

Exploring the Mental Health of Garments Teachers in Technical-Vocational Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the mental health of garments teachers in technical-vocational education, focusing on stress, anxiety, burnout, and coping mechanisms. Using a quantitative design, 50 garments and exploratory teachers from the CarCanMadCarLan area of Surigao del Sur, Philippines, were surveyed with a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments. Descriptive statistics, particularly the weighted mean, were used for analysis. Results showed that stress, anxiety, and burnout were generally at neutral levels, though signs of emotional fatigue and declining motivation were present. Teachers reported exhaustion and difficulty balancing workload with personal life, indicating potential risks if unaddressed. In contrast, coping mechanisms were rated high, with strong reliance on social support, relaxation techniques, and restorative activities. These findings suggest that while garments teachers maintain a balanced mental health status, emerging signs of strain highlight the need for institutional support. Strengthening wellness programs, managing workloads, and providing professional development can build on existing coping strategies and help sustain teacher well-being in technical-vocational education.

Keywords: Mental Health, Stress, Anxiety, Burnout, Coping Mechanisms, Garments Teachers, Technical-Vocational Education, Teacher Well-Being, Workload, Resilience

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a critical factor influencing a teacher's well-being and professional performance. Educators, particularly garment teachers, face unique challenges as they balance theoretical instruction with hands-on skills training in fashion and textiles. Their responsibilities include ensuring students acquire academic knowledge and practical competencies, keeping pace with industry developments, and managing classrooms with diverse learner needs. These demands, heavy workloads, and administrative tasks often contribute to stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue, which may affect teaching performance, classroom engagement, and long-term motivation (Guo, 2007).

Although research has widely documented teacher stress and burnout in general education, fewer studies have examined these issues specifically among garment teachers. Unlike academic teachers, garment instructors work in technical-vocational contexts that demand high levels of precision, practical demonstration, and competency-based training. Despite these expectations, garment teachers often face limited resources, a lack of recognition, and challenging workloads, which may heighten risks of stress, anxiety, and declining motivation (Chen, 2024; Wang, 2014).

In the municipalities of Carrascal, Cantilan, Madrid, Carmen, and Lanuza (CarCanMadCarLan) in Surigao del Sur, Philippines, limited research has been conducted on the mental health of garments teachers. While broader studies on teacher well-being have reported moderate stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and difficulties balancing workload and personal life, there remains insufficient evidence on how these challenges specifically manifest among garments teachers in technical-vocational education (Sultana & Aurangzeb, 2022; Kumari & Prajapati, 2024). Existing research has largely concentrated on general academic teachers, leaving garments educators, who face the unique dual demands of theoretical instruction and hands-on training, underrepresented in the literature. Furthermore, little is known about the coping mechanisms that garments

teachers employ to manage these mental health concerns and sustain their teaching effectiveness (Guo, 2007; Kumari & Prajapati, 2024). This lack of targeted evidence creates a significant research gap, as garments teachers' experiences may differ substantially from those in other teaching contexts due to their technical-vocational setting.

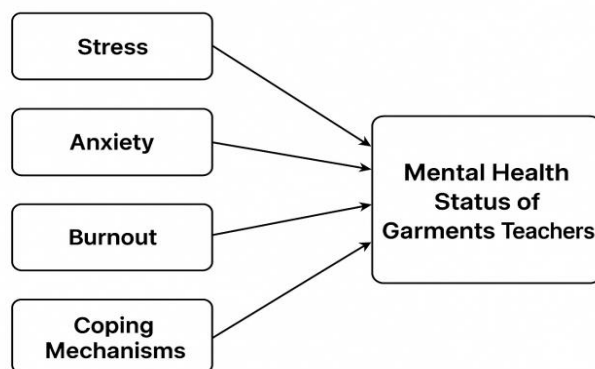
This study, therefore, addresses this gap by examining the level of mental health among garments teachers in Surigao del Sur, focusing on the dimensions of stress, anxiety, burnout, and coping mechanisms. By identifying both the emerging risks and the adaptive strategies practiced by teachers, this research aims to provide a clearer understanding of their mental health status and to propose evidence-based recommendations for strengthening institutional support, improving workplace conditions, and enhancing the well-being of garments educators (Chen, 2024; Wang, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the key dimensions used to assess the mental health status of garment teachers. As shown in Figure 1, the construct of Mental Health Among Garments Teachers is measured through four major dimensions: Stress, Anxiety, Burnout, and Coping Mechanisms. Stress refers to the tension and pressure associated with workload and responsibilities. Anxiety reflects worry, uneasiness, and difficulties balancing professional and personal life. Burnout captures emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and detachment from teaching roles. In contrast, coping mechanisms represent the strategies employed by teachers, such as seeking social support, practicing relaxation, and engaging in restorative activities, that help mitigate stress and promote resilience.

