

Mediating Role of Coping Strategies between Teacher's Stress and Job Related Outcomes

Haleema Parveen¹, Mehr Bano², M. Naveed Riaz³

¹Ph.D fellow, Preston University Islamabad

²Ph.D, Preston University Kohat

³ Ph.D, University of Sargodha

Received: November 4, 2017

Accepted: January 2, 2018

ABSTRACT

The study intended to examine the mediating role of coping styles between teacher's stress and job related outcomes including job performance and satisfaction. Total sample of 200 teachers was collected from different universities of Pakistan. Four scales were used from data collection including Teacher's Stress Inventory, Brief COPE, Teacher's Performance Scale and Teacher's Satisfaction Scale. Mediation analysis explained that only problem-focused coping has direct and indirect effect on job performance and satisfaction of teachers. The remaining coping strategies including emotions-focused and dysfunctional avoidance were not proven effective in enhancing job performance and satisfaction of teachers. The study shared empirical insights regarding the use of problem-focused coping style at the times of stress in the teaching profession.

KEYWORDS: Teachers' stress, coping styles, job performance, job satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern day educational institutions are not stress-free due the rise of high-speed work life which is filled with lot of stressors and stresses for teachers [1]. Thus teacher's stress is a common fact of life in educational institutions in general and in higher education institutions in particular [2]. At times when teachers face teacher's stress, it hardly remains possible to keep their job safe from the deleterious effects of stress. The immediate area of teachers' life affected by stress is their performance at job [3] and overall contentment or satisfaction with their work [4]. However, the teachers are not only professionals but "the teachers of professionals". Therefore it is difficult to believe that at hard times, they helplessly let their stress effect their job performance and job satisfaction without making any intervention. Thus the question arises, what teachers do at the times which stress mar their overall job.

The existing scientific knowledge gives convincing answer to this intricate question. The answer is very simple and that is "teachers use some coping strategies for teacher's stress". Thus while experiencing stress, teachers take a step ahead and select a coping strategy [5, 6]. Now it is worth knowing that what is the function of these coping strategies? Scientific literature shares that coping serves two functions including (1) evaluating and (2) managing. Firstly, the stressful situation is comprehended and then careful planning is executed to get out of that scenario. In short, use of a coping strategy is a response to a stress provoking scenario [7]. The question arises what is the benefit of the use of a coping strategy? Do all people make use of the same coping mechanism? It is always proves beneficial?

The answer to these questions is verily provided by the existing literature. Firstly, "benefit of the use of a coping strategy" cannot be picked until unless those effects of stress are not noticed. Teacher's stress directly effects their job performance and satisfaction [8]. Thus in between the teacher's stress and its effects on the job, the coping strategy is expected to play a beneficial role [9]. All the role of a coping strategy can be only beneficial when it remains successful in mediating the effects of teacher's stress on their job [10]. Probably it does not always happen. Why a coping strategy is not always beneficial? Before knowing that, whether the teachers use a single uniformed strategy, there is no answer. It is to be noticed that teachers use different coping strategies for managing their stress and preventing their jobs from the after effects of stress [6].

Usually three strategies are used by teachers including problem focused, emotions focused and dysfunctional avoidance [11]. The choice of a coping strategy determines whether a strategy will be beneficial or not beneficial [12]. Some teachers intelligently manage to select problem focused strategy for evaluating and managing the effects of stress in their jobs. This strategy has proven positive impact for working as a shield to prevent the job of teachers from the damaging effects of stress [13]. Thus when stress enters, the problem focused coping does not allow it to effect the job outcomes (performance and satisfaction of teachers). Problem focused coping is a bridge which stress never manages to pass to affect the outcomes. Thus, in more clear words problem focused coping is a fit mediator between stress and its outcomes. The other strategies are less or not effective in this regard.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

