

Empowering Educators: Cultivating Resilience in Secondary Teachers through Effective Coping Mechanisms

Clareisse F. Gabinete¹, and Elvin F. Gaac²

ABSTRACT

This study explored the stressors and coping mechanisms influencing the resilience and well-being of secondary school teachers in the District of San Agustin. The research aimed to identify key stressors related to family, school environment, and policies, and examine coping mechanisms employed by teachers. The study targeted all 215 secondary teachers in the district, with qualitative data gathered through interviews and focus groups using random sampling. A predetermined number of schools were randomly selected, and a random sample of teachers was chosen from each school using a random number generator. This approach enhanced the representativeness and external validity of the findings by ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. Quantitative data were collected through surveys and analyzed using the mean to determine the most common stressors, while thematic analysis was applied to identify prevalent coping mechanisms. Major stressors included workload, student behavior, administrative demands, financial constraints, time management issues, and family conflicts. Common coping strategies were social support, time management techniques, and self-care practices. Based on the findings, the study proposed a tailored stress management program aimed at improving resilience and well-being among teachers. Recommendations included fostering peer support networks, providing professional development workshops, and implementing institutional support strategies focusing on work-life balance, financial stability, and stress management. The results underscore the need for a holistic, evidence-based approach to support educators in managing stress and enhancing their overall well-being in the teaching profession.

Keywords: *stressors, coping mechanism, stress management program*

INTRODUCTION

Secondary teachers often face a multitude of stressors in their daily professional lives, including heavy workloads, student behavior issues, administrative demands, and insufficient resources. These challenges can significantly affect their mental and emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness as educators. In the context of the District of San Agustin, it is essential to understand the specific stressors impacting secondary teachers in order to develop targeted interventions that support their resilience and promote a sustainable teaching environment.

Equally important is identifying the coping mechanisms secondary teachers employ to manage these stressors. Coping mechanisms, defined as the cognitive and behavioral strategies individuals use to deal with stressful situations, play a central role in maintaining psychological well-being and professional functioning. Recent studies emphasize the importance of these mechanisms in promoting resilience among educators.

Despite the growing body of research, a clear gap remains in understanding which coping mechanisms are most effective in cultivating resilience among secondary school teachers in localized settings. Most existing studies offer general strategies, often lacking context-specific data that could inform tailored interventions. Furthermore, the relationship between effective coping mechanisms and broader aspects of teacher well-being, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and mental health, has not been thoroughly explored in many local educational settings.

✉ : clareisse.gabinete@deped.gov.ph

¹Calatrava National High School;

²Romblon State University, Odiongan, Romblon

Received 6 May 2025; Revised 23 July 2025; Accepted 17 December 2025



Another pressing gap lies in the design and implementation of stress management programs specifically tailored to the unique challenges faced by secondary teachers. Although general stress reduction programs exist in educational systems, few are informed by empirical data gathered directly from teachers themselves.

In light of these research gaps, this study focuses on three core objectives: (1) identifying the key stressors experienced by secondary teachers in the District of San Agustín, (2) examining the specific coping mechanisms that promote resilience and overall well-being, and (3) designing an effective, evidence-based stress management program tailored to teachers' actual needs. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to empower educators and promote a more supportive teaching environment. The findings may contribute to policy-making, school leadership strategies, and professional development initiatives that prioritize teacher well-being—ultimately benefiting both teachers and the learners they serve.

Synthesis of Related Literature

The discourse on stress management and teacher resilience underscores the multifaceted nature of challenges faced by educators and the critical need for effective coping mechanisms and support structures within educational institutions. Stress, as defined by various scholars, emerges from a multitude of factors, both internal and external, and manifests in physical, mental, and emotional symptoms. It is crucial to recognize the stages and symptoms of stress, ranging from subtle signs to severe manifestations, and to address them proactively to prevent burnout.

Burnout, a consequence of prolonged exposure to stress, is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Its prevalence among educators highlights the pressing need for strategies to manage stress and foster resilience. The Job Demand-Resource model and Maslach's three-dimensional model of burnout provide frameworks for understanding the interplay between job demands, individual resources, and burnout outcomes.

