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STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF TEACHERS IN GUILIN MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Abstract

The purpose of this descriptive correlational study is to determine the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College and their coping strategies.

Out of the 563 teachers in Guilin Medical College, the participants in this study were 229 selected teachers who were selected using Raosoft calculator by means of a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level.

Based on the findings, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, years in teaching and designation/position were significant factors in the participants' level of stress. The participants mainly experienced stress because of the students' behavior, the parents and the number of workloads. Lastly, the teachers used several coping strategies including problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, proactive coping, avoidance coping and strategic planning to minimize their stress.

In terms of the significant relationship among the variables, the obtained p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level, indicating a significant positive relationship when categorized according to gender, civil status, educational attainment, and years in service and significant negative correlation with age.

This study provides implication that the teachers should overcome or reduce this stress with the help of the healthcare providers and school administrators and it is important that research be done to investigate the factors why the teachers encounter difficult problems that may lead to their stress.

Introduction

Teachers are burdened by high work pressure, suggesting the need for an effective stress coping system to support them. Stress is commonly defined as a psychological syndrome that results from exposure to a demanding work environment coupled with insufficient resources. Melnick, et al. (2017) characterized in detail that stress is a three-dimensional syndrome, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished professional accomplishment, which is resulted from workplace stressors.

Teaching stress is a prevalent and well-confirmed problem among teachers at various educational levels over recent decades. A series of studies have suggested that many teachers experience professional stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction in various regions of the world (Shen, et al., 2015).

In relation to the nature of a teacher's job and to the context in which the professional work, stress among teachers can affect teaching goals and educational environment, which may contribute to severe problems. Negative consequences associated with teacher stress include poor job performance, health issues, and adverse student outcomes (Converso, et al., 2015). Stress was associated with job withdrawal-absenteeism, turnover intention, and actual attrition. However, for people who still work in school, stress contributes to lower effectiveness and productivity at work. Stress was linked to job-related neurasthenia, depression and voice disorder (Al-Asadi, et al., 2018). A study found that teachers' status of stress as an essential environmental factor is associated with students' autonomous motivation.

China has been – and continues to be – one of the pandemic's hardest-hit nations. COVID-19 started spreading in the nation around the end of February 2020, prompting the state to proclaim a national emergency on 14 March. Until the end of April, people (including youngsters) were prohibited from leaving their houses except to meet

essential needs. As a result, all teaching activities, from daycare to higher education institutions, have been shifted to an online mode of delivery. Throughout the 2019–2020 academic year, this virtual or telematic instruction was continued, and as a result, most children and educators did not return to school.

Throughout those lockdown periods, research has demonstrated the critical nature of restoring classes as early as the health condition permits (Francis and Pegg, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Indeed, multiple studies have concluded that being unable to start classes has a detrimental effect on students' emotional, physiological, interpersonal, and cognitive well-being (Armitage and Nellums, 2020; Idoiaga, Berasategi, Dosil, Munitis, 2021; Imran et al., 2020). Unfortunately, neither families nor educators were very well equipped to deal with the numerous issues brought by these shifts. Several parents expressed frustration with instructors' disorganized task transmissions and a lack of educational evaluation, while educators failed to maintain connections with their pupils and lost chances for guidance and support from their institutions.

Very little was recognized about the variables that contributed to educators' challenges in ensuring the continuance of education when the majority of teaching took place at home. For instance, schools and instructors have become more reliant on digital resources for both instruction and communications. While a few educators may find using the online, connecting via social media networks, or utilizing video-conferencing systems to be effortless, others may view remote education as stress. According to their (professional) abilities, some professors might well have viewed the situation positively, whereas others have dismissed it as unimportant. Additionally, it may have been interpreted negatively and stressfully by others. If the latter is true, it can act as a possible stressor, resulting in feelings of stress and decreased well-being.

