

# Mental Health Challenges and Teaching Performance Mediated by Coping Mechanisms: Basis for an Action Plan

Mechelle Mea H. Josol, Riza Beltran-Salipong, PhD

Bohol Island State University, Clarin Campus Poblacion Norte, Clarin, Bohol

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## ABSTRACT

The research conducted a study to assess the effect of coping mechanisms on teacher performance and whether coping mechanisms serve as mediators in relation to teachers' mental health challenges in the district of Calape. The researcher used surveys and the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) to evaluate teachers' mental health status and performance. The results indicated that most teachers in this study were afraid of how they will react to their past traumatic experiences. Although teachers have met their challenges through various coping strategies, the majority of them were able to cope with their issues. The highest ranked area of mental health from the Anti-Bullying Study was avoidance symptoms (Mean = 1.80, SD = 1.07) and the lowest score for cognitive and mood alterations (Mean = 1.29, SD = 1.12). For the area of Coping Strategies, the highest Mean is Problem Focused Coping (Mean = 3.25, SD = 0.65), while the lowest score is Avoidant Coping (Mean = 2.78, SD = 0.74). The performance rating of all participants was rated as Very Satisfactory (100% of teachers received this rating.) In addition, the results demonstrated that coping mechanisms do not mediate contentious between mental health challenges and teacher performance, since the mean indirect effect of coping mechanisms on mental health and teacher performance results is nonsignificant (estimate = 0.00205,  $p = 0.376$ ) and therefore does not support the existence of a mediating relationship. Furthermore, the relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health challenges to teacher performance is nonsignificant, therefore, there are no significant conditions necessary to support a mediating relationship. Therefore, even though teachers may have an abundance of challenges and difficulties, they may have overcome them with the need for coping strategies. Teachers are truly amazing in how they handle challenges and maintain their composure when faced with challenging situations. Further based on the findings of this investigation, it is the recommendation of the researcher for continuous professional development, ongoing peer-consultation and teacher activities to help promote the mental health and wellness of teachers.

**Keywords:** Challenged, Coping Mechanisms, Mediation, Mental Health, Teaching Performance

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is acknowledged by many as one of the most demanding professions which often expose teachers to high levels of stress. For teachers, specifically those at the elementary level, the long hours, limited supplies/resources, and the difficulty of maintaining work/life balance contributes to the emotional/psychological strain on them. (Dalid, 2025 pp. 287-295) Research has supported that mental health issues are continuing to be a significant issue for teachers and create anxiety or depression (Agyapong, 2022). The above noted facts emphasize the urgent need for improved support for teacher's well-being, thereby developing and enhancing teacher support systems within the educational system.

Teachers that experience mental health issues utilize coping strategies to help them through these situations. Alkhalwaldeh et al. (2023) define coping strategies as feelings, thoughts and/or actions that are utilized to cope with stress and negative feelings. These coping strategies are particularly helpful for teachers to overcome challenges and improve their situation (Agayon, 2022). Furthermore, these situations create a need to understand elementary teachers teaching performances relative to their mental health and the challenges that they face and what coping strategies they have utilized to address these challenges.

Although teacher's mental health continues to develop as an area of interest, the majority of local research has focused on prevalence, stress level, or burnout, neglecting to assess how these influence the teacher's performance. The relationship between teacher's performance and mental health challenges contains the mediating role of coping strategies, where by exploring teacher cope strategies will enhance the understanding of the teacher as a whole person rather than just a teacher.

To address these needs, this study will determine the influence of mental health challenges on the teaching performance of the Calape District Elementary teachers and the mediating role that coping strategies have on that relationship. There is a limited understanding of how mental health challenges influence the teaching performance of elementary teachers based on their daily emotional experience, professional engagement and interpersonal engagement. Thereby this study is an attempt to understand the relationship between levels of teacher mental health challenges and coping strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Republic Act No. 11036, also called the "Mental Health Act" establishes progressive measures for mental health services, and affirms that each Filipino citizen has a right to receive care as well as to obtain psychosocial support, with an emphasis on non-discrimination, and to have access for receiving these services. In particular, R A 11036 mandates that employers make mental health a priority for the well-being of their workforce through promotion of mental health in the workplace and encourages government agencies including DepEd to provide the resources needed to implement programs that improve the mental well-being of employees.