Effective stress management involved a range of strategies, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral approaches, as well as social support and lifestyle changes. These strategies aim to mitigate the negative impact of stress on educators' well-being and job performance. Additionally, creating supportive work environments, providing adequate resources, and promoting work-life balance are crucial in enhancing teacher resilience and preventing burnout.

Teacher resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt positively to challenging situations, emerges as a key factor in mitigating the effects of stress and promoting

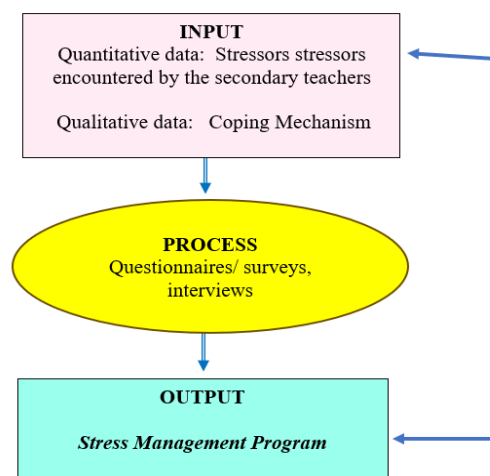


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

job satisfaction and effectiveness. Resilience competencies encompass flexibility, dynamics, and resistance, emphasizing the ability to adapt, embrace change, and recover quickly from adversity. Factors contributing to teacher resilience include coping strategies, social support, teaching skills, personal characteristics, and supportive work environments.

The discourse on stress management and teacher resilience highlights the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by educators and the importance of establishing effective coping mechanisms within supportive institutional environments. Stress among teachers manifested physically, mentally, and emotionally typically arises from cumulative work demands, interpersonal conflicts, and systemic pressures. This aligns with the findings which emphasized that secondary teachers in San Agustín experience significant stress from family responsibilities, school-based challenges, and administrative requirements.

When teachers consistently navigate these conditions without adequate support, their professional efficacy declines, potentially compromising overall school performance. Adding to this, Chang (2009) reinforces that teacher burnout is often exacerbated by emotional labor the constant requirement for teachers to manage their emotions while supporting students. This is particularly evident in environments where class sizes are large, behavioral problems are persistent, and administrative demands remain high.

Recent literature also emphasizes the role of coping mechanisms in strengthening teacher resilience. A study by Beltman et al. (2011) highlights how collegial relationships, mentorship, and collaborative school environments buffer the negative effects of stress. These findings align with teachers' emphasis on

collaboration and open communication as major coping mechanisms in the local context, particularly when dealing with policy-related stress and school-wide expectations. In addition to interpersonal support, workplace conditions significantly influence stress levels. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) found that school climate, administrative leadership, autonomy, and recognition contribute directly to teacher motivation and well-being. When organizational structures promote clarity, fairness, and participation in decision-making, teachers report higher resilience and lower stress.

The present study reflects similar perceptions from teachers who value supportive leadership and collaborative problem-solving structures within their schools. Taken collectively, these studies reinforce the central idea that stress management and resilience-building are not merely individual responsibilities but institutional imperatives. A holistic approach integrating personal coping strategies, systemic support, and collaborative school culture is essential for ensuring teacher well-being and long-term professional sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to comprehensively understand the stressors encountered by secondary teachers and the coping mechanisms they employ to build resilience. Quantitative data were gathered through questionnaires and surveys to identify and measure the key stressors faced by secondary teachers in the District of San Agustin. These instruments helped quantify the prevalence and intensity of various stressors, such as balancing work and family responsibilities, large class sizes, limited support, overwhelming workloads, and administrative challenges.

Simultaneously, qualitative data were collected through interviews to explore the coping mechanisms utilized by teachers to manage stress and enhance their resilience. These interviews provided in-depth insights collaboration with colleagues, and seeking support from personal networks.