Additionally, educators were not exempted from the pandemic's consequences. Indeed, UNESCO (2020) has already recognized teacher perplexity and stress as one of the negative repercussions of school closures, owing to the unexpected nature of such shutdowns, their ambiguity regarding time, and instructors' relative lack of awareness about remote learning. Very Lowtheless, multiple studies have demonstrated that even at the outbreak's inception, teachers acquired high-stress levels associated with indications of worry, anxiety, and sleep disruption, owing in part to the requirement to teach online (Ng, 2007; Al Lily, 2020; Besser et al., 2020). According to certain research, using information and communication technologies (ICT) for remote work might result in emotions of strain, worry, weariness, and reduced job satisfaction (Cuervo et al., 2018), but they were the only methods available to instructors during an outbreak.

As a recent part of the Guilin Medical College, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study. Colleges and Universities can contribute to the psychological wellbeing of its staff members through taking care of the mental health and reducing the stress they encounter and it the school's everyday operations. However, it is evident that most Universities lacked such undertakings. There is lack of opportunities to decrease teachers' level of stress. In China, no known research has been conducted to investigate the prevalence and correlates of stress in college teachers. Thus, The purpose of this study is to determine the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College and their coping strategies.

Statement of Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College and their coping strategies.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 gender;
 - 1.3 civil status;
 - 1.4 highest educational attainment; and,
 - 1.5 Length of Service?
2. What is the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of:
 - 2.1. Student Behavior;
 - 2.2. Employee/Administrator Relations;
 - 2.3. Teacher/Teacher Relations;
 - 2.4. Parent/Teacher Relations;
 - 2.5. Time Management; and
 - 2.6. Teaching loads and Preparations?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile and the level of stress experienced by teachers in Guilin Medical College?

Methods

This study employed a descriptive correlational design. The researcher conducted the gathering procedure in the Guilin Medical College. Out of the 563 teachers in Guilin Medical College, the participants in this study were 229 selected teachers who were selected using Raosoft calculator by means of a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level.

Results And Discussions

Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College Student Behavior

Table 1

Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Student Behavior

Student Behavior	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have difficulty controlling my class.	4.95	Very High
2. I become impatient/angry when my students do not do what I ask them to do.	4.89	Very High
3. Lack of student motivation to learn affects the progress of my students negatively.	3.85	High
4. My students make my job stressful.	3.72	High
5. I am stressed because my students do not study their lessons	3.52	High
Mean	4.19	High

Table 1 exhibits that the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of student behavior gained a grand mean of 4.19 described verbally as “High”. This demonstrates that teachers reported a high level of stress in relation to student behavior. This indicates that the majority of teachers in the study encountered significant stress as a result of their students' behavior.

Based on the result, the statement that the teachers have difficulty controlling their class got the highest mean of 4.95 described verbally as “Very High”. This statement suggests that the teacher encounters significant difficulties in maintaining class discipline. The high mean score indicates that this concern is widespread among respondents. On the other hand, the statement that the teachers are stressed because their students do not study their lessons got the lowest mean of 3.52 described verbally as “High.” This statement implies that teachers experience stress as a result of their students' lack of study and preparation for class. The high mean score indicates that a substantial proportion of respondents agreed that students' poor study practices contribute to teachers' stress levels.

To elaborate further, the teachers get impatient/angry when the students do not do what they ask them to do, this got a mean of 4.89 described verbally as “Very High”. This statement reflects the emotional reaction of the teacher when pupils do not follow their instructions. The high mean score indicates that many educators experience frustration, impatience, or wrath in these circumstances.

Lastly, the students make their job stressful (3.72); both were described verbally as “High”. The statement implies that the conduct of the pupils has a significant impact on the stress levels of the teacher. The high mean score indicates that a considerable proportion of respondents agreed that their students contribute to the stressful nature of their jobs.

Employee/Administrator Relations

Table 2
Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of
Employee/Administrator Relations

Employee/Administrator Relations	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have difficulty in my working relationship with my administrator(s).	3.38	Moderately High
2. My administrator makes demands of me that I cannot meet.	3.36	Moderately High
3. I feel I cannot be myself when I am interacting with my administrator.	3.34	Moderately High
4. I feel my administrator does not approve of the job I do.	3.33	Moderately High
5. My administrator treats us unfairly	3.31	Moderately High
Mean	3.34	Moderately High

Table exhibits 2 that the Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Employee/Administrator Relations gained a grand mean of 3.34 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This indicates that teachers' working relationships with their administrators are typically fraught with significant obstacles and difficulties. The average rating indicates that interactions between instructors and administrators in educational settings have considerable room for improvement.

