Assessing School Managers Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies: Their Influence on Managerial Competence

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Abstract

Occupational stress is a pervasive concern across various professions, significantly impacting individuals' well-being and job performance. In the educational sector, school managers, including principals, head teachers, and teachers-in-charge, face unique challenges that contribute to high levels of stress and lead to unfavorable working conditions and significant occupational stress. The study aimed to examine the level of occupational stress experienced by school managers in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, identify their coping strategies, and assess how these factors influence their managerial competence. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who could provide the most relevant information for the study's objectives. It employed a descriptive correlational survey design to assess the relationship between occupational stress, coping strategies, and managerial competence among school managers in Guiuan. The respondents include 48 school managers from three school districts within Guiuan. Findings revealed that school managers in Guiuan experience high levels of occupational stress due to factors such as poor working environments, curriculum implementation challenges, and economic issues. Effective coping strategies identified include delegation of duties, developing close staff relationships, and practicing good time management. Furthermore, a significant majority of school managers demonstrate outstanding managerial competence, indicating strong leadership abilities despite the high levels of stress. It concluded that while school managers in Guiuan face significant occupational stress, they employ commendable coping strategies and exhibit high levels of managerial competence. The importance of addressing occupational stress and supporting school managers in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, through targeted interventions and policies aimed at enhancing their coping strategies and managerial competence.

Keywords: *Coping Strategies, Managerial Competence, Occupational Stress, School Managers.*

Introduction

Occupational stress has been a persistent concern in the workplace, particularly among managers who are tasked with handling numerous responsibilities and making difficult decisions. As a result, managers may experience high levels of stress that can affect their job performance, productivity, and overall well-being.

The role of school managers is critical in ensuring quality education (Gibson, 2014; Pan et al., 2015; Azainil, et al., 2021). They have a wide range of responsibilities, including curriculum administration, discipline, and relationship-building within the community. However, their extensive workload can lead to unfavorable working conditions and high levels of occupational stress (Anyanwu et al., 2015). Teacher unions have focused on addressing stress in the education profession, particularly given the recent changes in school management (Musyoka & Mwanza, 2021). Stress has become a significant concern for school managers, with increased demands from various stakeholders such as parents, employers, and indiscipline among students (Alizon, 2010; Kalungwa, 2014; Musyoka & Mwanza, 2021).

According to Singh and Kar (2015) stress is influenced by various factors, including personality, environment, sociocultural factors, and contextual factors. Stress can arise from different sources, such as occupational, domestic, and economic factors (Adebola & Mukhtari, 2008; Anyanwu et al, 2015). Occupationsal stress is caused by a discrepancy between work demands and an individual's ability to meet them (Mahmood, Nudrat & Zahoor 2013). This stress can be caused by a "toxic" work environment, such as high work demands, lack of information, low decision-making power, and a lack of control (Murtaza, et al., 2015; Kuper & Marmot 2003 in Fortes et al., 2020). It can result in negative emotional stress, such as anxiety, frustration, and depression (Fortes et al., 2020).

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Moreover, occupational stress is a well-recognized global issue with severe consequences for health and economics in both developed and developing nations (International Labor Organization, 2016; Suleman et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2022). In the education system, school managers face various job-related stressors, including workload, curriculum implementation problems, lack of autonomy, conflicts between work and family, poor student performance, student misbehavior, and unfavorable working environments (Kyriacou, 2001; Anyanwu et al., 2015; Green et al., 2015). Failure to manage these stressors effectively can negatively impact the physical and emotional well-being of school managers (Anyanwu et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential for school managers to possess strong managerial competence to achieve school goals effectively and efficiently (Yulia & Achadi, 2020). According to Usman et al. (2018), managerial competence in school management is the ability to plan, organize, and monitor resources to achieve organizational goals. The success of a school depends on the managerial capability of its school managers, who guides teachers towards the school's objectives, and fosters a positive working relationship with them (Ch et al., 2017). However, managerial performance depends on the experience and competencies that managers bring to their jobs (Posecion & Posecion, 2019).