The World Health Organization (2025) supports R A 11036 as acknowledging that mental health is a vital component of an individual's total health, hence why the law states that all individuals experiencing mental health challenges should have access to mental health resources and support. R A 11036 seeks to promote education and awareness about mental health while reducing the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours related to mental ill health. Therefore, through improving the well-being of educators and all school personnel, the Mental Health Act will also improve the quality of education provided in the Philippines.

Under House Bill 6574, a mental and well-being office has been implemented by DepEd in each school division across the country. R A 11036 establishes that by the end of five years from the enactment, mental health professionals will be hired and deployed to public elementary and secondary schools, vocational institutions, and the DepEd's Central, Regional, and School Division Governance levels of offices to provide for the mental, emotional, and developmental health-related needs of all DepEd personnel including teachers and students. Furthermore, the Department of Education (DepEd) is putting into place rules and regulations (IRR) as set forth in Republic Act No. (RA) 12080, sometimes referred to as the "Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act". Its purpose is to ensure that every member of the education staff has the necessary support to both deliver good instructional performance and to achieve their overall mental health and well-being, thereby supporting their students' learning and allowing them to achieve the expectations placed on them. Additionally, the law encourages each School Division Office (SDO) to establish a mental health and well-being office that is administered by and supervised by DepEd, to ensure that both the educators and the students being served by DepEd in the jurisdiction of that SDO have access to mental health and well-being support services.

In the Philippines, there are many negative consequences related to teachers' mental health. As evidenced by reports of teachers' work overloads, the large amount of additional non-instructional duties assigned to them, the lack of instructional resources, and their contact with students who may also lack adequate resources, there has been a decline in their ability to develop and use learning resources for their students (Clarion, 2023). Also, there has been an "abrupt" curriculum change in the educational system; educators have had to adjust to the new "normal"; and they have been asked to implement a new form of remediation from the previous system of instruction. All of these changes negatively impact teachers' mental health and, in turn, the quality of education they can provide for their students.

The Health Theory of Coping (Stallman, 2020) defines coping as both a cognitive and a behavioral reaction to an unexpected emotional event. Research shows that teachers employ many different means for coping with their own feelings and emotions. The method used (emotion-focused vs. problem-focused) depends on

circumstances, as well as how the circumstances are interpreted (personal/cultural). Among Filipino teachers, coping methods often include faith-based methods, the use of peer networks, and the use of family networks as support systems to assist them in coping with their perceived problems associated with their jobs and their lives (Talidong & Toquero, 2020). Accordingly, it can be concluded that there are many different coping strategies that rely on both theoretical perspectives and socio-cultural factors.

Effective coping strategies include (Emeljanova et al., 2023) problem solving, physical exercise, and participation in hobbies, all of which support individuals in improving their emotional well-being. Additionally, Suttles (2024) found two categorical types of strategies (problem-focused vs. emotion-focused). In summary, the literature supports that a person's mental health status and their coping mechanisms in the Philippines cannot be considered in isolation. Rather, they are influenced by a person's experiences, the environment in which they work, and the legal-worldview or institutional framework in which the teachers find themselves.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The primary concern of this research is to find out how coping mechanisms mediate the relationship between the mental health challenges faced by teachers in Calape District and their level of teaching performance for the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, the study aims to discover answers to the following sub-problems:

1. How do elementary teachers level of mental health challenges compare according to the dimensions of the following: Avoidance Symptoms, Intrusion Symptoms, Alterations in Arousal and Reactivity, and Negative Alterations in Cognition or Mood?
2. How do elementary teachers' levels of coping mechanisms compare according to the dimensions of the following: Problem-Focused Coping, Emotion-Focused Coping, Emotional Regulation or Stress Relief, and Avoidant Coping?
3. What is the level of elementary teachers' performance overall since they began to work?
4. Is there a statistically significant mediating effect between the relationship of teacher's mental health challenges and teaching performance through the use of a coping mechanism?
5. Based on the research outcomes, what action plan(s) can be made?

### **Statement of Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant Mediating effect of a Coping Mechanism on the relationship of Teachers' Mental Health Challenges and Teaching Performance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, mediation design using a questionnaire-type survey to establish the mediating effect of coping mechanisms upon the mental well-being and performance of the teachers within the Calape District. By taking a non-experimental approach, the study preserved the integrity of teacher responses without artificially influencing variable(s).