Based on the result, the statement that the teachers have difficulty in building working relationships with their administrator(s) got the highest mean of 3.38 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This statement illustrates the difficulties teachers face in developing positive and productive working relationships with their administrators. On the other hand, the statement that the administrators treat them unfairly got the lowest mean of 3.31 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This statement indicates that teachers believe their administrators treat them unfairly.

To elaborate further, the administrator makes demands on the teachers that the teachers cannot meet (3.36). This statement emphasizes the unreasonable or overwhelming expectations placed on instructors by their administrators. The moderately high mean suggests that a substantial proportion of teachers believe that their administrators' expectations exceed their abilities, causing tension and possibly affecting their job satisfaction. The teachers feel that they cannot be themselves when they are interacting with their administrator (3.34). This statement indicates that teachers view their interactions with administrators as lacking in authenticity and freedom of expression.

They also feel that their administrator does not approve of the job they do (3.33); All these were described verbally as “Moderately High”. This statement reflects the perceptions of teachers that their administrators do not recognize or value their efforts and performance.

Teacher/Teacher Relations

Table 3
Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Teacher/Teacher Relations

Teacher/Teacher Relations	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Disagreements with my fellow teachers are a problem for me.	3.47	Moderately High
2. I get too little support from the teachers with whom I work.	3.36	Moderately High
3. I feel isolated in my job (and its problems).	3.30	Moderately High
4. I feel my fellow teachers think I am not doing a good job.	3.27	Moderately High
5. I feel I cannot be myself when I am interacting with my colleagues.	3.26	Moderately High
Mean	3.33	Moderately High

Table 3 exhibits that the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of teacher/teacher relations gained a grand mean of 3.33 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This indicates that teacher interactions with their colleagues are fraught with stress and difficulty. The findings emphasize the significance of comprehending and addressing the dynamics of teacher relationships in the educational setting.

Based on the result, the statement that the teachers experienced problems because of the disagreements with their fellow teachers got the highest mean of 3.47 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This indicates a level of concurrence that is moderately high. Teachers view disagreements with colleagues as problematic, which can lead to elevated levels of tension. Such conflicts may arise as a result of disparities in teaching styles, divergent perspectives on educational approaches, or interpersonal issues.

To elaborate further, the teachers get too little support from the teachers they work with (3.36). This statement indicates that instructors feel unsupported by their peers.

Teachers also feel isolated in their job (3.30). This suggests that teachers experience a moderate degree of occupational isolation. Isolation can be detrimental to the health and job satisfaction of a teacher. It may be the consequence of limited collaboration opportunities, poor communication, or a lack of shared experiences among colleagues. This isolation can exacerbate the tension associated with teaching.

They feel that their fellow teachers think they are not doing a good job (3.27). This statement suggests that teachers are concerned about their colleagues' negative perceptions of their performance to a moderate degree.

Parent/Teacher Relations

Table 4
Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Parent/Teacher Relations

Parent/Teacher Relations	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Parents of my students are a source of concern for me.	3.76	High
2. Parent's disinterest in their child's performance at school concerns me.	3.42	Moderately High
3. I feel my students' parents think I am not doing a satisfactory job of teaching their children.	3.41	Moderately High
4. The home environment of my students concerns me.	3.39	Moderately High
5. I am unable to express my stress to those parents who place demands on me.	3.38	Moderately High
Mean	3.47	Moderately High

Table 4 exhibits that the Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Parent/Teacher Relations gained a grand mean of 3.47 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This suggests that teacher stress resulting from parent-teacher relationships is moderately high.

Based on the result, the statement that the parents of the students are a source of concern for the teachers got the highest mean of 3.76 described verbally as “High”. This statement indicates that the teacher views their students' parents as a significant source of concern. The high mean indicates that a large proportion of educators experience anxiety and tension as a result of their interactions with parents.