Together, these dimensions provide a holistic understanding of the mental health levels of garment teachers in Surigao del Sur.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress

Stress has long been recognized as one of teachers' most significant challenges. Agyapong et al. (2022) emphasized that high job demands, workload pressures, and insufficient recognition contribute directly to elevated stress and reduced well-being. In the context of garment teachers, these demands often come from balancing academic instruction with practical training. Similarly, Chen (2024) identified heavy workloads and limited administrative support as major stressors that drive exhaustion and reduced performance, echoing the situation of garment teachers who face dual teaching roles.

From the local perspective, Caleja and Averion (2020) highlighted how excessive administrative work contributes to teacher burnout and stress, while Manayan et al. (2024) confirmed that workload burdens directly reduce job performance. Both studies underscore how garment teachers are particularly vulnerable and often tasked with instructional and administrative responsibilities simultaneously.

Anxiety

Anxiety is another recurring dimension in teacher mental health. Agyapong et al. (2022) noted that career development concerns and organizational pressures create insecurity and negatively impact educators' well-being. This resonates with garment teachers who must continually align instruction with dynamic fashion and textile standards. In addition, Emeljanovas et al. (2023) found that younger and less experienced teachers exhibited higher levels of anxiety, suggesting that early-career garment educators may be at heightened risk.

Locally, Jimenez (2021) demonstrated that teacher stress and anxiety hindered the production of learning materials, which is especially relevant in garment education, where skills-based resources are essential. Similarly, Samaniego (2022) stressed the challenges of implementing the Philippine Mental Health Act, revealing gaps in institutional support that may worsen anxiety among teachers.

Burnout

Burnout, often characterized by emotional exhaustion and motivational decline, is critical for educators. Agyapong et al. (2022) showed that deteriorating mental health reduces classroom effectiveness, highlighting the long-term risks of unmanaged burnout. Sharma and Mohta (2023) further observed that rigid policies and job insecurity significantly increased burnout levels, concerns that garment teachers may share, especially in under-resourced institutions.

Local evidence reinforces these findings. Aruta et al. (2021) reported that Filipino teachers without access to mental health resources faced higher burnout levels, while Viernes and Pasco (2023) revealed how isolation and stress diminished teaching performance. These insights align with garment teachers' experiences of emotional fatigue and motivational decline due to heavy workload and limited support.

Coping Mechanisms

Despite the challenges of stress, anxiety, and burnout, teachers employ various coping strategies to sustain resilience. Shang and Singh (2024) highlighted the importance of institutional and community support systems in strengthening teacher well-being. Shah et al. (2022) demonstrated that meaningful social support improves engagement and mental health. Similarly, Bautista and Lim (2021) advocated integrating mental health education into teacher training, equipping educators with coping strategies early in their careers.

From the local context, Pekas et al. (2022) emphasized the role of social and family support in coping with stress, and Oducado et al. (2024) confirmed that a positive school environment enhances resilience and satisfaction. In addition, Asak et al. (2024) illustrated how cultural values and personal coping mechanisms enabled teachers in Sulu to remain resilient despite adverse conditions, a lesson relevant to garment teachers balancing multiple demands. Ceballos et al. (2023) further observed that structured wellness programs reduced stress and improved job satisfaction, underscoring the potential of institutionalized mental health initiatives for technical-vocational educators.

Synthesis

The literature shows that stress, anxiety, and burnout are common challenges faced by teachers worldwide, though their causes and intensity vary across contexts. Globally, heavy workloads, lack of recognition, and limited institutional support emerge as key stressors, while in the local Philippine setting, these issues are compounded by excessive administrative tasks, resource constraints, and weak implementation of mental health policies. Anxiety is often linked internationally to career insecurity and professional demands, whereas locally it is more tied to gaps in support systems and workplace pressures. Burnout appears as a recurring theme in both contexts, with international studies emphasizing job insecurity and rigid policies, while local evidence highlights emotional fatigue and the effects of high-pressure teaching environments. Across both global and local perspectives, however, the importance of coping mechanisms and support systems is consistently emphasized, with social connections, institutional initiatives, and personal resilience identified as critical buffers. Taken together, these findings suggest that while garments teachers share similar vulnerabilities with educators worldwide, their dual academic and practical teaching roles, coupled with

limited resources in technical-vocational settings, may heighten their risks and require tailored mental health interventions.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, which was appropriate for assessing the levels of mental health among garment teachers. The quantitative approach allowed for an objective examination of four key dimensions: stress, anxiety, burnout, and coping mechanisms.