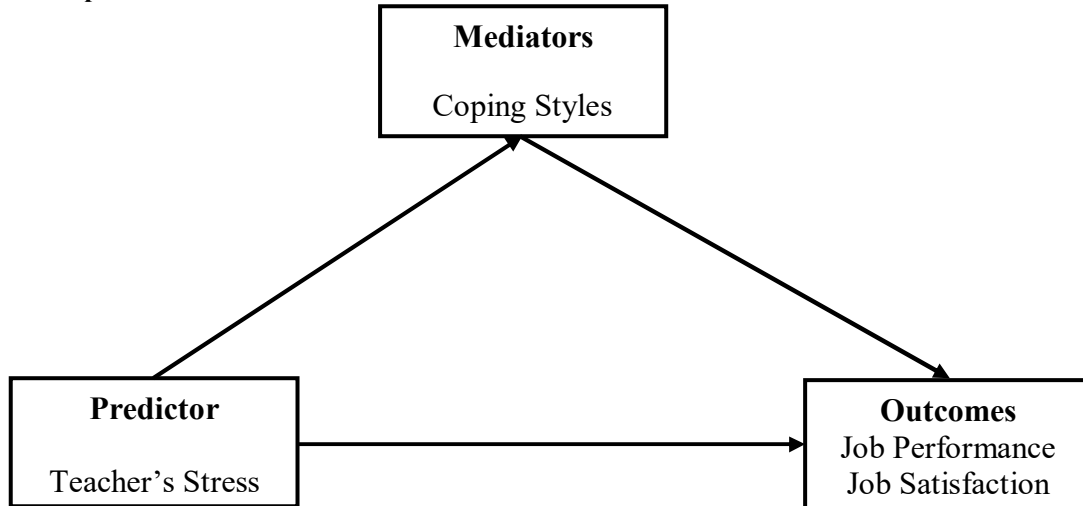


Figure 1: Schematic depiction of the mediating role of coping styles between teacher's stress and outcomes

2. METHOD

The sample consisted of university teachers ($N = 200$) including male and female teachers from public and private sector universities of Pakistan. Teacher's Stress Inventory [14] with 36 items, Brief COPE [11] with 30 items, Teacher's Performance Scale [15] with 28 items and Teacher's Satisfaction Scale [16] with 25 items were used in this investigation. All scales are rated in 5 point rating scale and all are considered reliable and valid measures of underlying constructs.

The study anticipated that problem-focused coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job satisfaction in teachers. Problem-focused coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers. Emotion-focused coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job satisfaction in teachers. Emotion-focused coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers. Dysfunctional coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job satisfaction in teachers. Dysfunctional coping will mediate between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers. For testing the hypotheses, mediation analysis is carried out.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Mediation of coping styles between teacher's stress and outcome including in teachers

	Outcome: Job Performance			Outcome: Job Satisfaction		
	Model 2			Model 2		
Predictors	Model 1 B	B	95%CI LL, UL	Model 1 B	B	95%CI LL, UL
(constant)	93.87***	128.33***	[113.36, 143.30]	29.89***	25.78***	[22.83, 27.52]
Teacher's Stress	-.08*	-.03	[-.10, -.04]	-.12***	-.11***	[-.12, -.19]
Problem-Focused Coping		1.26*	[.72, .80]		.28***	[.16, .40]
R^2	.32	.345		.72	.75	
F	4.43*	17.23***		533.97***	304.66***	
ΔR^2		.13			.03	
ΔF		29.38***			21.11***	
(constant)	93.88***	99.35***	[83.83, 114.88]	25.78***	[22.83, 27.52]	29.89***
Teacher's Stress	-.08*	-.08*	[-.16, -.01]	-.11***	[-.12, -.19]	-.12***
Emotion-Focused Coping		-.02	[-.72, .28]		.28***	[.16, .40]
R^2	.02	.02		.75	.72	
F	4.43*	2.56*		304.66***	533.97***	
ΔR^2		.00			.03	
ΔF		0.71			21.11***	
(constant)	93.87***	83.69***	29.89***	29.89***	31.47***	[29.21, 33.73]
Teacher's Stress	-.08*	-.05	-.12***	-.12***	-.12***	[-.13, -.11]
Dysfunctional Coping		-.61			-.05	[-.13, .01]
R^2	.02	.03	.72	.72	.73	
F	4.43*	3.12*	533.97***	533.98***	270.64***	
ΔR^2		.01			.01	
ΔF		1.79			2.70	