### **Environment and Respondents**

The study took place in the 19 (nineteen) public elementary schools situated in Calape District during the 2025/2026 school year. The district of Calape has a geographical location found on Bohol's western coast and contains both a mainland municipality of barangays and an island grouped into barangays.

The respondents of the study were all the elementary teachers of the Calape District in the school year 2025-2026. Although the total number of teachers was 174, only 140 (80.45%) elementary teachers were able to

answer the questionnaires due to other potential factors i.e., teacher absences from school. These districts consisted of teachers undergoing mental challenged due to work, daily life and past stressful experiences.

### Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire was used to gather information about teachers’ mental health issues and their ability to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of items based on the PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) developed by Weathers and colleagues (2013), which has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.90. The second section was derived from the coping scale by Hamby and Banyard (2013), which has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91. The final section of the instrument assessed the performance of the teachers taught by the school year 2024-2025.

The first section of the instrument measured how much teachers were disturbed by (1) avoidance symptoms, (2) intrusion symptoms, (3) alterations in arousal/reactivity, and (4) negative alterations in cognition/mood. The second section measured the types of coping strategies used in four categories: (1) problem-focused coping, (2) emotion-focused coping, (3) emotional regulation/stress relief, and (4) avoidant coping. The third section of the instrument collected data on teachers’ performance (IPCRF rating 2024-2025).

### RESULT

The data presented in this section presents the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from teachers to provide insight into the levels of mental health challenges over the past several months as well as their effectiveness at coping with these challenges (based on how they performed based on the IPCRF rating for teachers for 2024-2025). The discussion of these three sources allows us to establish a foundation for determining how these variables interact with one another and for creating an appropriate action plan.

#### 1. Level of Mental Health Challenges

Mental health challenges are defined as a common and complex psychiatric disorder, which typically occurs following exposure to a traumatic event. This study examined how the teachers in this study felt "bothered" by these challenges over the past several months.

Table 1

Level of Mental Health Challenges of the Elementary Teachers

n=140

In the past month, how much were you bothered by:	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Avoidance Symptoms	1.80	1.07	Challenged
Intrusion Symptoms	1.59	1.19	Challenged
Alterations in Arousal and Reactivity	1.32	1.10	Moderately Challenged
Negative Alterations in Cognition and Mood	1.29	1.12	Moderately Challenged
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.14</b>	Moderately Challenged

Table 1 illustrates how elementary teachers perceive their mental health, according to the average of each teacher's response concerning (1) symptoms of avoidance; (2) symptoms of intrusion; (3) alterations in arousal/alertness and reactivity; and (4) alterations in negative thoughts and negative moods). The average of each domain was then ranked in descending order to highlight the most common experiences of elementary school teachers.

The overall mean score for the mental health challenges of elementary teachers is 1.44 (SD = 1.14), interpreted as moderately challenged. This means that the elementary teachers were moderately bothered and affected by stress, anxiety, and problems they encountered in the past months. This result is supported by a cognitive theory of PTSD by Ehlers and Clark (2000). Some people recover from their stressful experiences after several months, but in a significant subgroup, the symptoms persist. In this data, under the intrusion symptoms, they were moderately bothered by repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience, but were able to overcome them. It is consonant with the study of Orlanda-Ventayen and Ventayen (2021) that teachers may show severe depression towards work since they were all educated, and they were able to handle the situations even in hard times.

Additionally, Agayon et al. (2022) indicate that teaching is challenging and frustrating; however, as evidenced by the teachers in this data collection, all things are achievable given the right mindset of the educator to adapt to the changing conditions of education. Therefore, educators must prepare for future situations since future conditions will likely not improve, and thus teachers must adapt and accept the "new normal."

### Level of Coping Mechanism

Table 2 provides a detailed description of the level of coping mechanisms of elementary teachers using both weighted mean and standard deviation formulas. There are four types of coping mechanisms in this research study - problem-focused, emotion-focused, emotional regulation/stress alleviation, and avoidant. The information about these four types of coping mechanisms will help the research study determine how the respondents cope with their difficult situations based upon which type of coping mechanism they choose to use.

