

Stress and Coping Strategies among Clinical Instructors in Nursing Schools in Davao Oriental

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ABSTRACT

To address the occupational strain resulting from overlapping academic, clinical, and administrative responsibilities, this descriptive correlational study investigated the primary stressors and coping mechanisms of 33 nursing clinical instructors at Mati Doctors College and Davao Oriental State University. Using a 108-item adapted questionnaire administered via convenience sampling, the study found that this predominantly early-career cohort (aged 27–32 years, 32.4%) experienced the highest stress from student-related factors ($M = 2.71$) and the pervasive pressure to complete all outstanding daily tasks ($M = 2.82$). Despite these environmental and role-based demands, instructors primarily relied on self-recognition ($M = 3.65$) as their leading coping strategy, with statistical analyses indicating no significant differences in stress levels across sociodemographic variables. Ultimately, to sustain faculty well-being and instructional efficacy, the study advocates for institutional interventions focused on effective workload management, supportive work environments, and targeted professional development programs.

Keywords: *Stress, coping strategies, clinical instructors, nursing education, Davao Oriental*

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a pervasive, systemic response to excessive demands that, among clinical nursing instructors, manifests as psychological distress and strain driven by high workloads, role conflict, and administrative pressures, often culminating in burnout (World Health Organization, 2023; Watson et al., 2023; Zangaro et al., 2023). Mitigating this escalating global phenomenon relies on deliberate, multidimensional coping strategies, including problem-, emotion-, and meaning-focused approaches, that enable individuals to adapt to taxing environments and sustain effectiveness (Trudel-Fitzgerald et al., 2023; Trudel-Fitzgerald et al., 2024; Algorani & Gupta, 2023; Troy & Mauss, 2023). Although previous studies strongly link academic stress to compromised institutional performance and diminished educational quality (Asis, 2020; Fernando & Hernando, 2021), empirical data detailing the specific coping mechanisms employed by nursing clinical instructors in Davao Oriental remains distinctly scarce. Consequently, this study aims to analyze the coping strategies utilized by academic professionals to manage their primary occupational stressors, providing foundational insights necessary to implement targeted interventions that bolster staff resilience and safeguard the quality of nursing education.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the sociodemographic profile of the respondents? (2) What are the sources of stress among clinical instructors in nursing schools in Davao Oriental? (3) What is the level of stress among clinical instructors in nursing schools in Davao Oriental? (4) What are the coping strategies among clinical instructors in nursing schools in Davao Oriental? (5) Is there a significant difference between the level of stress and the profile of the respondents? (6) Is there a significant relationship between the stress level and coping strategies and the profile of the respondents? (7) Based on the results of the study, what program can be proposed to develop strategies for preventing stress among clinical instructors in a selected state university in Davao Oriental?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study was specifically limited to currently employed healthcare faculty at Davao Oriental State University and Mati Doctors College, relying exclusively on self-reported data to identify immediate coping mechanisms rather than long-term psychological impacts or the efficacy of strategies. Consequently, these findings were contextually bound to the selected institutions and may not be broadly generalizable to clinical instructors in other academic settings.

Review of Related Literature

Nursing clinical instructors face significant occupational stress and burnout stemming from multifaceted roles and heavy workloads, which can compromise educational efficacy (American Psychological Association, 2019; Boyd, 2020; Zangaro et al., 2023; Allah & Shokr, 2024). Although these educators employ diverse coping strategies, both international and local literature emphasize that individual resilience is insufficient without robust institutional support, including clear role expectations and structured feedback (Buanz et al., 2024; Dintwe et al., 2025; Dugger & Watson, 2024; Mallorca et al., 2024). Ultimately, preserving instructional quality and faculty well-being necessitates systemic interventions that mitigate structural stressors while accounting for the sociodemographic variations that influence job satisfaction and turnover intention across the instructor workforce (Al-Rawajfah et al., 2022; Boamah et al., 2024; Dayon & Dagoc, 2025; Borces & Bacarisas, 2025; Jimeno, 2024; Matahela & van Rensburg, 2024; Watson et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This research is firmly anchored in Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, Roy's Adaptation Model, and Betty Neuman's Systems Model. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives establish a robust and comprehensive framework for exploring the occupational stressors and subsequent coping mechanisms experienced by clinical instructors within nursing schools across Davao Oriental.

