, physical, time, effort, and performance workloads, as well as feelings of frustration experienced by teachers with their work.

The Philippine educational system is mandated to contribute to the maximum attainment of national development and unity, with the framework based on a free and democratic system. Education is given high regard in the Philippines and, to a great extent, serves as an indicator of the quality of the country's sociocultural, economic, and educational growth because it creates, develops, enhances, and inculcates the capabilities of every human being.

The school provides the citizenry with relevant knowledge, skills, attitude, and values necessary for growth and development (DepEd, 2021).

Conclusions:

The study revealed that most respondents were older, held master's degrees, had shorter tenures, and lower family incomes. Overall, junior high school teachers exhibited a high level of mental workload in areas such as classroom management, teaching loads, administrative tasks, paperwork, and ancillary duties, as well as a high level of coping both in problem-focused and emotion-focused aspects. No significant differences were found in mental workload and coping levels when grouped according to demographic variables; however, a significant relationship existed between mental workload and coping, indicating that teachers with higher workloads tended to employ more coping strategies. The findings concluded that high mental workload increases the risk of stress and burnout, manifesting through emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Despite these challenges, teachers remained committed and performed their duties effectively, though their welfare is often overlooked. The similar workload and coping levels across groups suggest that factors beyond demographics influence teachers' mental strain. Teaching, being a noble profession, entails extensive responsibilities that may lead to burnout and decreased well-being, yet teachers continue to adapt through resilience and pedagogical innovation, particularly in the new normal. The study emphasized that heavy workloads negatively affect teachers' health, time management, and classroom efficiency, although some teachers still perform satisfactorily by viewing added tasks as opportunities for growth and leadership. It is recommended that teachers practice work-life balance, emotional regulation, and continuous professional development. Policymakers and administrators should review workload policies, streamline redundant tasks, digitize school data systems, ensure equitable task distribution, and hire more non-teaching staff. Strengthening mentoring programs, professional learning communities, and capability-building initiatives, as well as reallocating non-teaching duties to other agencies, are also advised to help teachers manage workload effectively and sustain well-being and job performance.

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