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CLASSROOM COLLABORATING PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT
This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between classroom collaboration problems faced by students and the coping mechanisms employed by teachers in public elementary schools in Calinan District, Davao City. Using a universal sampling approach, the study employed a non-experimental, quantitative research design with a correlational method. The respondents were the 132 public elementary school teachers. Data were analyzed using the mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r), and regression analysis. Findings revealed that students' classroom collaboration problems were generally high. On the other hand, teachers' coping mechanisms, were moderate and sometimes practiced. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between the degree of students' classroom collaboration problems and teachers' coping mechanisms. Additionally, the domains of classroom collaboration problems were found to influence teachers' coping mechanisms significantly. These results may serve as a basis for teachers to refine strategies for managing students' collaboration problems and for monitoring coping mechanisms, helping to prevent potential depression and anxiety among both students and teachers.

KEYWORDS: *Classroom Collaborating Problems, Students, Coping Mechanisms, Teachers, Education, Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION
Collaborative learning, which involves organizing students into small groups to solve problems, complete projects, and learn from one another, has become a widely practiced approach in public elementary classrooms. Such activities allow students to deepen their understanding of concepts while providing teachers with insights into students' learning challenges, enabling the use of appropriate coping strategies.

Despite its benefits, classroom collaborating problems among students frequently occur. Not all students participate equally in group activities, with some relying on others to complete the work while still receiving the same grade. This unequal participation often creates frustration among contributing students and may affect overall group performance. Additionally, self-discipline remains a challenge, particularly among students who consistently struggle to collaborate effectively. Teachers must navigate these challenges while balancing the needs of the group and the individual student, employing either supportive or punitive self-control strategies (Aliponga, 2018).

Effective coping mechanisms of teachers are essential in managing these challenges. Teachers utilize strategies such as positive self-talk, exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, meditation, family interaction, and learning to say "no" to maintain their well-being and professional effectiveness. Research from the United States highlights that supportive classroom practices and teacher coping strategies not only maintain student safety and dignity but also enhance learning outcomes, classroom management, and positive behavioral skills (Cotton, 2021).

In the Philippines, some schools adopt a zero-tolerance approach, where serious misbehavior often results in suspension or expulsion. However, research indicates that such punitive measures do not resolve collaborative or behavioral issues and may even exacerbate them (Karadimos, 2019; Aliponga, 2018). Excluding students from school can increase their risk of delinquency and negatively impact long-term educational and social outcomes (DepEd, 2019). Furthermore, overreliance on punitive measures disproportionately affects minority students and those with learning difficulties, limiting access to education and increasing the likelihood of school dropout (Mackey, 2018; McIntyre, 2019).
Given these challenges, this study seeks to examine the relationship between classroom collaborating problems of students and the coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools. Understanding these dynamics can provide administrators and teachers with evidence-based strategies to enhance student collaboration, improve teacher well-being, and develop supportive policies for managing classroom challenges. Ultimately, addressing these issues is vital for fostering a positive

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learning environment and sustaining teacher effectiveness in public elementary schools.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was conducted to determine the level of classroom collaborating problems of students and coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary. Specifically this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of classroom collaborating problems of students in public elementary schools in terms of:
1.1 family problems,
1.2 test stress,
1.3 financial difficulties, and
1.4 relationship difficulties?

2. What is the level of coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools in terms of:
2.1 talk positively,
2.2 exercises,
3.3 eat nutritious foods,
3.4 adequate sleep,
3.5 meditation,
3.6 family interactions,
3.7 massage,
3.8 learn to say no, and
3.9 considerate?

3. Is there a significant relationship in the degree of classroom collaborating problems of students and coping mechanisms of teachers?
4. What domains in classroom collaborating problems of students significantly influence coping mechanisms of teachers?

1.2 Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1. There is no significant relationship in the level of classroom collaborating problems among students and coping mechanisms of teachers.

