

Mental Self-Government and Stress Coping Skills: A Comparative Study of Teachers in the Davao City Division

Jan Erzon T. Esnardo

Abstract. This purpose of the study was to determine if there a significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to form of mental self-government in Davao City Division. A total of 82 teachers in Davao City Division were identified through tabachnick and fidell formula. The study utilized a descriptive-comparative design. Adapted survey questionnaires were utilized which centered on mental self-government and stress coping skills of teachers. Frequency and Percentage, Mean, and One-way ANOVA were used as statistical tools of the study. Results revealed On the mental self-government styles of teachers in Davao City Division, the findings revealed that the most common style was the Hierarchic style. Moreover, on the level of teachers' stress coping skills, the findings showed that rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking were interpreted as High, indicating that these stress coping skills were oftentimes evident among teachers. Clearly, on the significant difference in stress coping skills when grouped according to mental self-government styles, indicated a statistically significant difference. This suggests that the form of mental self-government significantly affects how teachers cope with stress. Thus, this study suggests that Department of Education (DepEd) should provide professional development programs focusing on enhancing teachers' stress coping skills.

KEY WORDS

1. Mental self-government 2. stress coping skills 3. descriptive comparative

Date Received: April 05, 2025 — Date Reviewed: May 15, 2025 — Date Published: June 18, 2025

1. Introduction

Teaching is acknowledged as a challenging career that involves considerable mental, emotional, and physical investment, frequently leading to increased stress as well as burnout. The general well-being of teachers is essential for maintaining successful and creative classroom instruction; however, numerous educators still grapple with inadequate coping skills that detrimentally affect their personal wellness as well as professional efficacy. Evidence demonstrates that while stressors in the educational environment are well documented, the coping skills

utilized by educators are frequently insufficient or misaligned, prompting concerns regarding their capacity for handling occupational stress properly.

In Davao City, Largo (2023) discovered that certain teachers employ coping strategies including escape-avoidance and distancing themselves, which are typically seen as less adaptive since they include ignoring the stressor instead of confronting it directly. These can be categorized as ineffective coping mechanisms, as they may result in persistent stress and burnout. This

highlights the need for targeted interventions and support systems to help educators develop more adaptive coping strategies. Such patterns emphasize the importance of addressing the root causes of stress in the teaching environment to promote long-term well-being and professional effectiveness.

Despite increasing acknowledgment of the difficulties encountered by educators, a large research gap persists on the stress coping skills of teachers in Davao City. Certain educators may struggle with proper stress management, potentially resorting to damaging coping strategies, which can adversely affect their well-being and instructional effectiveness. An emerging idea that may influence coping skills is mental self-government—the ability to exert control over one’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors—which could significantly impact how educators handle stress. Nevertheless, limited information exists regarding the influence of mental self-government on the coping skills of educators in the local setting. As a result, the researcher recognizes the necessity of investigating this connection to facilitate the development of effective coping skills and enhance teachers’ mental self-regulation. The study pursued answers to the ensuing objectives: a.) to determine the form of mental self-government of teachers in terms of monarchic, hierarchic, oligarchic, and anarchic. b.) to determine the level of stress coping skills of teachers in terms of rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking; and c.) to determine the significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to form of mental self-government in Davao City Division.

At .05 level of significance, the following hypothesis was tested: a.) There is no significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to form of mental self-government in Davao City Division.

This study provided valuable insights that supported decision-making, policy development, and strategic planning for key stakeholders. Educators gained a deeper understanding of their mental self-governance styles and how these influenced their stress coping strategies, leading to improved emotional regulation. School heads were able to implement targeted interventions and professional development to support teacher well-being and retention. Students benefited indirectly through improved classroom environments and stronger teacher-student relationships, enhancing engagement and academic outcomes. Future researchers received a strong foundation for exploring connections between cognition and stress resilience in educational settings. Overall, the study advanced knowledge and practice in promoting mental wellness in education.

1.1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework of the Study—Figure 1 depicted the conceptual framework outlining the study’s variables. The independent variable identified was the form of mental self-government of teachers. The dependent variable of the study was the level of stress coping skills of teachers in terms of rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. This study sought to determine if there a significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to form of mental self-government in Davao City Division.

2. Methodology

The following section outlines the procedures used by the researcher to perform this research study. It includes the population and sampling, instrumentation, data source, and data analysis.