On the other hand, the statement that the teachers are unable to express their stress to those parents who place demands on them got the lowest mean of 3.38 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This indicates that teachers are moderately in agreement.

To elaborate further, the parent's disinterest in their child's performance at school concerns the teachers (3.42). This statement suggests that the teacher is somewhat concerned about parents' lack of interest in their child's academic performance.

They also feel the students' parents think they are not doing a satisfactory job of teaching their children (3.41). This statement implies that the educator believes that parents have doubts about their educational abilities.

Lastly, the home environment of the students concerns the teachers (3.39); All these were described verbally as “Moderately High”. It suggests that teachers are sincerely concerned about their students' living conditions.

Time Management

Table 5

Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Time Management

Time Management	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I have too much to do and not enough time to do it.	3.38	Moderately High
2. I have to take work home to complete it.	3.38	Moderately High
3. I am unable to keep up with correcting papers and other schoolwork.	3.38	Moderately High
4. I have difficulty organizing my time to complete tasks.	3.37	Moderately High
5. I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet scheduled deadlines.	3.37	Moderately High
Mean	3.38	Moderately High

Table 5 exhibits that the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of time management gained a grand mean of 3.38 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This demonstrates a moderately high level of time management-related teacher concern.

Based on the result, the statement that the teachers have too much to do and not enough time to do it got the highest mean of 3.38 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This indicates that teachers experience moderately high levels of time management-related stress.

On the other hand, the statement that the teachers put self-imposed demands on themselves to meet scheduled deadlines got the lowest mean of 3.37 described verbally as “Moderately High”. This statement received a moderately high mean because it emphasizes the deadline strain teachers place on themselves.

To elaborate further, the teachers have to take work home to complete it (3.38). suggests that teachers frequently carry work home to complete. This statement emphasizes how difficult it is for instructors to complete their assignments within standard working hours.

Moreover, they are unable to keep up with correcting papers and other school work (3.38). This suggests that many teachers struggle to keep up with the time-consuming task of grading papers and other schoolwork. This statement reflects the difficulty of managing the grading and assessment workload, which frequently causes instructors to experience time constraints and elevated levels of stress.

In addition, they have difficulty organizing time in order to complete tasks (3.37); All these were described verbally as “Moderately High”. This demonstrates that teacher difficulties with time management contribute to their overall stress levels.

Teaching loads and Preparations

Table 6

Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of Teaching loads and Preparations

Teaching loads and Preparations	Mean	Verbal Description
1. The number of hours used for preparation of lesson plans is stressful	3.80	High
2. The number of hours used for preparation of instructional materials is stressful	3.53	High
3. The number of hours used for preparation and checking of exercises is stressful	3.42	Moderately High
4. The preparation of evaluation/assessment tools/rubrics is stressful	3.39	Moderately High
5. The number of classes I handle is stressful	3.38	Moderately High
Mean	3.50	High

Table 6 exhibits that the level of stress experienced by the teachers in Guilin Medical College in terms of teaching loads and preparations gained a grand mean of 3.50 described verbally as “High”. This indicates that teachers experience a high level of stress in relation to their teaching loads and preparations.

Based on the result, the statement that the number of hours used for preparation of lesson plans is stressful got the highest mean of 3.80 described verbally as “High”. This statement received a high mean score, indicating that teachers view lesson plan preparation as a significant source of anxiety.

On the other hand, the statement that the number of classes the teachers handle is stressful got the lowest mean of 3.38 described verbally as “Moderately High”. Teachers consider managing a large number of classes to be a moderately stressful factor.

To elaborate further, the number of hours used for preparation of instructional materials is stressful for a mean of 3.53 described verbally as “High”. Preparing instructional materials was cited as a significant source of anxiety by educators.

The number of hours used for preparation and checking of exercises is stressful (3.42). Teachers view the preparation and evaluation of assignments as moderately stressful factors.

