OCCUPATIONAL Stress of Generation Z Teachers as Influenced by Efficacy for Classroom Management and Emotional FUNCTIONING

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress is an increasing concern in the workplace, affecting the teacher's mental health and job performance. This study aimed to determine the influence of efficacy for classroom management and emotional functioning on the occupational stress of Generation Z teachers. Quantitative research specifically the descriptive correlational research design was employed. The respondents were the public secondary school Generation Z teachers in the City of Mati. Adapted questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation were used for the data analysis. The findings indicated a high level of efficacy in classroom management. Emotional functioning was found to be very high, and occupational stress among Generation Z teachers was found to be low. However, based on the correlation analysis conducted on the empirical data gathered, efficacy for classroom management and emotional functioning have no significant relationship with the occupational stress of Generation Z teachers in the City of Mati.

KEYWORDS: *Education, occupational stress, classroom management, emotional functioning, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress refers to a toxic work environment such as poor control, high work demands, lack of information, and extreme pressure (Fortes et al., 2020). Occupational stress is conceptualized interchangeably to work-related stress and due to the challenging or toxic workplace environment, individuals struggle to cope with stress, and it can lead to exhaustion and cause both physical and psychological effects (Suleman et al., 2018). Extensive

international scholarship consistently identifies teaching as an exceptionally high-stress profession compared to other fields (Agaia Demjaha et al., 2015; Tsubono & Mitoku, 2023; Zhao et al., 2022).

In the United States, Pew Research Center revealed that 77% of teachers are frequently stressful (Beshay & Beshay, 2024). Further, 20% to 30% teachers report experiencing high levels of stress due to their occupations (Metrailer & Clark, 2022). Furthermore, early studies found that teachers have a relatively high degree of stress at their school (Agyapong et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, young professionals, including Generation Z teachers, report high levels of occupational stress, this study discusses that Generation Z teachers face significant challenges in managing work demands, leading to stress and mental health concerns (Guiao, 2024).

Emotional functioning refers to how well individuals regulate their moving experiences and behaviors, as well as to understand and manage the emotions of others (Chesson, 2023). Teachers often experience high levels of occupational stress, which can negatively impact their emotional functioning and overall well-being (Bidi et al., 2024). Hence, it suggests that positive emotional functioning of the teachers can reduce the risk of work-related stress (Van Daalen et al., 2008). Thus, emotional functioning is found to influence occupational stress.

There are existing government programs designed to address work-related stress among teachers, such as the Republic Act No. 4670, which reiterates that teachers are not required to teach more than six hours per day. It is an act to promote the social and economic status of teachers. Another is the streamlined workload program that reduces the teachers' administrative burden by giving more time for lesson planning and ensuring more classroom time. However, most studies on occupational stress primarily focus on teachers (De Sousa Pinho et al., 2023). Some of these studies utilize qualitative research methods (Suyatno et al., 2024). Limited studies address occupational stress specifically to Generation Z teachers as influenced by efficacy for classroom management and emotional functioning. Thus, this study aims to address the following altogether.

Conducting an empirical, quantitative inquiry into this phenomenon is urgent because unmitigated stress directly threatens teacher retention,

instructional quality, and institutional stability within public secondary schools. Furthermore, the researcher plans to share the study's results with the students, teachers, principals, and school administrators during the Learning Action Cell (LAC) session during the annual Research and Development Extension Week gatherings. For further dissemination, there is a plan to publish this study in journals so that a greater number of people can read its outcome.

Theoretical Framework

The research was guided by Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1987) and Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation by James J. Gross (1998). The mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation were the statistical tools used in the interpretation of the significance of the data.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of efficacy for classroom management of Generation Z teachers in terms of: general management efficacy; and social comparisons for management?
2. What is the level of emotional functioning of Generation Z teachers in terms of: emotional awareness; emotional management; and interpersonal relations?
3. What is the level of occupational stress of Generation Z teachers in terms of: work dilemma; professional growth; professional misconceptions; working conditions; on job relations; and personal status?
4. Is there a significant relationship between: efficacy for classroom management and occupational stress; and emotional functioning and occupational stress?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employs quantitative research, specifically, descriptive correlational research design. This study's respondents were Generation Z teachers, born between 1997 and 2012, ages 24 to 30, and currently working in the City of Mati, specifically the Mati North District, Mati South District, and Mati Central District.