School managers carry significant responsibilities that can result in stress and have negative effects on their physical and emotional health. Stress-related ailments may include hypertension, stroke, headache, and diabetes, as well as psychological symptoms such as anxiety, aggressiveness, and rapid heartbeat. These issues may hinder effective school administration, so it is essential to manage stress in school management. Stress management is a set of skills used to cope with stressful situations and avoid burnout. Strategies to manage stress may include measures to maintain a state of psychological or physiological balance, such as exercise, time management, and relaxation techniques. (Anyanwu et al., 2015; Fitzgerald & Radford, 2022; Oluchi & Nwamuo, 2013; Uko, 2012; Ukpong & Uzoigwe, 2019).

The discussion highlights the significance of stress management for school managers, as stress can adversely affect their physical and emotional health, leading to negative behaviour and hindering effective school administration. Stress management strategies involve coping actions, behaviours, or attitudes that individuals exhibit when faced with psychological and social demands that tax their adaptive resources. The study also recognizes the gender differences in coping with stress, with male managers assumed to cope better in stressful situations than female managers due to their position in the family.

The level of occupational stress and the effectiveness of coping strategies may vary depending on the nature of the job and the individual's personal and professional circumstances. Therefore, understanding the relationship between occupational stress, coping strategies, and managerial competence is essential for employers to provide necessary support and resources for their managers.

The current study aims to investigate the level of occupational stress among managers and the coping strategies they use to deal with it. Additionally, it aims to examine the relationship between occupational stress, coping strategies, and managerial competence. This study is significant as it can provide insights into the factors that influence managerial competence and inform the development of effective interventions to reduce occupational stress and enhance coping strategies. Ultimately, the findings of this study can contribute to improving the well-being and job performance of managers in the workplace.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to assess the sources of occupational stress and coping strategies of school managers' and its influence on their managerial competence.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

What is the profile of the respondents' occupational stress in terms of;

sources; and

symptoms;

What is the status of respondents on coping strategies on stress management?

What is the level of school managers managerial competence in terms of?

management style;

planning;

information/communication;

time management; and

delegation

Is there a significant relationship between occupational stress and managerial competence of school managers?

Is there a significant relationship between the coping strategies on stress management and managerial competence of school managers?

Literature Review

Occupational Stress

In any profession there is no such thing as a stress-free job in the world. Everyone in his/her work is exposed to tension, frustration and anxiety as he/she gets through the duties assigned to him/her. In order to make our work experience and environment as pleasant as possible, it is better that we learn the technique of moderating and modulating our personal stress levels. (Anbazhagan, & Rajan, 2013).

According to Adebola and Mukhtari, (2008), cited by Anyanwu et al, (2015), the sources of stress could be occupational, domestic and economic. Market Business News defines Occupational stress as stress related to an employee's work. In other words, stress that builds up in the workplace. Having to deal with unexpected responsibilities may trigger this type of stress.

According to 'American Psychological Association', there are three types of stress – Acute, Episodic and Chronic. All of these triggers mentally or physically in one or the other way. The competence of school manager's and teacher discipline is one of the determinants for increasing teacher productivity and school success. (Azainil, Komariyah, & Yan, 2021).

Gold and Roth (2013) from their study that sought to determine stress and satisfaction levels of middle level tertiary tutors, causes of their stress and professed coping strategies in Australia, it was found that stress comes as a result of family and work-related demands which result to physical and emotional reactions. These results can either have positive or negative implications, depending on one's interpretations. (Gold & Roth 2008, cited in Kalungwa, 2014).

Several factors have been advanced by different stakeholders as the underlying nature, root causes and effects of occupational stress among teachers. These include poor salaries, lack of motivation, inadequate facilities, low students' entry behaviour in some schools, students' unrest and indiscipline, variation in enrolment rates, overloaded curriculum and inexperienced school principals (Alison 2017). Occupational related stress in schools is a serious issue in most of the developed countries' education system (Green, Frank and Watson, 2015)

According to Robbin (2014) in India for instance, tactical plans have been altered and the general structure for teaching and learning is being dictated by state mandates more than ever before. The emphasis on data driven decision making has shifted the idea of educational viewpoint in more practical and didactic

direction. The passage of the federal "No child left Behind Act (NCLB) in U.S has led to enhanced focus on standards-based education and students' educational attainment, especially as it pertains to students' performance, this has brought with it considerable amounts of stress to school manager's.