Table 2 Level of Coping Mechanisms of the Elementary Teachers

N=140

Coping Strategies	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Problem-Focused Coping	3.25	0.65	Managed
Emotion-Focused Coping	3.19	0.63	Managed
Emotional Regulation/Stress Relief	3.11	0.69	Managed
Avoidant Coping	2.78	0.74	Managed
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.71</b>	Managed

According to Table 2, problem-focused coping got the highest average score of 3.25 (SD = 0.65) interpreted as managed, which indicates that teachers actively manage their problems and solution by taking appropriate actions and looking for multiple ways to resolve them, indicating that they regularly utilized these strategies in managing their problems.

On the other hand, avoidant coping got the lowest mean of 2.78 (SD = 0.74), interpreted as managed, indicates that teacher sometimes uses distraction/denial as a way to avoid dealing with their problems, however they will not let their problem go unresolved.

The overall mean score for the coping mechanisms of the elementary teachers is 3.15 (SD = 0.71), interpreted as managed, which indicates that coping strategies assist teachers significantly in daily problem solving. Teachers continually attempt to solve problems correctly and constructively, improving their positive outlook on providing constructive solutions.

The usage of coping strategies to manage problems is evident from this research and supports Algorani's (2023) research, which indicates that coping strategies mobilise thoughts and behaviours to cope with both internal and external sources of stress. Teachers who use time management, self-care, perseverance, support and faith in God

provide them with the resources and benefits of overcoming challenges related to teaching (Emborgo and Uchang, 2025). In addition, teachers have been able to use active coping strategies to manage difficult situations that have occurred in their teaching careers.

In many ways, the theory of adult attachment supports the positive impact that having access to a responsive attachment figure can have on mental health (Mikulincer et al., 2008). According to Bandura (1991), individuals develop self-regulation through the use of socially-cognitive theory (i.e., self-care) and learn how to self-monitor their own behaviour and actions; becoming more effectively able to manage their behaviour and actions to develop stability in life.

### Level of Teachers' Performance

Table 3 reveals teachers' performance rating for the school year of 2024-2025 computed in percentage form. This result denotes the Individual Performance and Commitment Review (IPCRF), which provides a comprehensive assessment framework to determine the effectiveness of teachers and is vital for ensuring high quality education. The most recent results of the IPCRF will provide valuable information regarding teachers' areas of strength and growth to inform professional development programs and support networks.

Table 3 Level of Teacher's Performance

N=140

Teacher's Performance	Frequency	Percentage	
Very Satisfactory (3.500 - 4.499)	140	100%	
	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Performance Summary	4.31	0.15	Very Satisfactory

According to the table above, mean teacher performance had a 4.31 (SD=0.15) which can be interpreted as being in the "Very Satisfactory" range. Most teachers had objectives to rate "Very Satisfactory" on their Individual Performance Commitment Review Form (IPCRF) which serves as an assessment tool for how well they have accomplished an annual task. (DepEd 2015)

Furthermore, most teachers achieved higher ratings when it comes to their coping mechanisms and reported that they did so at mostly managed and highly managed levels, depending on the question they answered from the list above. Educators use their coping strategies to help ensure that they are teaching effectively and that they are performing their job duties in an appropriate manner.

These findings are consistent with Gragasin et al. (2023). Based on the data presented above, the IPCRF serves as a very good measure of teachers' performance for a period of 12 months. This also indicates whether or not a teacher has met the standard performance expectations set by the Department of Education. In addition to the above, all teachers that were successful in meeting the established criteria for this performance were able to accomplish goals and objectives related to the performance criteria and targets.

### Coping Mechanism as a Mediator of the Teacher's Mental Health Challenges and Their Teacher Performance

The relationship shown in Table 4 demonstrates that coping mechanisms mediate the relationship between teacher mental health challenges and their performance as a teacher. The intent here is to show how coping mechanisms also significantly mediate the relationship between a teacher's mental health challenge and the teacher's performance as a teacher. By examining the mediating effect of a coping mechanism on a teacher's

mental health and their teacher performance, this type of research could provide much-needed insight into how coping mechanisms can impact teaching.