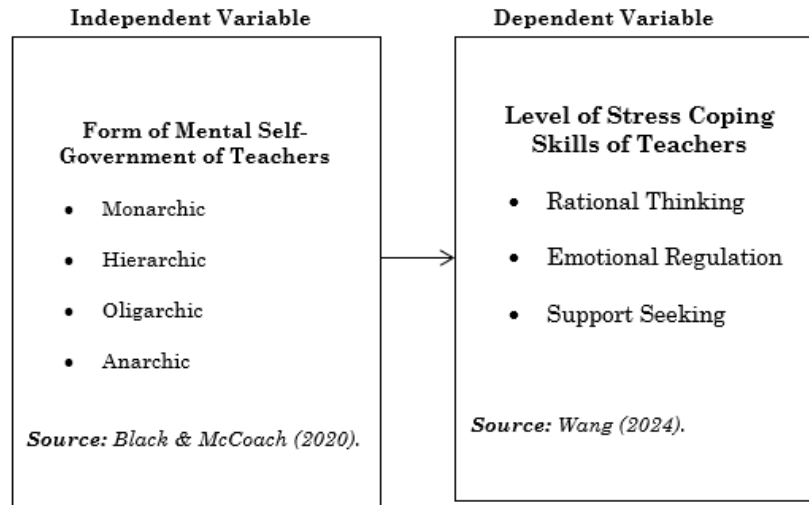


Fig. 1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

2.1. Research Design—This study used a descriptive comparative research design to examine differences in teachers' stress coping skills based on their forms of mental self-government: monarchic, hierarchic, oligarchic, and anarchic. The design allowed the researcher to explore patterns among naturally occurring groups without manipulating variables. It focused on three key stress coping domains: rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. By comparing teachers across these cognitive styles, the study aimed to identify trends in how different mental approaches influence coping mechanisms. This method provided a structured way to investigate the cognitive-emotional relationship in teachers. The findings are intended to inform teacher support initiatives and future research in educational psychology.

2.2. Ethical Consideration—Ethical guidelines set by the RMC Research Ethics Committee were strictly followed throughout the study. Approval was secured before data collection, ensuring compliance with protocols for human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and participation was voluntary. Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality were guaranteed through coding

and secure data handling. Potential risks were minimized, while benefits included increased self-awareness and professional growth for teachers. The researcher upheld transparency, fairness, and academic integrity at every stage.

2.3. Research Respondents—The study involved public school teachers from the Davao City Division, selected through universal sampling to include all eligible and willing participants. This approach ensured inclusivity and minimized sampling bias. Respondents were grouped based on their dominant cognitive governance style and assessed across three coping domains. Inclusion criteria required teachers to be actively teaching in the division, while those on leave or unwilling to participate were excluded. The sample size exceeded the minimum required, enhancing the validity of results. This comprehensive participation allowed for a more accurate analysis of how different mental styles affect stress management.

2.4. Research Instrument—Two validated questionnaires were used: one to assess mental self-government styles and another to measure stress coping skills. The first tool, adapted from Black and McCoach (2020), identified the monarchic, hierarchic, oligarchic, and anarchic styles. The second tool, based on Wang (2024),

measured coping in rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. Items were modified slightly for contextual relevance and language clarity. Both tools underwent expert

validation and pilot testing for reliability. These instruments provided reliable quantitative data essential for comparing coping patterns among cognitive styles.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure—Data collection followed a step-by-step process, beginning with securing approvals from relevant educational authorities. Validated instruments were pilot-tested, then administered face-to-face to teacher-respondents in selected schools. Clear instructions and ethical considerations were em-

phasized to ensure honest participation. After completion, the researcher personally retrieved and checked each questionnaire for completeness. Responses were stored securely to preserve confidentiality. This careful process ensured accurate and ethical data collection for meaningful analysis.

2.6. Data Analysis—The data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage described the distribution of mental self-government styles, while means assessed stress coping levels. One-way ANOVA was used to determine if significant differences existed be-

tween coping skills based on cognitive styles. These statistical tools provided insights into which mental self-governance types were associated with stronger coping strategies. The use of SPSS ensured a systematic and reliable approach to data interpretation. The findings helped draw evidence-based conclusions about teacher stress and cognition.

3. Results and Discussion

This section delineated the findings and discussion of the research. The presentation commenced with a comprehensive examination of the mental self-government of teachers, specifically focusing on monarchic, hierarchic, oligarchic, and anarchic. The chapter thereafter presented an analysis of the level of stress coping skills of teachers in terms of rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. The subsequent section highlighted the significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to form of mental self-government.

3.1. Mental Self Government of Teachers In Davao City Division—Table 1 showed the data on the mental self-government of teachers. Based on the data in Table 1, the most common mental self-government style among teachers in the Davao City Division is the Hierarchic style, with 41.46% of respondents. This suggests that many teachers prefer to approach tasks in an organized and prioritized manner. The Oligarchic style follows at 29.27%, indicating that a signifi-

cant number of teachers tend to handle multiple goals simultaneously, often giving them equal importance. Meanwhile, 24.39% of the teachers exhibit a Monarchic style, showing a tendency to focus on one task or goal at a time. Only 4.88% were found to have an Anarchic style, which reflects a more flexible and less structured approach to work. These results indicate that the majority of teachers in the division prefer structured and goal-oriented thinking styles in managing their responsibilities.