Among the measures considered by specialized institutions to be efficient for stress relieve are the following: avoiding educational politics changes, improving work conditions, suggesting objectives with a moderate level of accomplishment, a transparent, objective assessment, increasing wage and number of teachers, decreasing the number of pupils in a classroom, orientation on clear objectives, program implementation regarding stress management at the job, mini-brakes during work hours, time keeping (Fengler, 2016), an attitude full of kindness, positivism and gratitude, valuing these and the feeling of membership (Cozolino, 2017), development of the support groups and mentors for professional development (Aldrup et al., 2017), establishing flow in teaching, establishing spaces for stress relief at the job and improvement of the teaching wellbeing (Aldrup et al., 2017).

Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2011), in Anyanwu et al., (2015), and Owan, (2018).   Listed the following as strategies which can be used to cope with occupational stress by the school principals: utilizing colleagues as human resource developing close staff relationship, improving team management, adopting problem solving approach with teachers and hiring competent personnel to assist in administration, among others.

Managerial Competence

Competence is knowledge, attitudes, and skills inherent in the dimensions of personal, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social competence (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2018), competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are reflected in the habits of thinking and acting (Mulyasa, 2013). Competence can be interpreted as knowledge, skills, and abilities that are controlled by someone who has become a part of himself so that he can perform cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviour as well as possible (Yunus et al., 2017) Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that must be possessed, internalized, and mastered by the teacher to be able to carry out their professional tasks. Furthermore, it is said that competence can also be interpreted as knowledge, basic skills, and values that are reflected in the habits of thinking and acting (Susanto, 2016).

Based on the description above, competence can be defined as mastery of a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that show work and are reflected in the habits of thinking and acting in carrying out their duties. Principals, in addition to being able to manage education, are also required to understand and apply the whole substance of educational activities.

Mulyasa, (2007) cited by Azainil, Komariyah, & Yan, (2021) states that school manager's managerial competence is increasingly important to be improved in line with the increasingly complex demands of the principal's duties, which requires performance support to be more effective and efficient.

Moreover, the managerial competence is the competency of the school managers' in managing the school by the planned objectives. This management is related to how the principal manages the school unit system consisting of teachers, administrative staff, students, related institutions, and the community environment. The managerial process by the school managers' is also related to school development and school curriculum development. If a principal has good managerial competence, of course, school management will be good according to the goals planned by the school (Perdana, 2018).

Managerial competence is the ability to manage resources through planning, organizing, and monitoring to achieve organisational goals effectively and efficiently (Usman et al., 2018).

The school managers' managerial competence is a set of technical skills in performing duties as manager of the school and utilize all resources available to achieve the objectives effectively and efficiently (Ashlan, 2017; Kasturi, 2017; Sabandi, Anisah, & Rusdinal, 2018; Tanjung, Azmi, & Siahaan, 2017). Without good managerial competence, the relationship between individual goals and organisational goals can be weak. Therefore, the principal as a school manager is an important factor in determining the performance of

teachers in carrying out their duties and the success of the organisation in achieving its goals (Azainil et al., 2020).

Methodology

The study employed descriptive correlational survey design. This design determined if two or more variables are associated with each other. Descriptive since it is used to describe the present behavior or characteristics of a particular population, specifically the school managers of Guiuan.

The respondents of the study were the elementary school managers of three (3) school Districts of Guiuan. Namely, Guiuan East, Guiuan North, and Guiuan South. This are the principals, head teachers, and teacher-in-charge.

The research questionnaire utilized was patterned from the study conducted by Anyanwu, Ezenwaji, Okenjom, Enyi, (2015) this measure the Sources of Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies of respondents in the study. Additionally, a survey questionnaire focusing on the managerial competence of managers in terms of their management style, planning, information/communication, time management and terms of delegations was also utilized in this research study. This was adapted from the study conducted by Conui, (2021).

To gather the data from the respondents the researchers, prepare a communication letter address to the respective District supervisor of Guiuan East District, Guiuan North District, and Guiuan South District. This is requesting for permission to disseminate the survey questionnaires to school managers as research respondents. Following the approval of the letter, the researchers distributed the survey questionnaires to the objective respondents, allowing for immediate data retrieval. After the retrieval, tabulation, statistical treatment and analysis were conducted to answers the objectives of the study.

All the data obtained in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, composite means, simple frequency counts, percentages, and rating scales. The ordinal rating one (1) through five (5) use as indicators to convey descriptive data in ascending order. The information gathered will also be presented in a graphic format. Inferential statistics was made through SPSS version 21 to determine the significant relationships between and among the variables.