Conceptual Framework

Grounded in the transactional model, the conceptual framework posits that occupational stress arises from a continuous interaction between individuals and their environment, particularly when external demands are perceived to outweigh available personal resources. This dynamic process is mediated by primary cognitive appraisal, wherein

individuals evaluate the immediate situational stakes, and secondary appraisal, which assesses the viable options for managing the threat. Ultimately, the strength of institutional and emotional support systems dictates whether professionals utilize adaptive, problem-focused coping strategies or resort to maladaptive behaviors to alleviate workplace strain.

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research study assesses the stress and coping strategies among clinical instructors in nursing Schools in Davao Oriental

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive correlational, and comparative research design. Quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data. The descriptive component will evaluate the socio-demographic profile and sources of stress. The correlational and comparative component will scrutinize the relationship and differences in stress and coping strategies among clinical instructors in nursing schools in Davao Oriental.

Research Steps

Before commencing the study, the researcher sought approval from the Faculty Facilitator and obtained a permit to conduct the survey. Second, the researcher sought the approval and endorsement of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose and importance of their responses in the study, their rights as participants, and the assurance of confidentiality. Then, the researcher carried out data analysis of the data gathered.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

This study employed a purposive sampling approach to recruit clinical instructors from nursing schools across Davao Oriental. Data were collected using a validated 108-item structured questionnaire, yielding a final sample of 33 respondents who successfully completed the survey.

Data Analysis Methods

This study utilized descriptive statistics (counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarize participant profiles, stress levels, and coping strategies (SOP 1–3), alongside two-tailed inferential methods ($\alpha=.05$) including the non-parametric Kruskal–Walli’s test with Dunn’s post hoc adjustments to evaluate demographic differences (SOP 4) and a Chi-square Goodness of Fit test to analyze stress distribution deviations (SOP 5).

Research Hypotheses and Validation

This study tested the null hypotheses that no significant relationship exists between clinical instructors' stress levels and their coping strategies, and that no significant differences exist in either variable when participants are grouped by demographic profile.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical protocols by obtaining informed consent from all respondents, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw at

any time. Furthermore, ethical issues encompassed the imperative to ensure the respectful portrayal of respondents' views in the final analysis and reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Surveyed clinical instructors reported moderate occupational stress primarily driven by student-related concerns, school environment factors, and self-imposed workload pressures. Although coping behaviors appear habitual and largely independent of stress intensity, stress distribution varies significantly across demographic factors including age, gender, educational attainment, and teaching experience. Consequently, proposed stress-prevention initiatives must prioritize student-related challenges and personal workload management to effectively mitigate burnout and sustain faculty well-being.

SUMMARY

The study findings describe a predominantly female, mid-career cohort of nursing clinical instructors who report moderate occupational stress, driven primarily by student-related concerns and self-imposed perfectionistic work habits. While mean stress levels remain uniform across demographic profiles, suggesting that systemic workplace conditions are the primary drivers of strain, significant variations in stress distribution exist based on age, gender, experience, and educational attainment. To mitigate these challenges, this study proposes a structured Clinical Instructor Wellness and Support Program designed to optimize faculty well-being through targeted capacity building, peer support, and proactive workload management.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that occupational stress among clinical instructors is primarily driven by student-related concerns and environmental demands rather than individual backgrounds, manifesting as moderate stress levels fueled by perfectionistic tendencies and self-imposed workflow pressures. While overall stress scores do not differ significantly across demographic profiles ($p > .05$) and do not directly correspond to variations in coping strategies, the internal distribution of stress categories reveals high variability, showing highly significant differences when evaluated across gender, educational attainment, age, and years of teaching experience. Ultimately, these findings underscore that while institutional stressors universally affect faculty, the specific manifestations of stress vary unevenly across career stages and demographic subgroups, highlighting the need for systemic, structurally tailored wellness interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To proactively manage faculty stress, institutions should implement career-stage-specific mentorship programs alongside low-burden wellness practices and culturally relevant support systems. Administrators must address preventable systemic stressors by streamlining administrative paperwork, providing standardized planning templates, and ensuring realistic scheduling that protects uninterrupted time for non-teaching duties. Furthermore, clarifying role expectations across academic, clinical, and administrative domains is essential, reinforced by tangible policies such as class size caps and structured workload relief options. Finally, universities should collaboratively design continuous faculty development programs with

partner hospitals to harmonize clinical expectations and deliver targeted micro-skills training that empowers peer-led instruction.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure when creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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