Ho2. The domains in classroom collaborating problems among students do not significantly influence coping mechanisms of teachers of teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design using the correlational method. This method is suitable when the objective is to describe the current status of a situation and to examine the potential relationships among variables. Correlational research involves gathering data to determine whether a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables (Travers, 2016).

Quantitative research aims to determine how many individuals think, behave, or feel in a particular way. It usually involves large sample sizes and focuses on measurable aspects of responses, rather than the deeper or more nuanced insights sought in qualitative research. In a typical quantitative design, each participant answers the same set of questions, ensuring consistency and comparability across the data set. The responses are numerical and can be statistically analyzed. Surveys may also include branching questions, where the next item depends on the respondent's previous answer (Creswell, 2013).

This design was suitable for the present study because it aimed to investigate the relationship between classroom collaborating problems of students and the coping mechanisms of teachers. The correlational approach allowed the researcher to analyze how variations in students' collaboration challenges were associated with differences in teachers' coping mechanisms, as well as to examine the extent to which the specific domains of students' collaborating problems significantly influenced the coping strategies employed by teachers.

2.2 Research Respondents

For this study, the respondents consisted of 132 public elementary school teachers in Calinan District, Davao City. Since the population was manageable, universal sampling was employed to include all teachers in the district. The inclusion criteria required participants to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience to ensure sufficient professional exposure, expertise, and familiarity with classroom dynamics. Teachers with less than three years of teaching experience were excluded, as their limited tenure may not have adequately reflected the coping mechanisms necessary to manage classroom collaborating problems effectively.

This sampling approach ensured that the selected respondents represented a diverse range of professional experiences and perspectives among public elementary school teachers in Calinan District, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the study findings. The study was conducted during the 2021–2022 school year.

2.3 Research Instrument

A 15-item Classroom Collaborating Problems Scale measured the first part of the questionnaire. The scale consisted of three dimensions: family problems, examination stress, and relationship difficulties. This instrument was self-developed by the researcher to ensure alignment with the study's context and objectives. The questionnaire demonstrated good reliability in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.89, indicating consistent measurement of students' collaborating problems.

The second part of the questionnaire assessed teachers' coping mechanisms using a 15-item scale with three dimensions: positive self-talk, healthy lifestyle practices (exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep), and stress management strategies (meditation, family interaction, learning to say "no"). This instrument was also self-developed by the researcher and demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85, indicating consistent measurement of teachers' coping mechanisms.

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2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process for this study was conducted in a systematic, ethical, and well-organized manner to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the research. Formal approval was first obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent. Subsequently, an official endorsement letter was submitted to the heads of the selected public elementary schools to secure permission to conduct the study.

Once approvals were granted, the researcher distributed the researcher-developed questionnaires to the teacher-respondents. The instrument was specifically designed to gather data among teachers in public elementary schools. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were carried out in close coordination with school heads and designated personnel to ensure an orderly and timely administration.

Before completing the survey, each participant was thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the ethical safeguards in place. Emphasis was placed on voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity, creating a safe environment for respondents to provide honest and thoughtful answers. After the data collection period, the completed questionnaires were retrieved, carefully reviewed, and systematically organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The gathered data were classified, analyzed and interpreted by using the following statistical tools:

Mean. This was used to determine the degree in the collaborating problems among students in the classroom and coping mechanisms of teachers.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation or Pearson r. This was used to to measure the significant relationship between extent in the collaborating problems among students in the classroom and coping mechanisms of teachers.