Moreover, in order to maintain the integrity, validity and ethical aspect of the research process, the administration of the survey questionnaires to the respondents was through an informed consent form and the willingness to participate and engage in the conduct of this research project. The respondents were informed that all data to be collected are to be treated fairly and be used solely for research purposes. Moreover, to ensure the safety and rights of the possible participants, informed consent, voluntary participation, rights of participants, anonymity, and confidentiality will be an utmost consideration (Chigona et al., 2010).

Results and Discussion

This section answers the questions regarding the occupational stress and coping strategies on stress management and managerial competence of respondents. All are represented in the table, along with their related mean scores, descriptions, and interpretations as perceived by the respondents.

Table 1. Mean scores and Interpretation of School Managers on Occupational Stress

	Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
A.	**SOURCES**			
1	Poor working environment is a source of occupational stress	3.83	Agree	High
2	The problem of implementing the curriculum planned by non-experts causes stress	4.08	Agree	High

3	Pressure from teachers is a source of occupational stress	3.94	Agree	High
4	An overpopulated school a school manager finds himself can cause stress	4.08	Agree	High
5	Conflict demands and roles between work and home causes stress	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High
6	Lack of autonomy in the execution of responsibilities in school by the teachers causes stress	3.79	Agree	High
7	Excess work load for the school managers is an occupational stress	4.04	Agree	High
8	Economic and financial problem is a stressor to the school managers	3.81	Agree	High
9	Pressure from parents' association on school community relation is a stressor	3.98	Agree	High
10	Poor social image of the school managers is a source of occupational stress of the teaching profession	4.13	Agree	High
	Total Mean	**3.99**	Agree	High
B.	**SYMPTOMS**			High
11	Persistent headache is a symptom of stress that affects the school managers	3.85	Agree	High
12	Heart attack as a result of marital problems at home is a symptom of stress	3.96	Agree	High
13	Reduction in effectiveness in administration is a symptom of stress	3.96	Agree	High
14	Aggressive behaviour to staff and students is a symptom of stress	3.83	Agree	High
15	Regular body pain is a symptom of stress	3.52	Agree	High
16	Hypertension is also a symptom of stress	4.08	Agree	High
	Total Mean	**3.87**	Agree	High
	Overall Mean	**3.94**	**Agree**	**High**

Table 1 presents the mean responses that provides valuable insights into the level of occupational stress experienced by school managers. The indicators of symptoms examined reveal a high level of agreement among participants regarding the sources and consequences of stress within the school management profession.

The mean scores for the identified sources of occupational stress indicate agreement levels ranging from 3.79 to 4.25, with a total mean score of 3.99. These results suggest that school managers perceive various factors as significant sources of stress in their role. These include a poor working environment, challenges in implementing the curriculum, pressure from teachers, managing an overpopulated school, conflict between work and home demands, lack of autonomy, excessive workloads, economic and financial problems, pressure from parents' associations, and a poor social image of school managers.

Moreover, the mean scores for the symptoms of occupational stress range from 3.52 to 4.08, with a total mean score of 3.87. This indicates agreement among school managers that they experience various symptoms related to stress. These symptoms include persistent headaches, heart issues as a result of marital problems, reduced effectiveness in administration, aggressive behavior towards staff and students, regular body pain, and hypertension. The overall mean score of 3.94 suggests a high level of agreement among school managers regarding both the sources and symptoms of occupational stress. This indicates a widespread recognition of the challenges faced by school managers and the impact of stress on their well-being and performance.

The results highlight the importance of addressing occupational stress in the school management profession. It is essential for educational institutions and stakeholders to prioritize the well-being of school managers by creating a supportive work environment and implementing interventions to mitigate the identified stressors. Strategies could include improving working conditions, providing support systems, promoting work-life balance, and implementing stress management programs.

Further research is necessary to explore additional factors contributing to occupational stress among school managers and to assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing stress levels. By acknowledging and addressing occupational stress, educational institutions can cultivate a healthier and more productive work environment, ultimately benefiting the well-being of school managers and the overall success of the school community.