By analyzing both sets of data, the study was able to identify the most significant stressors and the most effective coping mechanisms. This comprehensive understanding was then used to design a tailored stress management program aimed at enhancing the resilience and well-being of secondary teachers in the District of San Agustin. The program focuses on promoting work-life balance, providing professional development opportunities, behavior management training, and fostering a collaborative work environment to improve teacher resilience, job satisfaction, and ultimately student engagement and achievement. into the strategies teachers use, including task management, self-care, effective communication,

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized a mixed-method approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the resilience of secondary teachers. This methodology began with the collection and analysis of quantitative data to identify patterns or trends, followed by qualitative methods to delve deeper into the experiences and perceptions of participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study presented a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors affecting teacher resilience (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2019).

For the quantitative phase, data were gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire that was developed based on a review of existing literature and validated resilience and coping theory frameworks. The instrument included sections measuring demographic information, job satisfaction, perceived stressors, coping strategies, and levels of resilience. Prior to full deployment, the instrument underwent content validation by field experts and a pilot testing phase to ensure its reliability and validity. Internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure measurement accuracy.

To determine the relationship between coping mechanisms and overall well-being, statistical analyses such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed. These methods helped identify the strength and nature of relationships between variables such as types of coping strategies (e.g., problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidant coping) and indicators of well-being and resilience.

In the qualitative phase, data collection involved semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected subset of survey respondents who exhibited either high or low levels of resilience based on the quantitative results. This phase aimed to explore their personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in greater depth. The interview guide was self-developed but informed by the initial quantitative findings and relevant literature. All qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and insights that further contextualized and enriched the quantitative findings.

RESULTS

The summary provided in Table 1 offers a comprehensive overview of the key stressors encountered by secondary teachers in the District of San Agustin across three distinct areas: Family, School Environment, and Policies and Office Standards.

Table 1. Level of Key Stressors Encountered by the Secondary Teachers

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Family	4.45	0.56	Strongly Agree	1
School Environment	4.39	0.61	Strongly Agree	2
Policies and Office Standards	4.38	0.61	Strongly Agree	3
Overall	4.40	0.59	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 (*Strongly Agree*); 3.41 – 4.20 (*Agree*); 2.61 – 3.40 (*Neutral*); 1.81 – 2.60 (*Disagree*); and 1.00 – 1.80 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Remarkably, across all areas, the mean scores indicate a consensus among teachers, with ratings falling within the "Strongly Agree" category. This consensus underscores the pervasive nature of the challenges faced by educators in the district.

Notably, the highest mean score was recorded in the "Family" domain, with a mean of 4.45, indicating that balancing professional responsibilities with family obligations is a major source of stress for secondary teachers in San Agustín. This finding underscores the critical role of work-family balance in teacher well-being. Teachers often struggle to allocate adequate time for rest, personal care, and quality time with loved ones, which can lead to emotional exhaustion, decreased job satisfaction, and potential burnout. These challenges, if left unaddressed, may negatively affect not only the teacher's performance and mental health but also student outcomes, as emotionally strained educators may find it harder to remain effective and engaged in their instructional roles. This suggests the need for family-friendly workplace policies, such as flexible scheduling, mental health support, and programs that promote work-life harmony.

Conversely, the lowest mean score, though still within the "Strongly Agree" range, was found in the "School Environment" domain, with a mean of 4.39. This suggests that while challenges such as managing disruptive behavior, administrative workload, and school improvement pressures are present, they are perceived as slightly less burdensome compared to family-related stress. However, the consistently high scores across domains still signal a significant level of occupational stress that warrants attention. This finding implies that although school-related stressors are more manageable, there remains a strong need for organizational interventions—such as strengthened behavioral support systems, collaborative leadership, and improved school climate—to mitigate the cumulative stress experienced by teachers.

Together, these results highlight the interconnectedness of personal and professional domains in influencing teacher resilience and well-

being. Addressing both aspects through holistic and sustainable support systems can improve teacher retention, satisfaction, and ultimately the quality of education provided.