Table 4 The Mediation Role of Coping Mechanism between Mental Health and Teachers Performance

N=140

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	z	p
Indirect	Mental Health Rating → Coping Mechanisms → Health	0.00205	0.00231	0.8858	0.376
Component	Mental Health Rating → Coping Mechanisms	0.04116	0.03946	1.0430	0.297
	Coping Mechanisms → Health	0.04975	0.02965	1.6777	0.093
Direct	Mental Health Rating → Health	0.00127	0.01390	0.0915	0.927
Total	Mental Health Rating → Health	0.00332	0.01403	0.2365	0.813
<b>Mediation Analysis Summary</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>p-direct</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>		<b>Decision</b>
	0.376	0.05	not significant		Do not reject H <sub>0</sub>

A mediation analysis survey was conducted to examine whether coping mechanisms mediate the relationship between mental health challenges and teachers’ performance. Results revealed that the indirect effect of mental health on rating through coping mechanisms was not statistically significant,  $B = 0.002$ ,  $SE = 0.002$ , 95% CI [-0.002, 0.007],  $p = .376$ .

Coping mechanism does not significantly mediate between mental health challenges and teaching performance as indicated by a non-significant indirect effect (estimate = 0.00205,  $p = 0.376$ ). This is further supported by the non-significance between coping mechanisms, mental health challenges, and teachers’ performance, indicating that the required conditions for mediation are not satisfied.

Furthermore, the path from mental health challenges to teachers’ performance shows a result of  $p\text{-value} = 0.927$ , interpreted as not significant, indicating that mental health does not directly influence teachers’ performance. The path from mental health challenges to coping mechanisms resulted in a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.297, interpreted as not significant, suggesting that mental health challenges do not significantly predict coping mechanisms. Similarly, the relationship between coping mechanisms and teachers’ performance is not significant,  $p\text{-value} = 0.093$ .

Overall, these findings suggest that coping mechanisms do not mediate the relationship between mental health challenges and teachers’ performance, and no significant relationships were observed among the variables included in the model. This means that coping mechanisms don’t portray the role as a mediator in this study. It could mean that there are other variables that strongly influence teachers’ performance.

The findings are similar to those of Li et al. (2022), who did not find any association between addressing mental health challenges and teachers’ well-being. A teacher may struggle from their stressful experiences, but it still didn’t affect their profession and performance as a teacher.

## DISCUSSION

The following were the findings of the study.

1. Elementary teacher's mental health has faced some level of stress, with an average rating of 1.44, Standard deviation of 1.14.
2. Teachers' ability to deal with or solve problems has been evaluated to be as handled well, with an average of 3.15, SD of 0.71.
3. All of the teachers involved in the evaluation have demonstrated Very Satisfactory performance based on their individual IPCRF results.
4. There were no significant findings that would support or reject the null hypothesis for the mediator between teacher's mental health and challenges and teacher's performance through coping mechanisms.

## CONCLUSION

According to teachers from the Calape District, while they face challenges due to their previous experiences, they have coped with them using coping strategies. Statistical analysis has shown that there is no significant relationship between the mental health challenge level of teachers and their teaching performance or between the mental health challenge level of teachers and the type of coping strategies used. However, the study does have some limitations. One limitation is how some teachers answer the survey/questionnaire. Many will answer the survey in a biased manner when answering in order to provide the researcher with an answer they think is desirable, potentially affecting the validity of the data when answering correctly. Furthermore, the way in which teachers interpret individual questions may also affect the validity of the results. Additionally, the time frame set by the researcher may also have affected some teachers' ability to answer the questions correctly. Lastly, the reliance on self-reported data, as well as the use of the Individual Performance and Contribution Rating Form (IPCRF) to assess performance levels, may have further impacted the study. Despite these limitations, the study has shown that teachers' coping behaviours and mental health conditions can be confirmed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations stem from the study's conclusions:

1. Administrators are encouraged to provide comprehensive support for emotional avoidance and cognitive responses to stress among elementary educators, including stress management, counselling and mentorship training.
2. The Department of Education is encouraged to continue implementing and consistently using proactive coping strategies, such as self-care and future-oriented planning.
3. The Department of Education should continue to monitor and rate teacher performance for sustainable improvement and identify trends in need of enhancement.
4. The Department of Education should continue to recognize teacher performance standards and mental health support systems as equally important but independently managed priorities. The lack of a strong correlation indicates that mental health issues will not be neglected but rather that teachers may maintain professional performance even while experiencing difficulties.
5. The proposed action plan included components that promote mental health awareness amongst teachers and support teachers' well-being to improve their performance and achievement within the classroom.
6. Future researchers can consider conducting studies using other variables that may affect teacher performance in future studies.

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