Table 2. Mean Score and Interpretation of School Managers on Coping Strategies

	Indicator	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1	Delegation of duties is a way of managing occupational stress.	3.85	Agree	Commendable
2	Developing close staff relationship reduces occupational stress.	3.81	Agree	Commendable
3	Improving team management is a source of stress management.	3.71	Agree	Commendable
4	Hiring competent personnel to assist in administration reduces stress.	3.96	Agree	Commendable
5	Taking balanced diet could help to reduce stress as a management strategy.	4.00	Agree	Commendable
6	Taking regular exercise like walking and playing sports is a source of stress management strategy.	4.54	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
7	Having a practice good time management is a coping strategy to reduce stress.	4.65	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
8	Deep breathing and drinking water help to reduce stress.	4.67	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
9	Spending leisure time at home with family reduces stress.	4.56	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
10	Sharing problem related to job-stress reduces stress.	4.48	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
11	Relaxation breathing technique is a source of stress management.	4.54	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
12	Societal recognition and placement in the society reduces stress.	4.63	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
13	Take out time for leisure and take rest reduces stress.	4.29	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
14	Setting priorities of workload help to reduce stress.	4.33	Strongly Agree	Highly Commendable
	Total Mean	**4.29**	**Strongly Agree**	**Highly Commendable**

Table 2 presents the mean response on coping strategies used by school managers for stress management. The indicators examined reveal a high level of agreement among participants regarding the effectiveness of these strategies in reducing occupational stress.

Based on the data the mean scores result for the coping strategies range from 3.71 to 4.67, with a total mean score of 4.29. This indicates a commendable and highly commendable level of agreement among school managers on the effectiveness of these strategies.

Several coping strategies are rated as commendable in their effectiveness. These include delegation of duties, developing close staff relationships, improving team management, hiring competent personnel, taking a balanced diet, and taking regular exercise. These strategies are perceived as effective in managing occupational stress by a majority of the participants.

Moreover, there are coping strategies that receive a highly commendable rating for their effectiveness. These include practicing good time management, deep breathing, drinking water, spending leisure time at home with family, sharing job-stress-related problems, relaxation breathing techniques, societal recognition and placement, taking out time for leisure and rest, and setting priorities of workload. These strategies are seen as highly effective in reducing stress by the majority of the participants.

The total mean score of 4.29 further emphasizes the high effectiveness of these coping strategies in stress management.

These findings highlight the importance of implementing these coping strategies to support the well-being of school managers. Educational institutions and stakeholders should encourage the adoption of these strategies and provide resources and support systems to facilitate their implementation.

By promoting and implementing these highly commendable coping strategies, educational institutions can contribute to creating a healthier work environment and supporting the well-being of school managers, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction and performance.

Table 3. Means And Interpretation of Level of School Managers Managerial Competence

		Indicators	Mean	Description	Interpretation
A		**MANAGEMENT STYLE**			
1		I always value and consider feedback from my subordinates.	3.83	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
2		I very often effectively balance providing encouragement and setting expectations for my subordinates.	3.40	Often	Satisfactory
3		I often encourage open communication and welcome ideas and opinions from my subordinates.	4.02	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
4		I sometimes skilled in resolving conflicts in a positive and productive manner.	4.23	Always	Outstanding
5		I always promote a sense of teamwork and collaboration among my subordinates in the school setting.	4.15	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
		Total Mean	**3.90**	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
B		**PLANNING**			
6		I always ensure that organizational operations are balanced so that changes are neither too routine nor too disruptive.	4.15	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
7		I very often plan meetings in advance to ensure that important agendas are not forgotten.	4.83	Always	Outstanding
8		I often provide written plans to guide others in the organization.	4.65	Always	Outstanding
9		I sometimes demonstrate flexibility in making changes to meet the organization's needs when necessary.	4.60	Always	Outstanding
10		I always ensure that day-to-day work runs	4.79	Always	Outstanding