Coping Mechanisms Utilized by the Teachers to Manage Stress and Build Resilience

The following are the different themes that emerge from the study:

Theme 1: Family Responsibilities

Balancing the demands of being a teacher while nurturing a fulfilling family life requires a deliberate and proactive approach. Participants shared that they developed a variety of coping strategies, such as task prioritization, open family communication, mindfulness, and delegation, that helped them maintain a functional work-life balance. The effectiveness of these coping mechanisms is evident in how teachers reported feeling more emotionally stable, less overwhelmed, and more capable of managing both professional and personal demands. These strategies align with known protective factors in resilience literature, reinforcing their relevance in reducing stress and promoting well-being.

Theme 2: Scaffolding Matters

Teachers emphasized the importance of having emotional and structural support systems, referred to here as "scaffolding", to manage the dual pressures of work and family. During times of family conflict or emotional strain, strategies such as boundary-setting, seeking advice from trusted peers, and breaking down tasks into manageable parts were reported as highly beneficial. The effectiveness of these approaches was validated by the participants' ability to sustain classroom performance, even in the face of personal stressors. Moreover, these findings support the theory that structured coping and social support enhance an individual's ability to adapt during crises.

Table 2. Proposed Stress Management Program

Training Area	Description	Target	Objectives	Time/Duration
Stress Management Basics	A foundational workshop introducing various stress management techniques such as deep breathing, journaling, and identifying stress triggers.	All Secondary Teachers	To equip teachers with essential knowledge and coping skills for recognizing and managing stress effectively in daily life.	1-day seminar (8 hours)
Family Engagement Strategies	Focuses on equipping teachers with tools for positive family communication, setting emotional boundaries, and maintaining support systems at home.	All Secondary Teachers	To help teachers strengthen family relationships through effective communication, shared expectations, and balance between home and work roles.	1 half-day session (4 hours)
Support for Managing School-Based Stressors	Provides practical strategies for handling common school-related stressors such as classroom management, paperwork, and administrative pressure.	All Secondary Teachers	To empower teachers with solutions such as peer mentoring, classroom behavior plans, and resource management to reduce job-related stress.	2 sessions, 3 hours each
Work-Life Balance and Self-Care	Offers techniques on time management, daily planning, digital detox, and self-care routines to help teachers maintain holistic well-being.	All Secondary Teachers	To enable teachers to set personal/professional boundaries, manage time wisely, and engage in regular self-care activities to avoid burnout.	1-day workshop (6 hours)
Collaboration and Communication Enhancement	Interactive sessions on conflict resolution, assertiveness, and active listening to improve relationships with colleagues and administrators.	All Secondary Teachers	To promote a culture of open communication and collaboration in the school community, reducing interpersonal stress and fostering a more positive work environment.	2 sessions, 2.5 hours each
Follow-up and Reflection Sessions	Reflective check-ins where teachers discuss what techniques worked, peer share, and suggest improvements for ongoing stress management.	All Secondary Teachers	To assess the impact of the program, encourage continuous reflection, and adapt strategies based on real classroom and personal experiences.	Monthly 1-hour sessions (3x)

Theme 3: Maintaining Open Communication

Participants consistently cited open communication as a fundamental coping mechanism in the school environment. Teachers who maintained transparent dialogue with colleagues, administrators, and even students reported feeling more supported and less isolated. This, in turn, contributed to a more collaborative atmosphere and better problem-solving.

The effectiveness of this coping strategy is demonstrated by its positive impact on interpersonal relationships and school climate, as reported in interviews. Teachers noted fewer misunderstandings and greater teamwork, which directly contributed to their resilience and capacity to handle professional stress.

Theme 4: Task and Focus in the School Environment

Teachers employed practical coping strategies such as goal-setting, task prioritization, mindfulness, and feedback-seeking to manage workload and maintain mental clarity. These techniques were seen as effective based on participants' accounts of improved productivity, reduced anxiety, and greater job satisfaction. Additionally, the consistent implementation of these strategies helped teachers feel more in control of their schedules, allowing them to meet demands without burnout. The effectiveness of these coping mechanisms is justified by their alignment with time management and cognitive-behavioral techniques, both of which are widely recognized as effective in stress reduction and performance enhancement.

