



## SELF-CARE PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

This study examined the self-care practices of secondary school teachers and stress management in the Municipality of Lambayong. It employed descriptive-correlational design among sixty-three teachers. Mean and Pearson – moment correlation coefficients were employed to test the hypothesis. On the extent of self-care practices of teachers in terms of physical, psychological, emotional, relational, spiritual, and workplace/professional it was “Observed to a moderate extent”.

More so, on the level of stress management in terms of task-based, and conflict mediating it was revealed as “observed to a moderate extent” while role-based and boundary spanning and was revealed as “Observed to a lesser extent”. Interestingly, it was found that there was a “positive relationship” between self-care practices and stress management except in the workplace which revealed no significant relationship.

**Keywords:** Self-care practices, Secondary school teachers, Stress management

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The significance and advantages of self-care are applicable to all occupations, however, certain professions may exhibit a greater degree of stigma towards it than others. Individuals in caregiving roles, such as educators, frequently encounter greater ease in advising others to prioritize their health over their own personal adherence to such advice. The National Institute of Mental Illness (NIMI) of America suggests that teachers must prioritize self-care to ensure their mental well-being, as they tend to devote a significant amount of attention to others while neglecting their own needs.

Self-care has been identified as a potentially effective strategy for mitigating or managing teacher stress. According to recent data, a significant proportion of educators, specifically over 40%, experience elevated levels of stress on a daily basis throughout the academic year. This places the teaching profession on par with nursing in terms of having the highest stress levels among all occupations. Stress can arise from various factors such as inadequate resources, behavioral issues in the classroom, or the burden of meeting standardized test expectations, among others. However, the consequences of stress are consistent, resulting in compromised physical and emotional well-being.

According to Good Therapy (2019), self-care refers to the measures that an individual may undertake to attain the pinnacle of their physical and mental well-being. Engaging in self-care and pleasurable activities on a regular basis has the potential to enhance positive attitudes, attendance rates, and overall well-being in both academic and non-academic domains.

The author Larrivee (2012) discusses the origins and consequences of stress and its implications for educators. Additionally, the author highlights strategies that teachers can employ to alleviate stress and rejuvenate their mental state, thereby preventing the possibility of burnout. The author posits that burnout arises from three fundamental elements, namely physical exhaustion, depersonalization at the workplace, and a sense of inadequate personal achievement. Novice educators are particularly vulnerable to experiencing such emotions.

The ongoing pandemic has significantly impacted the Department of Education, particularly in terms of mental health, resulting in changes to the lives of both teaching and non-teaching personnel. The Department of Education (DepEd) has taken measures to address concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic through its DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020, which is also referred to as the Adaptation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021. In this order, the DepEd has identified the safeguarding of the mental health and overall well-being of learners and school personnel as a crucial priority. In line with this, the conduct of Mental Health Psychological Support Services (MHPSS) is a must with the supervision of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Services (DRMMS) together with various agencies.

In this context, the researcher tries to find out the relationship between the self-care of secondary school teachers and stress management

The Department of Education (DepEd)-Disaster Risk Reduction Management Service (DRRMS) launched mental health helpline system consisting of contact information from different organizations to support learners, teachers, and the public in times of mental and psychological distress. Along this context, the self-care practices of secondary school teachers served as the independent variables of the study. This included Self-care practices in terms of Physical Self-Care, Psychological Self-Care, Emotional Self-Care, Relational Self-Care, Spiritual Self-Care, and Workplace/Professional Self-Care.

The provision of MHPSS entails access to different helplines for mental health. In this regard, all DepEd offices are instructed to include and promote the enclosed poster provided by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS) in all events and programs.

Thus, the stress management of teachers in with workplace and at home was the dependent variable of the study.

The study focused on the Self-care Practices of Secondary School Teachers and their Stress Management. There were sixty three (63) Secondary School Teachers in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat as respondents of the study for the School Year 2022-2023.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a descriptive-correlational design. It determined the relationship between the independent variables such as self-care practices of secondary school teachers along with physical self-care, psychological self-care, emotional self-care, relational self-care, spiritual self-care, and workplace/ professional self-care, and the dependent variables were the Stress Management in terms of, Role-based, Task-based, Boundary spanning, Conflict mediating.

According to Noah (2021), a descriptive-correlational design investigates the relationships between two variables without the researcher changing or modifying any of them.

A survey questionnaire was used to collect the necessary information. It was organized in tabular form, analyzed, and described with the use of verbal description yielding answers to the specific questions of this research.