Respondents of the Study. The study made use of purposive and proportional sampling, which involves selecting a sample from each district with specific characteristics. According to Nikolopoulou (2022), study respondents

are chosen because they have characteristics that the researcher needs in the study.

Research Instruments. The study used a survey questionnaire, divided into three parts. This includes the Efficacy for Classroom Management by Putman (2013), Emotional Functioning by Anderson (2023) and Occupational Stress by Shirotriya & Quraishi (2015).

Statistical Tools. The mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation were the statistical tools used in the interpretation of the significance of the data.

Ethical Considerations. This study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Immaculate Conception with a protocol code of GS-ER-02-26-0564. Upon careful consideration, the study was deemed ethically sound and received ethical clearance granted on March 11, 2026.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Efficacy for Classroom Management of Generation Z Teachers

The results in Table 1 show the efficacy for classroom management of the respondents which is high ($\bar{x}$=4.02) which means that efficacy for classroom management is oftentimes manifested. More so, the SD is less than 1, which implies almost similar perceptions of the respondents regarding their efficacy for classroom management. This result implies that teachers feel capable in handling classroom situations effectively, including maintaining order, dealing with misbehavior, and fostering a positive learning environment.

The findings align with the study of Aye and Lay (2021), who found that teachers' efficacy obtained a high level in all classroom management functions. Likewise, the result concurs with the study of Shohani et al. (2014), which revealed that secondary teachers have a high level of efficacy for classroom management. practices including teaching methodology and managing students' behavior.

Table 1

Level of Efficacy for Classroom Management of Generation Z Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
General Management Efficacy	4.17	0.52	High
Social Comparisons for Management	3.69	0.82	High
Total Mean	**4.02**	**0.53**	**High**

The general management efficacy of the respondents as regard their efficacy for classroom management have a mean of 4.17, described as high specifically, the mean ranges from 3.65-4.46. *The principal using their classroom as an example of what a well-managed classroom looks like* has a mean of 3.65 and *feeling calm when they are in control of the classroom/students* with a mean of 4.69. This result suggests that overall teachers feel confident in their ability to manage classrooms effectively and comfortable handling student behavior, even in challenging situations.

The findings align with the study of Hussien and Al-Qaryouti (2015) in Oman, which demonstrated that teachers have a high level of efficacy for classroom management. Similarly, the result concurs with the study of Sridhar and Javan (2011), who highlighted that teachers have a high level and better classroom management. Moreover, Susanto et al. (2024) revealed that teachers have high knowledge in managing practical behavior of challenging students.

Level of Emotional Functioning of Generation Z Teachers

The results in Table 2, show the emotional functioning of the responThe results in Table 2, show the emotional functioning of the respondents which is very high ($\bar{x}$=4.25) which means that emotional functioning is always manifested. More so, the SD is less than 1, which implies almost similar perceptions of the respondents regarding their emotional functioning. This result implies that the teachers demonstrate a very high level of emotional functioning. This means they are highly capable of recognizing and understanding emotions in themselves, their students, and parents.

The findings align with the study of Arslan (2018), which revealed that teachers have a very high level of well-being and have more excellent positive functioning at work. Additionally, the study of Bazanova (2021) indicates that teachers generally exhibit high levels of emotional functioning and competence, which positively impact their work performance and well-being. Similarly,

Jimenez (2020) revealed that secondary school teachers have high emotional functioning, work attitude, and satisfactory teaching performance.

Table 2

Level of Emotional Functioning of Generation Z Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Emotional Awareness	4.15	0.70	High
Emotional Management	4.17	0.57	High
Interpersonal Relations	4.45	0.52	Very High
Overall Mean	**4.25**	**0.49**	**Very High**

The interpersonal relations of the respondents as regard their emotional functioning have a mean of 4.45, described as very high specifically, the mean ranges 4.14-4.65. The item easily calming an anxious student has a mean of 4.14 and having empathy for their students with a mean of 4.65. This result implies that respondents possess very high interpersonal relations and suggests they are highly effective in building and maintaining positive relationships with students, parents, and coworkers.

The findings align with the study of Reyes (2023), which revealed that public school teachers have a very high level of interpersonal relationships and organizational commitment. More so, the result concurs with the study of Angelo et al. (2010) who found that teachers have a high level of interpersonal competencies and being associated with the well-being of the teachers. Furthermore, a study from Arifin (2019) revealed that teachers can show empathy and maintain good relationships with their fellow teachers, students, and others. Additionally, research from Dukhnovsky and Zhuravleva (2019) showed that teachers with harmonious relations with their students could be described as mentally healthy with a positive outlook.