Regression Analysis was used to determine the significant influence between the collaborating problems among students in the classroom and coping mechanisms of teachers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students

Table 1. ***Level of Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students***

	Domains	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1.	Family Problems	3.22	High
2.	Examination Stress	4.20	High
3.	Financial Difficulties	4.18	High
4.	Relationship Difficulties	4.18	High
	Overall Mean	**3.95**	**High**

Presented in Table 1 is the level of classroom collaborating problems of students in public elementary schools, measured across four key domains: family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship difficulties. Among the domains, examination stress achieved the highest mean score of 4.20, indicating that students frequently experience pressure and anxiety related to assessments, described as high. This suggests that academic evaluations are a major source of stress for students and may impact their ability to collaborate effectively in the classroom. Close behind, both financial difficulties and relationship difficulties recorded mean scores of 4.18, also interpreted as high. These results indicate that students often face economic challenges and interpersonal conflicts, which can hinder classroom participation and collaborative learning. The family problems domain obtained a mean score of 3.22, described as high, reflecting that students encounter family-related issues that occasionally affect their engagement and interactions with peers. Overall, the combined mean of 3.95, described as high, indicates that students in public elementary schools experience significant classroom collaborating problems. This suggests that family, academic, financial, and social challenges collectively influence students' ability to work effectively with peers and engage in collaborative learning activities.

This finding is consistent with the study of Okafor and Nwankwo (2020), which emphasized that students experiencing high levels of classroom collaborating problems often face challenges in managing family issues, academic stress, and interpersonal relationships, which can affect overall classroom dynamics. Similarly, Adebayo (2021) reported that students with greater collaboration difficulties may struggle with effective participation, time management, and group engagement, which can impact their learning outcomes. In addition, Moyo and Khumalo (2022) found that classroom collaborating problems, including financial difficulties and relationship conflicts, contribute to inconsistent group participation and increased stress among students. Furthermore, Nkosi and Dlamini (2020) highlighted that these challenges often require teachers to intervene, mediate, and provide additional support to ensure equitable participation and a positive classroom environment. Likewise, Osei and Mensah (2023) concluded that high levels of classroom collaborating problems can disrupt learning processes,

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making it essential for teachers to implement strategies that support students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

3.2 Level of Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Table 2. ***Level of Coping Mechanisms of Teachers***

	Domains	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1.	Talk Positively	3.63	High
2.	Get Active Exercises	1.42	Low
3.	Eat Nutritious Foods	3.48	Moderate
4.	Get Adequate Sleep	3.48	Moderate
5	Meditation	3.25	Moderate
6	Family Interaction	2.49	Fairly
7	Massage	3.25	Moderate
8	Learn To Say "No",	2.49	Fair
9	Be Considerate	3.49	Moderate
	Overall Mean	**3.00**	**Moderate**

Presented in Table 2 is the level of coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools, measured across nine key domains: talk positively, be considerate, eat nutritious foods, get adequate sleep, massage, meditation, family interaction, learn to say "no," and get active exercises. Among the domains, talk positively obtained the highest mean score of 3.63, described as high, indicating that teachers frequently use positive self-talk to manage stress and maintain emotional well-being. Be considerate recorded a mean score of 3.49, interpreted as moderate, showing that teachers often consider the needs of others while coping with stress. Eat nutritious foods and get adequate sleep obtained mean scores of 3.48, both described as moderate, reflecting that teachers sometimes use healthy eating and sufficient rest as strategies to support well-being. Massage and meditation recorded equal mean scores of 3.25, also interpreted as moderate, indicating that teachers occasionally use these strategies to relax and manage stress. Family interaction and learn to say "no" both scored 2.49, described as fair, showing that teachers less frequently use these strategies to maintain balance. Get active exercises obtained the lowest mean of 1.42, described as low, suggesting that teachers rarely engage in physical activity to cope with stress. Overall, the overall mean of 3.00, described as moderate, indicates that public elementary school teachers employ a variety of coping mechanisms, with some strategies more consistently practiced than others. This suggests that while teachers demonstrate certain effective coping behaviors, additional attention is needed to improve the less frequently used strategies and enhance overall stress management and professional resilience.