Theme 5: Collaboration is the Key

Collaboration emerged as a vital coping mechanism, especially when navigating school policies and expectations. Teachers who actively engaged in professional development, sought peer mentorship, and participated in collaborative decision-making processes felt more competent and confident in their roles. The effectiveness of collaboration as a coping mechanism is evident in the shared sense of community and reduced role ambiguity experienced by participants. This aligns with existing research suggesting that collegial support systems are essential in sustaining teacher morale and professional growth.

Proposed Stress Management Program

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by secondary teachers in the District of San Agustín, it is evident that a tailored stress management program is urgently needed to support teacher resilience and well-being. The data highlights the multifaceted nature of the stressors experienced by teachers, ranging from overwhelming workloads to financial constraints and emotional strain. By prioritizing measures to address these challenges, such as improving financial stability, promoting work-life balance, and providing support for managing stressors, the district can create a more sustainable environment for educators. Moreover, supporting teacher well-being not only benefits educators but also positively impacts student success. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are better equipped to create positive learning environments and foster student engagement and achievement. Therefore, addressing the challenges faced by teachers through a stress management program can enhance teacher resilience, job satisfaction, and ultimately, student outcomes.

Tailored interventions are crucial to effectively address the specific needs of teachers in San Agustín. Generic solutions may not adequately tackle the diverse

challenges faced by educators. Hence, collaborative efforts should focus on implementing strategies to manage disruptive behavior, support diverse student needs, and foster partnerships with parents to create a conducive work environment. Additionally, systemic changes are necessary to support teachers in San Agustín comprehensively. From overwhelming workloads to administrative challenges, teachers encounter numerous stressors that require a collective effort from all stakeholders to alleviate. Creating a supportive environment for teaching and learning is essential for both teacher well-being and student success.

Effective communication and collaboration are identified as key components in managing the challenges faced by teachers. Therefore, the proposed stress management program should incorporate strategies for enhancing communication and fostering collaboration among educators, administrators, and other stakeholders.

The proposed stress management program will prioritize a holistic approach to well-being, including task management, self-care, and seeking support from colleagues. By empowering teachers with proactive coping strategies and providing them with the necessary resources and support, the program aims to optimize productivity, enhance resilience, and promote overall well-being among secondary teachers in the District of San Agustín.

CONCLUSION

Secondary teachers in the District of San Agustín face significant stressors, particularly in balancing professional responsibilities with family obligations, managing time effectively, and navigating administrative demands. These stressors impact teachers' emotional well-being and daily functioning, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive support systems to foster a sustainable teaching environment.

Teachers utilize a range of coping mechanisms to manage stress and build resilience. Key strategies include including task prioritization, practicing self-care, and seeking emotional and professional support from colleagues and family. Additionally, effective communication, collaboration, and breaking down complex tasks into achievable goals emerged as essential strategies that enable teachers to manage stress, prevent burnout, and maintain overall well-being.

In response, a tailored stress management program was proposed to meet the specific needs of secondary teachers in San Agustín. This program emphasizes work-life balance, professional development, behavior management strategies, and fostering a collaborative and supportive school culture. Through the

implementation of this program, the district aims to enhance teacher resilience and job satisfaction, which in turn is expected to improve student engagement and academic performance.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors declare equal contributions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Beltman, S., Mansfield, C., & Price, A. (2011). Thriving not just surviving: A review of research on teacher resilience. *Educational Research Review*, 6(3), 185–207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2011.03.001>
- Chang, M. (2009). An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional nature of teachers' work. *Educational Psychology Review*, 21(3), 193–218. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/designing-and-conducting-mixed-methods-research/book241842>
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2019). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Burnout: A multidimensional perspective. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of organizational stress* (pp. 68–85). Oxford University Press. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911781/>
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2015). Job Satisfaction, Stress and Coping Strategies in the Teaching Profession-What Do Teachers Say?. *International education studies*, 8(3), 181-192.