

The Dual Role Journey: Exploring the Stress Levels and Coping Strategies of Nurse-Educators Pursuing Advanced Studies

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the stress levels of nurse-educators who simultaneously teach and pursue further studies, and identified the coping strategies they employ in selected nursing colleges in the National Capital Region. A descriptive-correlational design was used. Data were collected from 38 licensed nurse educators using a standardized Likert-scale questionnaire. Statistical treatments included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA to analyze relationships and differences among variables. Results revealed that respondents experienced high levels of stress due to workload, time constraints, and dual-role demands. Despite this, they demonstrated effective coping strategies, including problem-solving, emotion regulation, spirituality, and social support. These strategies were significantly associated with reduced stress and improved adaptation. Moderate stress was also found to contribute positively to professional growth and skill development. However, excessive workload was linked to increased stress, potentially affecting teaching performance. The study was limited by its small sample size and focus on selected institutions, which may affect generalizability. Future research may include larger, more diverse samples and explore the longitudinal effects of stress and coping. Institutions should strengthen support systems, promote work-life balance, and provide accessible coping resources to enhance nurse-educators' well-being and performance. This study contributes to understanding how nurse-educators manage dual roles, highlighting the importance of coping mechanisms and institutional support in sustaining resilience and professional effectiveness.

Keywords: Nurse-educators, stress appraisal, coping strategies, dual roles, resilience, workload, professional development

INTRODUCTION

Nurse-educator students in graduate schools face heightened levels of stress because of workload and time constraints (Olorunfemi et al., 2024). In the Philippines, although advanced education contributes to professional development, it may also lead to decreased work performance (Oducado et al., 2021). Moderate to high levels of stress, stemming from role overload and role conflict (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), lead to job burnout and dissatisfaction (Gómez-Urquiza et al., 2017). Although social and institutional resources serve as stress buffers (Bautista et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2020), there is insufficient data on the nurse educators of the National Capital Region.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined stress levels, coping strategies, and accommodation among nurse educators in relation to their demographic profiles. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What was the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, length of experience, highest educational attainment (advanced degree), career path being pursued, and weekly teaching hours?
2. What were the stress levels as well as coping strategies of nurse educators in terms of stress appraisal, coping strategies, emotional coping, behavioral coping, outcomes, and accommodation?
3. What significant relationship existed among stress appraisal, coping strategies, and accommodation?
4. Was there a significant difference in stress appraisal when respondents were grouped according to their demographic profile?
5. Based on the findings, what evidence-based institutional intervention program or action plan could be proposed to improve stress management, coping resources, and accommodation among nurse-educators pursuing advanced studies?

Scope and Delimitations

The research methodology adopted here is quantitative, and the study will measure stress and coping among licensed nurse educators who teach while undertaking postgraduate studies at select Metro Manila institutions (2025–2026), excluding those working purely in clinical settings. The generalizability of the study is compromised by its being conducted on a small, selective sample population.

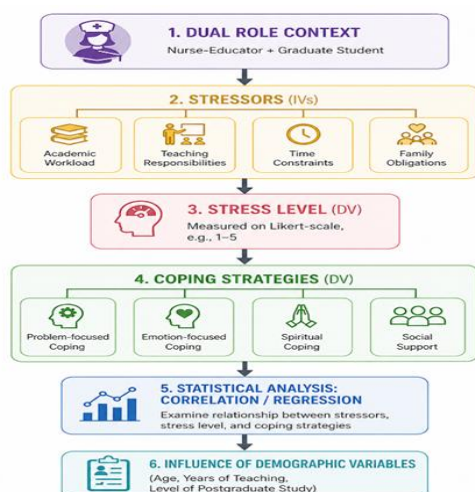
Review of Related Literature

Nurse educators have experienced medium to high levels of stress from teaching, clinical work, and postgraduate study, resulting in burnout (Garcia et al., 2022). These stressors include workload, time constraints, and role conflict. This is attributed to the Job Demands-Resources model and Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Demerouti et al., 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping strategies can be achieved through social and organizational resources (Nguyen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, very little research has been done concerning postgraduate nurse educators within the National Capital Region (NCR).

Theoretical Framework

In this research paper, the **Transactional Model of Stress and Coping as developed by Lazarus & Folkman, along with Merton's Role Theory**, is used to define stress as a function of demand appraisal, coping mechanisms, and strain due to various roles. The independent variables include workload, teaching demands, time limitations, and personal variables, whereas stress and coping mechanisms (problem-solving, emotion-focused, spirituality, and social support) become the dependent variables.