	smoothly.			
	Total Mean	**4.60**	Always	Outstanding
C	**COMMUNICATION**			
11	I always have access to reliable sources of information and use effective methods to obtain information.	4.77	Always	Outstanding
12	I very often organize information in a way that makes it easy to find and use.	4.52	Always	Outstanding
13	I often ensure that information is readily available to those who need it when they need it.	4.69	Always	Outstanding
14	I sometimes communicate important information in writing to ensure that all employees have equal access to it.	4.88	Always	Outstanding
15	I always make it a priority to visit other areas of the workplace to observe and understand their processes and results.	4.85	Always	Outstanding
	Total Mean	**4.74**	Always	Outstanding
D	**TIME MANAGEMENT**			
16	I always use a system for scheduling my time effectively.	4.85	Always	Outstanding
17	I very often manage interruptions and minimize fragmentation in my work.	4.88	Always	Outstanding
18	I often balance my time between completing current tasks and planning for future ones.	5.0	Always	Outstanding
19	I sometimes prioritize and focus on key problems and tasks.	5.0	Always	Outstanding
20	I always ensure that I have access to all necessary information to meet deadlines.	5.0	Always	Outstanding
	Total Mean	**4.95**	Always	Outstanding
E	**TERMS OF DELEGATION**			
21	Employees understand the objectives and know what is to be done, when and by whom.	4.23	Always	Outstanding
22	Responsibilities are delegated effectively and efficiently.	4.19	Very Often	Very Satisfactory
23	The supervisor shows genuine interest in the work of employees.	4.77	Always	Outstanding
24	Employees receive the guidance, training, and authority needed to make decisions independently.	4.90	Always	Outstanding
25	Employees are delegated work to help them gain new skills and grow in the organization.	4.94	Always	Outstanding
	Total Mean	**4.60**	Always	Outstanding
	Overall Mean	**4.56**	**Always**	**Outstanding**

Table 3 presents the managerial competence of school managers across various scopes. The examined indicators reveal a consistently high level of performance, with outstanding ratings obtained in multiple areas.

School managers demonstrate a strong commitment to effective management style. While there is room for improvement in some areas, such as balancing encouragement and expectations, the overall mean score of 3.90 indicates a very satisfactory level of performance. School managers value feedback from subordinates, encourage open communication, and promote teamwork and collaboration among their staff, contributing to a positive work environment.

Furthermore, school managers exhibit excellent planning skills, as evidenced by their high ratings in this dimension. They consistently ensure balanced organizational operations, plan meetings in advance, provide written plans to guide others, demonstrate flexibility when necessary, and ensure the smooth running of day-to-day work. The total mean score of 4.60 reflects their outstanding performance in planning, indicating their ability to effectively organize and coordinate activities within the organization.

Additionally, communication skills are a notable strength for school managers, as reflected in the outstanding ratings obtained in this dimension. They have access to reliable sources of information, organize information effectively for easy retrieval, ensure information availability, and communicate important information in writing. They also prioritize workplace visits to understand processes and results. The total mean score of 4.74 highlights their exceptional communication abilities, which contribute to efficient information flow and a well-informed workforce.

Likewise, school managers demonstrate exceptional time management skills. They consistently use effective scheduling systems, minimize interruptions and fragmentation in their work, balance current tasks with future planning, prioritize key problems and tasks, and ensure access to necessary information to meet deadlines. The total mean score of 4.95 indicates their outstanding ability to manage their time effectively, leading to increased productivity and task accomplishment.

Lastly, school managers excel in terms of delegation. They ensure that employees understand objectives and know their tasks, delegate responsibilities effectively and efficiently, show genuine interest in employees' work, provide necessary guidance and training for independent decision-making, and delegate work to facilitate skill development and growth. The total mean score of 4.60 reflects their outstanding performance in delegation, highlighting their ability to empower and support their staff.

The overall mean score of 4.56 indicates that school managers demonstrate outstanding competence across the evaluated dimensions.

These findings demonstrate the high level of managerial competence among school managers, which is crucial for effective leadership and organizational success. The exceptional performance in planning, communication, time management, and delegation reflect their ability to create a supportive and well-structured work environment.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Level of Managerial Competence

Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding	36	75%
Very Satisfactory	12	25%
Satisfactory	-	-
Unsatisfactory	-	-
Poor	-	-
Total	**48**	**100%**

The analysis of Table 4 reveals the distribution of respondents according to their level of managerial competence. Among the participants, 75% were classified as having an "Outstanding" level of competence, while 25% were rated as "Very Satisfactory."

The absence of data for the categories "Satisfactory," "Unsatisfactory," and "Poor" suggests that none of the respondents fell into those categories. This indicates a positive trend in the overall managerial competence of the participants, as no individuals were rated as having below average or poor competence.