Table 1. Mental Self Government of Teachers in Davao City Division

No.	Item	N	Frequency	Percentage
1	Monarchic	82	20	24.39%
2	Hierarchic		34	41.46%
3	Oligarchic		24	29.27%
4	Anarchic		4	4.88%
Overall		82	82	100%

3.2. *Level of Stress Coping Skills of Teachers*—Table 2 showed the level of stress coping skills of teachers, which was measured by three indicators, namely: Rational Thinking, Emotional Regulation, and Support Seeking. The mean ratings of these indicators were as follows: Rational Thinking (3.59), which was described as high; Support Seeking (3.54), described as

high; and Emotional Regulation (3.52), also described as high. The three indicators on the level of stress coping skills of teachers generated an overall mean rating of 3.55, described as high. This indicates that teachers' stress coping skills in terms of rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking were oftentimes evident.

Table 2. Level of Stress Coping Skills of Teachers

No.	Item	Mean	Descriptive Level
1	Rational Thinking	3.59	High
2	Emotional Regulation	3.52	High
3	Support Seeking	3.54	High
Overall Mean		3.55	High

Legend: 1.00–1.79: Very Low, 1.80–2.59: Low, 2.60–3.39: Moderate, 3.40–4.19: High, 4.20–5.00: Very High

3.3. *Significant difference in the Level of Stress Coping Skills of Teachers When Grouped According to Form of Mental Self-Government*—The findings in Table 3 revealed a significant difference in the level of stress coping skills of teachers when grouped according to the form of mental self-government. The computed F-value of 48.325 and the p-value of .026, which is less than the standard level of significance of 0.05, indicate that there is a statistically significant

difference between the variables. This suggests that the form of mental self-government has a significant impact on teachers' stress coping skills. Given the p-value of .026, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in stress coping skills when teachers are grouped according to their form of mental self-government was rejected, confirming that mental self-government styles play a crucial role in influencing how teachers manage stress.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Level of Stress Coping Skills of Teachers When Grouped According to Form of Mental Self-Government

Variable Paired	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Descriptive Interpretation
Form of Mental Self-Government and Stress Coping Skills	1325.805	80	248.322	48.325	Significant (p = .026)

4.1. Findings—This study aimed to determine the mental self-government styles of teachers in terms of Monarchic, Hierarchic, Oligarchic, and Anarchic styles. Moreover, it sought to assess the level of teachers' stress coping skills in terms of rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. The next portion presented the significant difference in teachers' stress coping skills when grouped according to their form of mental self-government. The following are the significant findings:

4.2. Conclusions—On the mental self-government styles of teachers in Davao City Division, the findings revealed that most teachers prefer structured and goal-oriented thinking styles, particularly the Hierarchic style. This suggests that teachers approach their professional responsibilities with organization and prioritization, which may contribute positively to their work performance and decision-making processes. These findings align with Sternberg's Theory of Mental Self-Government, which emphasizes how individuals regulate their thinking and prioritize activities based on their cognitive styles. The theory provides a clear framework to understand why teachers with hierarchical thinking prefer organized approaches in managing tasks and responsibilities.

On the level of teachers' stress coping skills, the results showed that teachers frequently demonstrate high capabilities in rational thinking, emotional regulation, and support seeking. This indicates that teachers are generally effective in managing stress through clear thinking,

emotional control, and seeking assistance when needed, supporting their overall well-being in a demanding profession. These outcomes correspond with Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which explains that coping is shaped by how individuals appraise stressors and their ability to manage them. The model helps explain why teachers with high coping skills actively engage in cognitive and emotional regulation as part of their dynamic response to stress.

On the significant difference in stress coping skills when grouped according to mental self-government styles, the study confirmed that mental self-government significantly influences how teachers cope with stress. This highlights the importance of considering teachers' cognitive styles in developing targeted interventions to enhance their stress management and professional resilience. These results are supported by Baumeister and Vohs' Self-Regulation Theory, which posits that individuals with stronger self-regulatory capacities—linked to their mental self-government style—tend to have better coping abilities. The theory underscores how differences in self-control and goal-setting across cognitive styles lead to variations in teachers' coping effectiveness.

4.3. Recommendations—This study aimed to determine the mental self-government styles of teachers in terms of Monarchic, Hierarchic, Oligarchic, and Anarchic styles. Moreover, it sought to assess the level of teachers' stress coping skills in terms of rational thinking, emo-

tional regulation, and support seeking. The next portion presented the significant difference in teachers' stress coping skills when grouped according to their form of mental self-government. The following are the significant findings:

5. References

- Bentayao, N. G. J., Cagape, N. W., & Quibod, N. C. P. G. (2024). School head's management practices on policy changes in davao city: Matatag curriculum implementation in focus. *EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics Commerce and Educational Management*, 25–32. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra18886>
- Kayır, G., & Toraman, Ç. (2021). Development of curriculum changes perception scale and teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 16(2), 7.
- Scott, S. G., & Bruce, R. A. (2020). Decision-making style: The development and assessment of a new measure. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 55(5), 818–831. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164495055005017>
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th). Allyn & Bacon/-Pearson Education.