Conceptual Framework



The framework shows that nurse-educators experience stress from their dual roles as teachers and graduate students. Key stressors such as workload, teaching demands, time pressure, and family responsibilities act as independent variables influencing stress levels and coping strategies (problem-focused, emotion-focused, spiritual, and social), with age and teaching experience as moderating factors.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach to assess stress and coping among nurse-educators enrolled in postgraduate programs in the Philippines.

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational design was used to assess stress and coping among nurse-educators in selected NCR institutions using a standardized Likert-scale questionnaire.

Research Steps

Data collection began after approval from relevant authorities and the IERB. Online surveys via Google Forms were conducted from January to March 2026, with voluntary participation and confidential data collection using identification codes. Data were securely stored for three years in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study focused on licensed nurse-educators in the NCR who were teaching while pursuing postgraduate studies (2024–2026). Using purposive sampling, 38 participants were selected based on availability. Inclusion required active teaching and postgraduate enrollment, while others were excluded. Although a larger sample was recommended, the final size was limited by accessibility.

Data Analysis Methods

The descriptive statistics provided information on the respondents' profiles, stress levels, and coping mechanisms. The normal distribution (Shapiro-Wilk, $p > .05$) permitted parametric tests to be used. The correlations were assessed using the Pearson correlation test, and differences were evaluated using one-way ANOVA. This was done through SPSS and Excel.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The null hypotheses regarding the effect of demographics on stress and the correlation between stress and adaptation were tested. Data were gathered using a structured online questionnaire that included aspects of profile, stress, coping, and adaptation. The tool, derived from the PSS-10 and Brief COPE, exhibited validity (CVI = 0.91) and reliability ($\alpha = 0.87-0.91$; overall = 0.92).

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed by ensuring that participants voluntarily took part in the study. Data privacy was achieved through confidential coding and encrypted data storage in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, retaining data for 3 years before destroying it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What was the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, length of experience, highest educational attainment (advanced degree), career path being pursued, and weekly teaching hours? Participants were mostly young (24–25), predominantly female (76.3%), early-career nurse educators with 1–5+ years of teaching experience, pursuing master's degrees, and handling moderate to heavy workloads.

SOP 2. What were the stress levels as well as coping strategies of nurse educators in terms of stress appraisal, coping strategies, emotional coping, behavioral coping, outcomes, and accommodation? Respondents experience high stress from balancing teaching and studies but view it as beneficial for personal growth. They cope effectively through time management, social support, and spirituality, showing positive adaptation despite challenges.

SOP 3. What significant relationship existed among stress appraisal, coping strategies, and accommodation? The data showed a normal distribution ($p > 0.05$). Coping was negatively related to stress and positively to adaptation, while stress was also linked to outcomes, suggesting that effective coping can promote positive adaptation.

SOP 4. Was there a significant difference in stress appraisal when respondents were grouped according to their demographic profile? One-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in stress by workload ($F = 4.27$, $p = 0.011$), with longer working hours linked to higher stress, supporting the Job Demand-Resources Model.

SOP 5. Based on the findings, what evidence-based institutional intervention program or action plan could be proposed to improve stress management, coping resources, and accommodation among nurse-educators pursuing advanced studies? The action plan aims to reduce stress among nurse educators through workload management, time management training, resilience programs, mentoring, and support systems. Success will be measured by lower stress, improved coping, performance, and retention. Despite high stress, educators remain resilient, and stress can lead to positive outcomes.

SUMMARY

The results reveal that nurse educators are young, female, and have early careers, and their workload is moderate to heavy, leading to stress levels. However, these educators have

good coping mechanisms and display adaptation. The results reveal that the higher the workload, the higher the stress level.

CONCLUSIONS

It is found that the nurse educators working in the NCR face considerable stress due to their dual role, mostly because of workload and timing. At the same time, as stated in the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, stress does not always have to be considered bad if one knows how to cope with it effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A structured approach is recommended to address stress among nurse-educators in graduate studies. Institutions should provide counseling, support systems, flexible schedules, training, mentoring, and workload policies, while educators improve time management and wellness. Investments in mental health and further research on stress, interventions, and related factors are also needed.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT:

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in 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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