Level of Occupational Stress of Generation Z Teachers

The result in Table 3, shows the occupational stress of the respondents which is low ($\bar{x}$=2.57) which means that occupational stress is rarely manifested. More so, the SD is less than 1 which implies almost similar perception of the respondents regarding their occupational stress. This result implies that respondents experience an overall low level of occupational stress in their current teaching environment. This suggests that they are not severely burdened by stress related to their professional roles.

The findings align with the study of Mohta and Sharma (2018) revealed that teachers are having low levels of occupational stress. Likewise, the result concurs with the study of Bongo and Casta (2017) which highlighted teachers experienced low levels of both emotional and occupational stress. However, it negates the study of Nagra and Arora (2013) who revealed that teachers experience moderate levels of occupational stress, which has a significant positive impact on their wellbeing and health.

Table 3

Level of Occupational Stress of Generation Z Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Work Dilemma	2.84	1.06	High
Professional Growth	2.08	0.60	Low
Professional Misconceptions	3.26	0.81	Moderate
Working Conditions	2.67	0.31	Moderate
On Job Relations	1.92	0.64	Low
Personal Status	2.58	0.37	Low
Total Mean	**2.57**	**0.37**	**Low**

The professional misconceptions of the respondents as regard to their occupational stress have a mean of 3.26, described as moderate specifically, the mean ranges 2.93-3.79. The items *their assignments are of not to their interest* got a mean of 2.93 and *not being able to complete assigned work is simply disappointing* with a mean of 3.79. This result falls within the moderate range. It suggests that teachers frequently encounter professional misconceptions and misalignments in their roles, though not at the most severe levels.

The findings align with the study of Juhaevah et al. (2020), which stated that teachers who participated in professional development had a moderate level and better knowledge of knowing and addressing misconceptions. Likewise, the result concurs with the study of Laksana et al. (2017), which revealed that teachers exhibit professional misconceptions at moderate level.

Significance of the Efficacy for Classroom Management, Emotional Functioning, and Occupational Stress of Generation Z Teachers

Table 4 shows that both efficacy for classroom management ($r = .06$, $p >$

.05) and emotional functioning (r= -.00 > .05) are not significantly related to occupational stress of Generation Z teachers.

The correlation analysis revealed a very weak relationship between efficacy for classroom management and occupational stress (r=0.062, p=0.477). This indicates that there is no relationship between efficacy for classroom management and occupational stress. For instance, McCarthy et al. (2016) emphasized that although classroom management efficacy can buffer some aspects of stress, it is often overshadowed by factors such as administrative demands, workload, and student behavior.

The correlation between emotional functioning and occupational stress was found to be very weak (r=-o.005, p=0.952). This result indicates that there is no relationship between emotional functioning and occupational stress.

Table 4

Significance of the Relationship between Efficacy for Classroom Management, Emotional Functioning and Occupational Stress

	Occupational Stress		
	r	p-value	Decision
Efficacy for Classroom Management	0.062	0.477	Not Significant
Emotional Functioning	-0.005	0.952	Not Significant

Furthermore, Meyer and Hofmann (2015) suggested that emotional functioning acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. Moreover, McCarthy et al. (2016) argued that the relationship between emotional functioning and occupational stress is influenced by the surrounding circumstances, background information, or context.

This finding contradicts the statement of Antoniou et al. (2020), who found a significant positive relationship between efficacy for classroom management and occupational stress. Furthermore, the result is not congruent with the research by Bongo and Casta (2017), where emotional functioning was shown to have a significant relationship with occupational stress.

Generation Z public secondary school teachers in the City of Mati possess a robust sense of professional agency, characterized by a high capacity for classroom management and exceptionally strong emotional functioning. This indicates that despite being new to the civil service, this demographic

enters the field with strong baseline competencies in managing student behavior, regulating their affective states, and navigating complex classroom dynamics. Overall occupational stress among these young educators is low. However, this low metric does not signify a completely stress-free or universally supportive institutional environment. Rather, it indicates that while specific systemic pressures exist, particularly regarding heavy workloads, social expectations, and administrative exclusion, they do not manifest as debilitating institutional anxiety for this specific cohort. This study conclusively demonstrates that neither classroom management efficacy nor emotional functioning serves as a statistically significant predictor or correlation of occupational stress for Generation Z teachers.

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