- Problem focused coping mediated between teacher's stress and job performance.
- Emotions focused coping did not mediate between teacher's stress and job performance.
- Dysfunctional coping did not mediate between teacher's stress and job performance.
- Problem focused coping mediated between teachers' stress and job satisfaction.
- Emotions focused coping mediated between teacher's stress and job satisfaction.
- Dysfunctional coping did not mediate between teacher's stress and job satisfaction

4. DISCUSSION

The research focused to investigate the mediating effect of coping strategies between teacher's level of stress and outcomes including job satisfaction and job performance in teachers. The prior studies explained that even in the presence of stress, problem focused coping enhances teachers' performance and satisfaction [17]. The same has been proved in this research as problem-focused coping mediated between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers and problem-focused coping mediated between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers [18]. The findings have a lesson for the lesson givers i.e. teachers that whenever they face stress they should immediately employ problem-focused coping to maintain the high performance of their jobs and to keep their job satisfaction intact [19]. Knowing that the use of problem-focused coping remains fruitful for teachers is one side of the coin. The other side is still undiscovered and that is what other teachers do who do not employ problem-focused coping. For no longer it remained a secret as scientific literature provided an evidence-based answer that some teachers either use emotions focused coping or rely on dysfunctional avoidance. Quiet obviously, the quest regarding the effectiveness of coping strategies triggers a question about the efficiency of emotions focused coping and dysfunctional avoidance.

The findings uncover the fact that emotion-focused coping did not mediate between teacher's level of stress and job satisfaction in teachers, although the direct effect of stress on satisfaction is established [20]. Emotion-focused coping did not mediate between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers. The findings give a lesson to teachers regarding what to do and what not to do at times of stress. Use of emotions focused coping doubles the trouble as during the stressful experiences the teachers are already emotionally disturbed. In such situations, focusing on emotions add in the severity of stress symptoms instead of eliminating them. Personal efforts for seeking a solution for a problem with problem focused coping obviously remains better than just getting emotional support of others [21]. Thus there is no other opinion that teachers should use problem focused coping by putting aside their emotions at the times of stress. Remembering a trauma is actually recreating it.

The same is the case of dysfunctional avoidance. Use of dysfunctional avoidance as a cope is not at all beneficial. Dysfunctional coping did not mediate between teacher's level of stress and job satisfaction in teachers. Dysfunctional coping did not mediate between teacher's level of stress and job performance in teachers. Avoidance offers no solutions to any problem in general and stress in particular. It is just to close eyes in stressful situations and pretending if the problem has gone away. The problems remain still and even get more intense, escalate and multiply. The sole way to eliminate a fear is to face it. Thus instead of dysfunctional avoidance, the problem focused coping is a superlative alternative. The nomenclature "dysfunctional" coping itself is self-explanatory that this coping style is ineffective in nature and outcomes [11].

4.2. Conclusion

The study has mainly concentrated on the direct and indirect effect of teacher's stress on job outcomes. The findings revealed that teacher's stress has direct and indirect effect on job performance as problem focused coping mediated between teacher's stress and job performance. However, emotions focused coping and avoidant coping did not mediate between teacher's stress and job performance. Teacher's stress has direct and indirect effect on job satisfaction as problem focused coping mediated between teachers' stress and job satisfaction. Teacher's stress has direct and indirect effect on job satisfaction as emotions focused coping mediated between teacher's stress and job satisfaction. However, dysfunctional coping did not mediate between teacher's stress and job satisfaction.