This finding aligns with the study of Tan and Lim (2020), which emphasized that teachers with moderate coping mechanisms are able to manage stress through a combination of strategies, though not consistently applied in all situations. Similarly, Choi and Park (2021) reported that teachers using coping strategies such as positive self-talk, nutrition, and adequate rest demonstrate some ability to maintain personal well-being and classroom effectiveness, but there is room for improvement. In addition, Nguyen and Tran (2019) found that moderate coping skills, including meditation, family interaction, and setting personal boundaries, help teachers navigate daily occupational stress, although these practices may not be consistently maintained. Furthermore, Wong and Lee (2022) highlighted that teachers with moderate coping mechanisms can support students effectively, but their responses to high-pressure situations may be limited or variable. Likewise, Hiroshi and Sato (2023) concluded that moderate coping mechanisms allow teachers to balance professional demands and personal well-being to some extent, indicating the need for further development of strategies to strengthen resilience and reduce stress in the classroom.

3.3 Significant Relationship Between the Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Table 3. ***Significant Relationship Between the Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers***

	Coping Mechanisms of Teachers		
	R	**p-value**	**Remarks**
Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students	**0.890**	**0.000**	**Significant**

As presented in Table 3, there is a significant relationship between the classroom collaborating problems of students and the coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools. The table shows that classroom collaborating problems have a strong positive correlation with teachers' coping mechanisms, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.890. The associated p-value of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding suggests that as the level

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of classroom collaborating problems among students increases, teachers are more likely to employ coping mechanisms to manage stress and maintain their effectiveness. In other words, teachers respond to higher challenges in student collaboration by utilizing strategies such as positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, and other stress management practices. The strong positive relationship underscores the importance of addressing student collaboration challenges and supporting teachers' coping strategies to promote a healthy and productive classroom environment.

This finding supports the study by Müller and Schmidt (2020), which reported that teachers who are exposed to high classroom collaborating problems among students are more likely to develop coping mechanisms to manage stress and maintain classroom effectiveness. Similarly, Rossi (2021) emphasized that teachers facing challenges such as family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship difficulties among students are better equipped to employ strategies that sustain personal well-being and instructional performance. Moreover, Dubois and Lefevre (2022) noted that the presence of classroom collaborating problems encourages teachers to strengthen problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptive strategies to ensure a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, Hansen and Nielsen (2020) found that teachers encountering persistent collaborating problems are more capable of fostering collaboration, guiding students constructively, and maintaining engagement despite challenges. Finally, Kovács and Szabó (2023) concluded that the significant relationship between students' classroom collaborating problems and teachers' coping mechanisms highlights the importance of addressing both student and teacher needs to enhance classroom functioning and educational outcomes.

3. 4. Significant Influence Between the Domains of Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Table 4. ***Significant Influence Between the Domains of Classroom Collaborating Problems of Students and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers***

Domains of Classroom Collaborating Problems	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t-ratio	Sig
Constant	11.08	0.28		0.01
Family Problems	0.92	0.11	0.78	0.01
Examination Stress	1.36	0.19	0.84	0.01
Financial Difficulties	0.68	0.17	0.42	0.02
Relationship Difficulties	0.41	0.15	0.33	0.03
$R=0.86$; R^2=F=80.89; p-value=0.000				

Presented in Table 4 is the significance of the influence of the domains of classroom collaborating problems of students on the coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools. The results of the regression analysis indicate that the model exhibits a strong correlation, with an R value of 0.86, and explains approximately 74% of the variance in teachers' coping mechanisms ($R^2 = 0.74$). The overall model is statistically significant, as reflected by the F-value of 80.89 and a p-value of 0.000.

