

A Qualitative Thematic Analysis of Teacher Stress, Burnout, Strain and the Imperative for Future-Oriented Coping Interventions

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Abstract: Teachers play a significant role in shaping the minds and live of their students. However, increasing job environment issues and unnecessary workload pressures have made teachers stressed and burned out, with increasing cases showing predilection to depend on avoidance coping under high pressures. This study uses qualitative research design and reflexive thematic analysis to understand the dynamics of stress-strain-coping pathway in senior secondary school teachers using interview method and a sample of 50 principals and 100 teachers. The results divulged three interrelated themes related to job demands, coping choices and support systems, further signifying the importance of social support, reciprocity and adaptive planning in educational settings. These themes reveal that while relational support reduces short term burden, teachers habitually adopt maladaptive strategies when they anticipate increasing demands and work overload, showcasing their vulnerable side to difficult situations at work. Integrating these experiences, the study proposes the Anticipatory Coping Dynamics (ACD) Model which is a theoretical framework that posits anticipatory stress as a primary factor which increases reactive avoidance unless hindered by future-oriented coping mechanisms, such as proactive reciprocity-building and preventive planning. The model advances occupational stress theory by extending the Job Demands-Resources framework and three testable propositions are thus, formulated. The model is designed for PLS-SEM validation in longitudinal designs. Findings confirm participants' consensus on the urgent need for coping trainings, offering practical implications for policy in resource-constrained contexts.

Keywords: Teacher Stress, Burnout, Anticipatory Stress, Future-Oriented Coping, Thematic Analysis, Anticipatory Coping Dynamics Model, Avoidance Coping, Relational Support

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