4.1. Limitations and Recommendations

The study has relied on self-report data for the performance evaluation of employees which should be replaced with the supervisors' evaluations of job performance in the future research studies. The coping strategies used in the present study were related to general stress coping, it would be more appropriate in future research to investigate the mediating effect of job specific coping strategies instead of general strategies.

REFERENCES

- [1] Zurlo M. C., Pes D., & Cooper C. L. (2007). Stress in teaching: A study of occupational stress and its determinants among Italian schoolteachers. *Stress and Health* 23(4): 231–241. doi:10.1002/smi.1141.
- [2] Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher Stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review*, 53 (1), 27-35.
- [3] Hanif, R., Tariq, S., & Nadeem, M. (2011). Personal and Job Related Predictors of Teacher Stress and Job Performance among School Teachers Pakistan. *Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 5 (2), 319-329.
- [4] Veronica, D. (2011). Stress and job satisfaction among university teachers. *International Conference of Scientific Papers*, (pp. 320-328). AFASES, Brasov. 26-28.
- [5] Brown, S. & Nagel, L. (2004). Preparing Future Teachers to Respond to Stress: Sources and Solutions. *Action in Teacher Education*, 26 (1), 34-42.
- [6] Austin, V., Shah, S., & Muncer, S. (2005). Teacher stress and coping strategies used to reduce stress. *Occupational Therapy International*, 12, 63-80.
- [7] Parker, P.D., & Martin, A.J. (2009). Coping and buoyancy in the workplace: Understanding their effects on teachers' work-related well-being and engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 68-75
- [8] Sadeghi, K., & Sa'adatpourvahid, M. (2016). EFL teachers' stress and job satisfaction: What contribution can teacher education make? *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 4(3), 75-96.
- [9] Alhijaa, F. N. (2015). Teacher Stress and Coping: The Role of Personal and Job Characteristics. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 185, 374 – 380.
- [10] Smith, K. L. (2012). Coping Mechanisms and Level of Occupational Stress Among Agriculture Teachers and Other Teaching Populations. *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 1391.
- [11] Carver, C.S., Weintraub, J.K., & Scheier, M.F. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56(2), 267-283.
- [12] Richards, J. (2012). Teacher Stress and Coping Strategies: A National Snapshot. *The Educational Forum*, 76, 299-316.
- [13] Beers, J. C. (2012). Teacher Stress and Coping: Does the Process Differ According to Years of Teaching Experience. *Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 809.
- [14] Schutz, R.W., & Long, B.C. (1988). Confirmatory factor analyses, validation and revision of a teacher stress inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 48, 497-511.
- [15] Kim, E.C. & Richard, D.K. (1991). *A Resource Guide for Secondary School Teaching*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- [16] Ho, C. & Au, L. (2006). Teaching satisfaction scale: Measuring job satisfaction of teachers. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 172-185.
- [17] Vinothkumar, M., Arathi, A., Merin, J., Nayana, P., Jishma, E. J., & Sahana, U. (2016). Coping, perceived stress, and job satisfaction among medical interns: The mediating effect of mindfulness. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 25(2), 195–201.
- [18] Sundberg, L., & Sandberg, C. (2011) The Relationship between Proactive Coping Skills and Job Satisfaction, Absentecism, Tardiness and Performance. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2, 33-49.
- [19] Sudhaker, C.H. and Gomes, L.A. (2010) Job Stress, Coping Strategies and the Job Quality Index of Nurses Working in Selected Multispeciality Hospitals—Towards Human Resource Development. *Journal of the Academy of Hospital Administration*, 22, 10-14.
- [20] Ahsan, N., Abdullah, Z., Yong Gun Fie, D. & Shah Alam, S. (2009) A Study of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among University Staff in Malaysia: Empirical Study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8, 121-131.
- [21] Ogden, J. 2000. *Health psychology*. Open Univ. Press, Buckingham.