Locale

The study was conducted in technical-vocational schools and institutions in the CarCanMadCarLan area of Surigao del Sur, Philippines. These schools offer Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) exploratory subjects and garment-related programs, including garment construction, tailoring, and fashion design. Teachers in this locale face distinctive challenges, such as balancing theoretical and practical instruction, managing large class sizes, and keeping pace with evolving industry standards. The focus on this region was particularly relevant given the limited research on the well-being of garment teachers in Surigao del Sur, despite their critical role in preparing students for the garment and textile industry.

Research Respondents

The study's respondents consisted of 50 garment and exploratory teachers from technical-vocational institutions in the CarCanMadCarLan area. These educators were purposively selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) currently teaching garments-related or exploratory subjects, (b) having at least one year of teaching experience, and (c) willingness to participate in the survey. This purposive selection ensured that only teachers directly engaged in garment education and familiar with its challenges were included in the study.

Research Instrument

The study employed a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments widely used in teacher mental health research. Stress was measured using items from the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983), while anxiety and depression were drawn from the GAD-7 (Spitzer et al., 2006) and PHQ-9 (Kroenke et al., 2001). Burnout items were adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey (MBI-ES; Maslach et al., 1996) and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti et al., 2001), both recognized as gold standards. Coping strategies were assessed using the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997), supplemented with insights from recent teacher-focused coping studies. A 5-point Likert scale was applied across all dimensions. To ensure cultural and professional relevance, items were modified to reflect garment teachers' dual academic and technical responsibilities while preserving the original tools' psychometric integrity.

Data Gathering

A systematic procedure was followed to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance. Permission was first obtained from school administrators in the CarCanMadCarLan area. After approvals were granted, teachers meeting the inclusion criteria were identified in coordination with department heads. A formal invitation was extended, and informed consent was secured before participation. Survey questionnaires were then distributed, either in person or through online platforms, depending on respondents' availability and preference. Adequate time was provided to complete the instrument. All responses were retrieved, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The weighted mean was employed to determine the average levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and coping mechanisms. This statistical approach provided a transparent and data-driven representation of the mental health status of garment teachers, serving as the basis for the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical research standards. Participation was strictly voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring no identifying information was linked to survey responses. Data were used exclusively for academic purposes and were stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Institutional permission was obtained from the respective schools before conducting the study. These measures ensured compliance with ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice in educational research.

RESULTS

The mental health status of garment teachers was generally neutral across stress, anxiety, and burnout dimensions, though signs of emerging emotional strain were observed (Table 1).

Stress Level

The stress level dimension yielded an average weighted mean of 3.14 (Neutral). This indicates that while garment teachers did not report extreme stress, they consistently experienced moderate levels of tension, pressure, and mental fatigue associated with workload and responsibilities. This aligns with previous findings that workload and administrative demands contribute to moderate but persistent stress levels among teachers (Agyapong et al., 2022; Chen, 2024).

Anxiety and Depression

The anxiety and depression component recorded a neutral rating (3.25). However, the item *"I feel anxious about balancing workload and personal life"* obtained an Agree rating (3.6), highlighting work-life balance as a specific area of concern. Similar results were noted by Emeljanovas et al. (2023), who found that career-related uncertainty and workload balance were significant sources of anxiety among teachers.

Work-Related Burnout

Work-related burnout produced a borderline result (3.48 – Neutral). Notably, two statements received agreement ratings: *"I feel emotionally drained after a full day of teaching"* (3.75) and *"I find it difficult to stay motivated due to exhaustion"* (3.6). These findings suggest that while burnout levels have not reached a critical stage, emotional fatigue and declining motivation emerge among respondents. Comparable patterns of moderate but rising burnout have been documented in local and international studies (Aruta et al., 2021; Sharma & Mohta, 2023).

Coping Mechanisms

The coping mechanisms dimension obtained the highest average weighted mean (4.25 – Agree), with *"I seek support from colleagues or administrators when needed"* receiving a Strongly Agree rating (4.5). This indicates that garment teachers actively use positive coping strategies, including seeking social support, practicing relaxation techniques, and participating in hobbies or restorative activities. These results are consistent with Shah et al. (2022) and Shang & Singh (2024), who emphasized that social support and institutional backing are among the most effective teacher coping mechanisms.

Table 1. Level of Mental Health Among Garment Teachers

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Stress Level		
I feel overwhelmed by my workload as a garments teacher.	3.4	Neutral
I frequently experience tension and pressure while performing my duties.	3.3	Neutral
My job responsibilities cause me to feel mentally drained.	2.85	Neutral
I find it difficult to relax after work due to work-related stress.	3.0	Neutral
I feel that my stress levels negatively impact my teaching performance.	3.15	Neutral