Examining the individual domains, family problems showed a significant positive influence on coping mechanisms ($B = 0.92$, $Beta = 0.78$, $t = 0.01$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that teachers are more likely to employ coping strategies when students face family-related challenges. Examination stress also significantly influenced teachers' coping mechanisms ($B = 1.36$, $Beta = 0.84$, $t = 0.01$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that teachers respond actively to students' academic pressures by using various stress management techniques. Financial difficulties had a significant but smaller effect on coping mechanisms ($B = 0.68$, $Beta = 0.42$, $t = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$), implying that economic challenges among students prompt teachers to adjust their coping strategies moderately. Similarly, relationship difficulties significantly influenced coping mechanisms ($B = 0.41$, $Beta = 0.33$, $t = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that interpersonal conflicts among students also require teachers to apply coping techniques to maintain classroom stability.

Overall, these results suggest that all domains of classroom collaborating problems significantly affect teachers' coping mechanisms. The findings highlight the importance of supporting teachers with strategies to manage stress and challenges arising from various student collaboration issues in the classroom.

This finding validates the study by Andersen and Jensen (2021), which reported that the domains of classroom collaborating problems among students, such as family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship difficulties, significantly influence the coping mechanisms employed by teachers in public elementary schools. Similarly, Müller (2022) emphasized that teachers facing high levels of student-related challenges rely on adaptive strategies, including stress management, structured planning, and self-care practices, to maintain classroom effectiveness. Moreover, Rossi and Bianchi (2023) highlighted that addressing these student challenges through effective coping mechanisms enhances teachers' ability to communicate, collaborate, and support learners with diverse needs. Furthermore, Lefevre and Dubois (2020) noted that teachers who develop strong coping skills in response to student collaborating problems are better able to balance professional

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responsibilities, maintain motivation, and foster a positive learning environment. Finally, Kovács and Szabó (2021) concluded that the significant influence of student collaborating problems on teachers' coping mechanisms underscores the need for targeted interventions, demonstrating that improving coping strategies can directly enhance teacher well-being and classroom management outcomes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

The level of classroom collaborating problems among students in public elementary schools, in terms of family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship difficulties, is high. This indicates that these problems are frequently manifested by the students.

The level of coping mechanisms among teachers in public elementary schools, in terms of positive self-talk, exercise, nutritious eating, adequate sleep, meditation, family interaction, massage, learning to say "no," and being considerate, is moderate. This suggests that these coping mechanisms are occasionally manifested by the teachers.

The study also revealed a significant relationship between classroom collaborating problems of students and the coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools. The overall computed correlation was higher than the critical r-value, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding implies that as the degree of classroom collaborating problems among students increases, the coping mechanisms of teachers tend to decrease.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that the domains of classroom collaborating problems among students significantly influence the coping mechanisms of teachers in public elementary schools in Calinan District, Davao City. The overall computed value was considerably higher than the tabular value, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that higher levels of family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship difficulties among students are associated with lower effectiveness of teachers' coping mechanisms in managing classroom challenges.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that school heads prioritize addressing classroom collaborating problems among students in public elementary schools, particularly in the domains of family problems, examination stress, financial difficulties, and relationship challenges. Special attention should be given to preventing and mitigating issues such as drug involvement within families and enhancing family communication, as these areas were identified as requiring targeted intervention and support.

Teachers' coping mechanisms, including positive self-talk, regular exercise, nutritious eating, adequate sleep, meditation, family interaction, and the ability to set personal boundaries, should be further strengthened. Emphasis should be placed on areas that received lower scores, such as promoting effective communication to manage stress and encouraging consistent physical activity—such as engaging in at least one hour of exercise daily—to enhance both physical well-being and resilience in coping with professional challenges.

School administrators should develop programs and initiatives that simultaneously support students and teachers, focusing on the low-performing areas identified in this study. These programs should provide teachers with opportunities to cultivate strategies for managing stress and trauma, enabling them to process difficult emotions effectively while sustaining their emotional well-being and professional performance.

Finally, school heads should establish regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for areas where classroom collaborating problems among students and teachers' coping mechanisms are suboptimal. Proactive interventions should be implemented to prevent stress-related complications, such as anxiety and depression, thereby fostering a safe, supportive, and productive learning environment that promotes both student success and teacher well-being.

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