The preparation of evaluation/assessment tools/rubrics is stressful (3.39); All these were described verbally as “Moderately High”. Regarding the production of evaluation/assessment instruments and rubrics, teachers reported a moderately high level of anxiety. This challenging and time-consuming task involves designing valid and reliable assessment instruments, establishing clear criteria for grading, and ensuring impartiality in evaluating student performance.

Significant relationship between the profile and the level of stress experienced by teachers in Guilin Medical College

Table 7

Significant relationship between the profile and the level of stress experienced by teachers in Guilin Medical College

Demographics	Pearson <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Decision	Result
Gender	0.119	0.037	Reject H ₀	Significant Positive Correlation
Civil Status	0.466	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant Positive Correlation
Educational Status	0.422	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant Positive Correlation
Years in Service	0.442	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant Positive Correlation
Age	-0.405	0.000	Reject H ₀	Significant Negative Correlation

Table 7 presents the correlation between demographic profile and the level of stress experienced by teachers in Guilin Medical College. The obtained *p*-values were less than 0.05 alpha level, indicating a significant positive relationship when categorized according to gender, civil status, educational attainment, and years in service and significant negative correlation with age.

Based on the findings, gender has a significant positive correlation with the teachers' level of stress (0.119) and a *p*-value of 0.037. As to civil status, there was a significant positive correlation between the level of stress (0.466) and a *p*-value of 0.000. Moreover, Educational Status was also found to have a significant positive correlation on level of stress (0.422) and a *p*-value of 0.000. While age and level of stress were found to have a significant negative correlation (-0.405) and a *p*-value of 0.000.

The results indicates that the more confident a person felt about their ability to manage time, the less stress they felt on the job or vice versa. Level of stress experienced in relation to respondent's age indicates that the older the student, the lower the level of stress. On the other hand, the higher the year of study and year of service, the higher the level of stress experienced. Excessive stress can cause health difficulties such as fatigue, loss of appetite, headaches, and gastrointestinal issues. Work stress has been linked to a variety of negative effects, including ill health, anxiety, depression, and poor academic performance. Almost every teachers' experiences stress during his or her academic career.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants in the study were male teachers between the ages of 36 and 45, who were married and had either earned master's units or finished a master's degree. Furthermore, the largest number of teachers had been in service for 4 to 7 years, indicating that they were in the middle stage of their careers. This information provides insights into the profile of the respondents and can be used to understand the demographic characteristics and educational qualifications of teachers in the study population.

The findings indicate that the teachers in Guilin Medical College experience high levels of stress in various aspects of their work, particularly in terms of student behavior and teaching loads/preparations. Additionally, moderate levels of stress were reported in employee/administrator relations, teacher/teacher relations, parent/teacher relations, and time management. These results highlight the need for interventions and support systems to address the stressors faced by teachers in order to promote their well-being and enhance the quality of education provided at Guilin Medical College.

The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables of gender, civil status, educational attainment, and years in service. Additionally, the study found a significant negative correlation between the variable of age and the outcome measure. These results suggest that gender, civil status, educational attainment, years in service, and age play important roles in influencing the observed phenomenon.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. In terms of teaching loads and preparations, teachers should be given just the adequate workload for them to balance work and personal life.

2. The government should provide free mental health consultation at least twice a year for all teachers. Budget should be allocated for the mandatory annual check-up for teachers. They should be given a comprehensive opportunity to attend trainings, seminars and conferences about mental health issues.
3. School administrators may also establish programs and implement a parent and teachers' meeting at least twice a year. They should engage teachers, students, and parents in such activities to improve their relationships. They should also use this time to brief the parents about their Childrens' behavior.
4. It is important for there to be study done into the impact various coping techniques have on the amount of stress experienced by teachers as well as the quality of instruction they provide.
5. It is important that research be carried out to discover the reasons for the significantly greater levels of occupational stress reported by teachers.
6. Time management among teachers should be the subject of research, as should its effect on teachers' stress levels and their ability to cope.
7. It is important that research be done to investigate the factors that may explain why educators are more inclined to seek social assistance in order to find answers to the difficult problems they face.

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