Average Weighted Mean	3.14	Neutral
Anxiety and Depression		
I often worry about my ability to meet teaching expectations.	3.3	Neutral
I experience feelings of sadness or low mood due to work stress.	3.0	Neutral
I feel anxious about balancing workload and personal life.	3.6	Agree
I experience nervousness or uneasiness when preparing lessons.	3.35	Neutral
I sometimes feel hopeless or discouraged in my teaching career.	3.0	Neutral
Average Weighted Mean	3.25	Neutral
Work-Related Burnout		
I feel emotionally drained after a full day of teaching.	3.75	Agree
I find it difficult to stay motivated due to exhaustion.	3.6	Agree
I often feel detached or disconnected from my teaching role.	3.35	Neutral
I feel I have lost enthusiasm for my job as a garments teacher.	3.4	Neutral
My burnout has negatively affected my students or classroom performance.	3.3	Neutral
Average Weighted Mean	3.48	Neutral
Coping Mechanisms		
I use relaxation techniques (e.g., deep breathing, meditation).	4.25	Agree
I seek support from colleagues or administrators when needed.	4.5	Strongly Agree
I engage in hobbies or personal activities to manage stress.	4.3	Agree
I take breaks or time off when feeling overwhelmed.	4.1	Agree
I feel that my coping strategies help me maintain mental well-being.	4.1	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.25	Agree
Legend: 4.50-5.00 -Strongly Agree 3.50-4.49 -Agree 2.50-3.49 -Neutral 1.50-2.49 -Disagree 1.00-1.49 -Strongly Disagree		

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that garments teachers experience moderate levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout, alongside the use of strong coping mechanisms. These results suggest that while mental health risks are not yet severe, early warning signs of strain are present and require institutional attention.

Stress and Anxiety

The neutral yet consistent stress levels observed align with the results of Agyapong et al. (2022), who reported that teachers across multiple contexts experience moderate stress levels, often linked to workload and work–life imbalance. The elevated workload–life conflict rating in the present study reinforces the need for organizational policies addressing time management and personal well-being. For example, schools could implement flexible scheduling options or designate “non-teaching days” for lesson preparation and administrative tasks, giving teachers greater control over their time.

Burnout

Although burnout was rated as neutral overall, the high scores on emotional exhaustion and reduced motivation are comparable to the findings of Aruta et al. (2021), who documented heightened emotional fatigue among Filipino teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings emphasize the gradual development of fatigue that, if left unaddressed, may evolve into critical burnout, threatening long-term teacher motivation and classroom effectiveness. To counter this, schools can provide structured wellness programs, such as monthly well-being seminars, counseling services, and recognition awards for teaching excellence, which reinforce motivation and acknowledge teacher contributions.

Coping Mechanisms

The strong reliance on adaptive coping strategies mirrors the observations of Shah et al. (2022), who highlighted the protective role of social support, positive reframing, and relaxation in mitigating psychological

strain. The garments teachers' tendency to seek help from colleagues and administrators reflects the importance of peer and institutional networks as buffers against stress. This finding is further supported by Shang and Singh (2024), who stressed that coping effectiveness is strengthened when educators perceive recognition and community backing. Schools can formalize these informal supports by creating peer support groups or mentoring programs where teachers regularly share experiences and coping practices.

Implications

The results highlight the need for proactive institutional interventions to support garments teachers' mental health. Schools may establish peer support groups to foster collaboration and reduce isolation, mindfulness and relaxation workshops to build stress management skills, and workload management policies to balance teaching and administrative responsibilities. For instance, rotating administrative tasks among staff or hiring additional support staff can reduce teacher overload. In addition, professional development sessions on mental health awareness and resilience training can help educators recognize early warning signs of strain and take proactive measures. The presence of well-established coping strategies provides a valuable foundation for these initiatives, ensuring that interventions are context-specific and aligned with the strengths already practiced by garments teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that garments teachers maintain a generally balanced but fragile mental health status, with stress, anxiety, and burnout rated at neutral levels yet showing early signs of emotional fatigue and declining motivation. Strong coping mechanisms, such as reliance on social support and restorative practices, were evident and serve as protective factors against worsening mental health concerns. However, these coping strategies alone are insufficient without institutional backing; proactive support through wellness programs, workload management, and structured mental health initiatives is urgently needed to sustain teacher well-being and prevent escalation into severe distress.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, several recommendations are put forward to strengthen garment teachers' mental health and well-being. Institutions should prioritize establishing structured support programs, such as peer support groups and mentorship systems, to enhance collaboration and reduce feelings of isolation. Mental health interventions, including mindfulness training, relaxation practices, and counseling services, should be integrated into school programs to provide teachers with accessible coping resources. In addition, reviewing and adjusting workloads, administrative responsibilities, and scheduling policies is necessary to ease pressure and promote better work-life balance. Professional development initiatives focusing on resilience-building and mental health awareness may empower teachers to manage challenges effectively. Finally, future research should expand the scope of this study to include comparative analyses across different groups of educators and employ longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of coping strategies on mental health outcomes.

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