The high percentage (75%) of respondents classified as "Outstanding" implies a strong presence of exemplary managerial skills within the sample. This finding suggests that the majority of the participants possess a high level of competence in their managerial roles.

Table 5. Relationship Between Occupational Stress and Managerial Competence

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlational Coefficient	Interpretation	P-value	Interpretation
Occupational Stress	Managerial Competence	0.237	Low Correlation	0.104	**Not Significant**

The analysis of Table 5 reveals that there is a positive but weak correlation (0.237) between occupational stress and managerial competence. This suggests that there is some association between these two variables, but it is not a strong or significant relationship.

The p-value of 0.104 indicates that the observed correlation is not statistically significant. This means that the correlation between occupational stress and managerial competence could have occurred by chance and may not be indicative of a meaningful connection.

Overall, the findings suggest that while there is a positive relationship between occupational stress and managerial competence, it is not a dominant or significant factor. Other variables and factors may have a more substantial impact on managerial competence. Further research is necessary to explore additional variables and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between occupational stress and managerial competence.

Table 6. Relationship Between Coping Strategies and Managerial Competence

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlational Coefficient	Interpretation	P-value	Interpretation
Coping Strategies	Managerial Competence	0.206	Low Correlation	0.160	**Not Significant**

The analysis of Table 6 presents the relationship between coping strategies and managerial competence. The correlational coefficient of 0.206 indicates a positive but weak correlation between these two variables.

While the correlation is positive, the coefficient value suggests that the relationship between coping strategies and managerial competence is not particularly strong. It implies that there is some degree of association between these variables, but it is not a dominant or significant factor in determining managerial competence.

The p-value of 0.160 indicates that the observed correlation is not statistically significant. This means that the correlation between coping strategies and managerial competence may have occurred by chance, and it is not likely to represent a meaningful connection.

These findings suggest that while coping strategies may play a role in managerial competence, they are not the primary or decisive factor. Other variables, such as leadership abilities, decision-making skills, and interpersonal relationships, might have a more substantial impact on managerial competence.

It is important to note that this analysis only focuses on the relationship between coping strategies and managerial competence. Other factors, such as individual traits, organizational support, and external pressures, may also contribute significantly to managerial competence and should be considered in future research.

In assumption, Table 6 demonstrates a weak positive correlation between coping strategies and managerial competence. However, the lack of statistical significance suggests that this relationship may not be significant or generalizable. Further research incorporating additional variables and employing rigorous study designs is needed to better understand the factors that influence managerial competence in relation to coping strategies.

Conclusion

The findings provide valuable insights into the occupational stress, coping strategies, and managerial competence of school managers. The study reveals that school managers face various significant stressors in their roles, indicating a widespread recognition of the challenges they encounter. However, they employ commendable coping strategies that are perceived as effective in managing stress. Moreover, school managers exhibit outstanding managerial competence across different dimensions, demonstrating their ability to effectively lead and coordinate their teams. While there is a positive but weak correlation between occupational stress/coping strategies and managerial competence, these factors do not have a dominant influence on managerial competence. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of prioritizing the well-being of school managers and implementing interventions to mitigate stress, while further exploring additional factors that contribute to managerial competence.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were advanced:

Create a supportive work environment: Address the identified sources of occupational stress by improving the working environment, such as providing comfortable and well-equipped facilities. Promote positive relationships among staff members and encourage open communication to foster a supportive and collaborative work culture.

Implement stress management programs: Develop and implement stress management programs tailored to the specific needs of school managers. These programs can include training sessions on coping strategies, mindfulness techniques, time management, and work-life balance. Provide resources and support systems to help school managers effectively manage and reduce stress levels.

Prioritize workload management: Work with school managers to establish effective workload management strategies. This can involve delegating responsibilities, setting realistic priorities, and promoting efficient time management practices. Ensure that managers have the necessary resources and support to carry out their duties effectively.

Enhance professional development opportunities: Offer professional development programs and opportunities for school managers to enhance their skills and competencies. This can include workshops, seminars, and training sessions focused on leadership, communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Empower school managers with the knowledge and tools they need to excel in their roles.

Foster recognition and appreciation: Recognize and appreciate the contributions of school managers within the school community and society at large. This can be done through public acknowledgement, awards, or opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Promote a positive social image of school managers to reduce stress related to societal perception and enhance their sense of value and self-worth.

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