This study was conducted in six Secondary Schools in the Municipality of Lambayong School Year 2022-2023. The researcher preferred this Municipality of Lambayong because it is one of the biggest municipalities in the first Congressional District in the Province of Sultan Kudarat with the most number of secondary schools.

The respondents of the study were the sixty-three out of two hundred thirty-five Teachers from Junior High to Senior High School in the Municipality of Lambayong for the School Year 2022-2023.

To select the teacher-respondents of the study, Quasi-random sampling specifically systematic sampling using an equal allocation technique was applied in which twenty-five

percent (25%) from the total population per school served as the teacher-respondents of the study. This was based on Accad and Accad (2016) quasi-random sampling wherein, this type of sampling is either not possible when are homogenous or similar characteristics.

A questionnaire was a research instrument that gathered data from a large sample. An adopted and revise survey questionnaire used in the study. The research instrument to gauge the self-care practices was adopted from (Gabilagon, 2022). Moreover, in terms of Stress Management was adopted from (Saling, 2021).

The instrument for data collection was a 2-Part structured questionnaire.

To gauge the self-care practices in terms of Physical Self-Care, Psychological Self-Care, Emotional Self-Care, Relational Self-Care, Spiritual Self-Care, and Workplace/Professional Self-Care the scale below was used.

Part II, contained qualitative questions adapted and used by Victoria L. Aquino, 2013 and Saling, 2021 but slightly revised to suit the needs of the study that assessed the extent to which teachers stress management.

In the gathering of the data, the researcher asked permission with notification from the following: research adviser, East-West Mindanao Colleges, Inc. Graduate School Dean, and the Schools Division Superintendent of Sultan Kudarat Division. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the principals of the identified schools on the schedule of the survey. After the coordination, questionnaires were distributed and were retrieved later. Consolidation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered followed.

After the checklist and survey- questionnaires were retrieved, data were processed using the following statistical tools:

To determine the levels of self-care practices and stress management, a weighted mean was used.

The study also utilized Pearson-moment Correlation to determine the relationship between the two major variables in determining the influence of the independent to dependent variables such as self-care practices management and stress management.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **On the Extent of Self-care Practices of Secondary School Teachers in terms of, Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Relational, Spiritual, and Workplace/Professional Self-Care**

Table 1 reveals the self-care practices of secondary teachers in terms of physical, with the computed section mean of 3.24 interpreted as "Observed to the moderate extent". Among all indicators, I eat my meals regularly. Breakfast (6-8am), Lunch (11 am-12 noon), and Dinner (6-8pm) got the highest mean of 3.60, interpreted as "Observed to the moderate extent". All other indicators were interpreted as "Observed to the moderate extent" such as 2I eat healthy, well-balanced meals, which composes fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein 3.37, I keep myself physically active every day by walking, doing household chores, and playing movement games related to lessons in school 3.21, I take regular breaks from technology such as phones, email and social media 3.10, I engage in relaxing activities before bed (e.g. listening to relaxing music, meditation, body massage, reading, painting, watching a comedy movie, watching the stars, talking with my partner) 3.60 respectively and only indicator, I maintain a healthy sleep schedule and uninterrupted sleep of at least 7-9 hours 2.97 which is the lowest computed mean of 2.97 and interpreted as "Observed to the lesser extent".

This implies that in terms of Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with Physical Care, it was observed to the moderate extent.

This result confirms the statement from Good Therapy, (2019) that practicing self-care and doing activities that are enjoyable at least a few times a week may help to increase positive attitudes, attendance rates, and benefit well-being both inside and outside of the school.

Table 2 shows the psychological care of secondary teachers with the computed section mean of 3.03 interpreted as “Observed at the moderate extent”. In particular, indicators, I am aware of the time I spent watching the news or scanning social media 3.22, I plan and manage my time to avoid things that can cause conflict with family, friends, and co-workers 3.21 got the highest computed mean respectively which implies “Observed to the moderate extent”, whereas, indicators, I spend time for self-reflection 2.94, I write down my thoughts and experiences every day to manage my worries 2.68 got the lowest computed mean respectively which interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”

The findings support the study of Jennings (2018) that educators can be more responsive and present for their students.

This denotes that in terms of Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with Psychological Care it was observed at the moderate extent.

Table 3 shows on the emotional care of secondary teachers with the computed section mean of 3.19 which implies that it was “Observed to the moderate extent”. All other indicators had a varied interpretation, indicators, I feel proud of myself and accept my strengths and weaknesses (3.43) and I accept different types of feelings like happiness, sadness, anger, and worry that arise every day without judgment (3.46) got the highest mean which interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. Moreover, the indicator, have the lowest computed mean such as, I do healthy activities every day for at least 30 minutes like walking, dance, and yoga (2.76) which is interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent” and I begin each day with an activity that makes me feel good (e.g., breathing, meditation) (3.01) which implies that “Observed to the moderate extent”.

This only implies that in terms of Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with Emotional Care it was found out that it was “Observed to the moderate extent”. Therefore, secondary teachers in Lambayong tend to have an emotional care amidst their hectic schedule from their home and workplace.

The table on the previous page entails the relational care of secondary teachers with the computed section mean of 3.32 interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. Of the six indicators, five indicators were interpreted as observed to the moderate extent, specifically, I use technology to talk to my family & friends who are far 3.60, I stay in contact with important people in my life 3.59 got the highest computed mean respectively, whereas only indicator, I share my feelings, both positive and negative, with others 2.97 got the lowest meaning “Observed to the lesser extent”.

Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with Relational care, was found to be Observed to the moderate extent

The table above explains the spiritual care of secondary school teachers with the computed section mean of 3.46 interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. All indicators in this section were interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. Specifically, indicators, I have a strong faith in God/Allah and hope despite all the trials and challenges in my life 3.68, I keep myself happy and hopeful 3.57, and I look for and appreciate the beauty in all day-to-day activities 3.56 got the highest mean respectively.

This denotes that Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with of Spiritual Care, was observed to the moderate extent.

Table 6 reveals on the workplace/professional care of secondary school teachers, with the computed section mean of 3.47 which is interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. All indicators were interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”, moreover indicators, I take time to eat my lunch (11 am – 12 noon) 3.83, I take time to talk with my coworkers and I remind myself of my strengths as I take on new things 3.46 got the highest computed mean respectively, in addition, indicators, I create and beautify my workplace 3.29 and I engage in seminars and workshops via online platforms or face-to-face and/or enroll in graduate school for my professional growth and development (3.44) got the lowest computed mean but nevertheless it was interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”.

This only shows that Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers along with of Workplace/Professional Care, it was revealed, that “observed to the moderate extent” which conclude they have a self-care practices in the workplace together with their colleagues.

Self-Care Practices of Secondary Teachers with the computed section mean of 3.29 which interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent” is shown in Table 7. All variables

were interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. Specifically, variables Workplace/Professional 3.47 got the highest mean, Spiritual 3.46, Relational 3.32, Physical 3.24), Emotional (3.19), and Psychological (3.04), got the lowest mean percentage.

This only implies that Self-care-practices of Secondary school teachers along with workplace/professional, spiritual, relational, physical, emotional, psychological were “Observed to the moderate extent”.

### **On the level of stress management of secondary school teachers in terms of, Role-based, Task-based, Boundary spanning, and Conflict mediating**

The succeeding tables explain answers on the level of stress management of secondary school teachers in terms of Role-based, Task-based, Boundary spanning, and Conflict mediating.

Table 8 shows on the stress management of secondary school teachers in terms of role based with the computed section mean of 2.86 which interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”. Most of the indicators were interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”, in particular, indicator, being interrupted frequently by telephone calls, complaining parents got the highest mean of 3.05 which the only interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. Moreover, indicators, thinking that I will not be able to satisfy 2.71, Feeling I have an overwhelming workload that I cannot possibly finish during the normal workday 2.83 Knowing that I cannot get the information needed to carry out my job properly 2.84 got the lowest computed mean respectively which interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”.

This implies that Stress Management of Secondary School Teachers along with Role-Based, was “ Observed to the lesser extent”.

Therefore, Secondary School Teachers has adversed access control within the organization.

Table 9 shows the stress management of secondary school teachers in terms of task-based with the computed section mean of 3.02, “Observed to the moderate extent”. Interestingly, indicators, Trying to resolve differences between among stakeholders and Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members extent stressed and parents with issues got the computed highest equal mean of 3.11 which interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”, whereas, indicators, Feeling that meetings take up Too much time of my day (2.91) and Imposing excessively high expectations on myself (2.95) got the lowest mean respectively which interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”.

Therefore, Secondary School Teachers has focused in the substantial issues related to different work itself which arises their performance of their day-to-day activities.

Table 10 reveals on the stress management of teachers in terms of boundary spanning with the computed section mean of 2.98 interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”. In particular, only two indicators interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent” which are, attempting to meet social expectations of the school and home 3.11 and Speaking in front of groups 3.05 computed the highest mean. More so, indicators, trying to gain public approval/support for school programs 2.92, politics and Bureaucracy in the public school’s system, i.e. having to work around the system to get things done 2.94, and Trying to gain financial support for school programs, both mandatory and non-mandatory 2.89 got the lowest

Table 11 shows the stress management of teachers in terms of conflict mediating. It reveals computed section mean of 3.05 interpreted as “Observed to a moderate extent”. In particular, trying to resolve parent/school conflicts 3.25, and handling student discipline problems 3.24, and Complying with government mandates without getting the resources needed to fulfill them, i.e. insufficient funding 3.10 got the highest mean which was interpreted as “Observed to the moderate extent”. In addition, indicators, evaluating staff performance e, i, having the freedom to remove ineffective teachers or to reward outstanding ones due to tenure issues 2.73, and the feeling I have too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned extent stressed to me, i.e. lack of control 2.94 got lowest computed mean which interpreted as “Observed to the lesser extent”.

This implies that the Stress Management of secondary school Teachers along with

Conflict Mediating was Observed to the moderate extent.

It can be gleaned from Table 12 that Stress Management of Secondary Teachers was observed to the moderate extent given the computed mean of 3.29. In particular, Boundary spanning (3.19), Conflict- mediating (3.05), and Task-based (3.02) got the highest mean percentage and were interpreted as "Observed to the moderate extent". And Role-based (2.86), and Boundary Spanning were the lowest mean percentage.

The relationship between self-care practices and stress management of secondary teachers is shown in Table 13. Interestingly, all domains had a significant relationship with stress management except workplace that found out to have not significant. Specifically, at 5% level of significant, Physical care (0.498), Emotional (0.450), Relational (0.422), and Spiritual (0.455), which is higher than the p-value of 0.000, 0.001, 0.000, 0.001, and 0.000, respectively. Hence, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that state that there is no significant relationship between Self-care practices of Secondary School Teachers and their Stress management, therefore, there is significant relationship between sthe two variables.

The result of the study is related to the, Self-care should not be a forced task, however, self-care could be easily incorporated into the day. Juarez, Becton, and Griffin (2020) express how teachers are already busy people and practicing self-care should not add more stress. Improving the quality or quantity of sleep, eating better, getting physical, spending time socially and spiritually, and practicing good emotional hygiene are the self-care strategies that they say "should be easy to incorporate into life at work and at home" (para. 9). Good Therapy (2019) discussed the importance of self-care and the many benefits of practicing it. In education, teachers are working to meet the needs of their students, families, and coworkers before they meet their own, which can take a toll on their well-being. Good Therapy (2019) explains, "people who are able to meet their own physical and emotional needs are typically better equipped to take care of others."

#### 4. MAJOR FINDINGS

The study aimed to determine the relationship between self-care practices and stress management of secondary teachers. Specifically, this study tried to evaluate self-care practices in terms of Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Relational, Spiritual, and Workplace/Professional and Stress Management in terms of, Role-based, Task-based, Boundary spanning, and Conflict mediating

This research used a descriptive-correlational design and employed a survey questionnaire. The respondents of the study were 63 teachers. An adapted survey questionnaire was used to gather the needed data. The statistical tools used in processing the data were mean and Pearson r.

##### **Salient Findings of the Study;**

On the extent of self-care practices of teachers in terms of Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Relational, Spiritual, and Workplace/Professional it was "Observed to a moderate extent."

On the level of Stress Management in terms of Task-based, and conflict mediating it was revealed as "observed to a moderate extent" while role-based and Boundary spanning it was "Observed to a lesser extent."

Interestingly it was found that there is a "positive relationship" between self-care practices and stress management except in the workplace

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was drawn based on the findings of the study. The study deals with the Self-Care Practices of Secondary School Teachers in terms of Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Relational, Spiritual and Workplace/ Professional and their Stress Management in the Municipality of Lambayong. It reveals that there is a significant relationship between Self-Care Practices and Stress Management of Secondary School

Teachers. Therefore, Self-Care practices has something to do with the Stress Management of Secondary School Teachers in the Municipality of Lambayong.

From the salient findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were presented;

1. The school may continue its school mental health program that will enhance the self-care management of the teachers.
2. The teachers may sustain their self-care practices at home and at the workplace.
3. The teachers and school heads may continue or strengthen their stress management to poster mental health.
4. This study be replicated in wider scope to have a clearer picture of self-care practices and stress management.

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