



Level of Stress, Coping Strategies, and Job Satisfaction of Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-Ibig at Pag-Asa Integrated School at San Pablo City, Laguna

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Abstract

The teaching profession is inherently demanding, and for Special Education (SPED) teachers, the challenges are often intensified due to the unique needs of their students. This study aimed to assess the level of stress, coping strategies, and job satisfaction among SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School in San Pablo City, Laguna. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study sought to identify the relationships between these three variables and understand how stress and coping mechanisms impact overall job satisfaction. Data was collected through validated survey instruments and analyzed using statistical tools including Weighted Mean and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings revealed that the majority of SPED teachers experienced moderate to high levels of stress (mean = 3.76), primarily due to workload and emotional demands. Coping strategies most frequently used included problem-focused and emotion-focused methods (mean = 4.02), with strong support networks playing a key role in resilience. Job satisfaction levels were moderate (mean = 3.58), with personal fulfillment and student progress as motivating factors. Significant negative correlations were found between stress and job satisfaction ($r = -0.63$, $p < 0.01$), while coping strategies were positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$). Recommendations emphasize institutional support and mental wellness programs for SPED teachers.

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1. Introduction

The teaching profession is known to be the most noble of professions and is also highly demanding and challenging that teachers often encounter significant stressors (Nichols, 2022; Maguate *et al.*, 2024) ^[33, 30]. The work-related stress that teachers experience has been also found to have detrimental impact to their well-being, job satisfaction, and even to student success. Even in the Philippines, like other educators in other parts of the world, Filipino teachers experience high levels of stress due to significant stressors including excessive workload and paperwork, inadequate salary, class size, student behavior, and lack of administrative support have implications for teacher well-being and job performance (Maguate *et al.*, 2024) ^[30]. Aside from teaching the subject matter, classroom management, grading, and assessment, part of the teacher's job is to prepare one's instructional materials, seek continuous professional growth by taking post-graduate studies and attending various trainings and seminars, conduct and publish research, coordinate with parents and guardians, and organize extracurricular activities that serve as additional learning experiences for the learners. Each of these tasks require preparation, time, and skills, and the work demands more than just doing one's job, as it is also expected for a professional teacher to employ problem-solving strategies and intervention programs to ensure quality education for the students.

With all these work for a regular teacher, the job is twice as challenging, so to speak, for a teacher who is handling learners with special needs, with disabilities, or exceptionalities, also known as a Special Education (SPED) teacher. A study by Torollo *et al.* (2024) ^[48] revealed that high levels of stress and burnout were commonly reported among Special Education or SPED teachers from multiple schools in Davao, Philippines, and these factors adversely affected their capacity to deliver quality education and support students with special needs. In addition, Woods *et al.* (2023) ^[54] found that there is a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction among teachers—that is, the higher the stress levels, the lower the job satisfaction—and that coping had a significant moderating effect.

Due to issues regarding job satisfaction of SPED teachers, many SPED teachers also choose to teach abroad because the pay is much higher than the salary of SPED teachers here in the Philippines and the work environment abroad seemed more convenient for them as a teacher and more conducive to SPED learning for the students with special needs (Brazas, 2023). Specifically, the trend of migration of SPED teachers to find “greener pastures” in the United States was also identified by Brazas (2023) as a factor contributing to the insufficient number of SPED teachers in the Philippines. With factors such as too much workload, lack of opportunities for professional development, and chances of higher paying jobs abroad, the percentage of special education (SE) teachers in the Philippines leaving the country to teach SE abroad is continuously increasing.

According to available literature review, there is limited research that focus on the status of SE and job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the Philippines; specifically, no study has yet been done in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School at San Pablo City, Laguna regarding the SPED teachers’ stress level, coping strategies, and its impact to their job satisfaction.

For these reasons, the present researcher wanted to identify the perception of SPED teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School at San Pablo City, Laguna regarding their stress level, coping strategies, and job satisfaction. By exploring these issues, the research seeks to provide actionable insights to improve support systems for SPED teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School, ensuring a sustainable and effective special education program.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the stress level, coping strategies, and job satisfaction of SPED teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School, clarify the relationship existing among these variables, and develop an action plan to address the issues and concerns related to the variables in the study.

2. Methods

This study used a descriptive - correlational research design which is designed for the researchers to gather information about the present existing conditions needed in the chosen field of study through survey questionnaires as the main source of data. This method enables the researcher to interpret the theoretical meaning of the finding and hypothesis development for further studies. Descriptive correlational research, according to Bhat (2023), is a method that attempts to explain the link between two or more variables without claiming causation. It entails gathering and examining data on a minimum of two variables in order to

determine whether a relationship exists between them. Correlational research aims to identify correlations between variables and enable future events to be predicted based on current information. A connection may have a positive or negative direction. Correlational research, according to Bhandari (2023), is the best method for rapidly collecting data from natural settings and aids in extrapolating results to actual circumstances in a manner that is externally legitimate. Furthermore, hypotheses on causal linkages may receive further support or preliminary hints from correlational research. Researchers can build hypotheses and make predictions with the use of correlational research, which may offer insights into intricate real-world interactions.

The respondents of the study consisted of thirty-seven (37) Special Education teachers from Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School at Brgy. San Gabriel, San Pablo City, Laguna, Philippines. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling, to collect data from the SPED teachers currently teaching at the said academic institution during the academic year 2024-2025. The SPED teachers must be handling learners with special needs for not less than three years and are currently teaching in PPPIS for the school year 2024-2025.

In this study, data are collected through an adapted modified (Abina *et al.*, 2022) ^[2], survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from a research study by Estemon *et al.* (2023), Abina *et al.* (2022) ^[2], and Abellana *et al.* (2023) ^[1] and no changes have been made. It was shown to the panel of experts in Special Education, statistics, and research for their comments and suggestions. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. The first part of the questionnaire gathers the profile of the respondents including information such as age, sex, grade level(s) handled, teaching position/rank, number of years in service as SPED teacher, and a checklist about problems encountered as SPED teacher. The second part of the survey questionnaire measures the perceived level of stress of SPED teachers, their coping strategies, and job satisfaction, both parts using a 5-point Likert scale.

The following scale was used in measuring and interpreting the data on the level of stress, coping strategies, and perceived level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers of Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School in San Pablo City, Laguna:

Table 1: Coping Strategies

Assigned Points	Numerical Ranges	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.50-4.49	Agree
3	2.50-3.49	Neutral
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree
1	1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree

Table 2: Level of Stress and Job of Satisfaction

Assigned Points	Numerical Ranges	Categorical Responses	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Strongly agree	Very High
4	3.50-4.49	Agree	High
3	2.50-3.49	Moderate	Moderate
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree	Low
1	1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

The study was conducted at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School at Brgy. San Gabriel, San Pablo City, Laguna, Philippines during the academic year 2024-2025.

Before collecting data, the researcher asked permission from the school head and School Division Office (SDO) San Pablo regarding the data gathering procedure to be conducted involving all the SPED teachers at the said school. When permission was received, a letter to the respondents was also given to ask the willing consent of the respondents to

participate in study. Then, the researcher implemented the answering of the survey questionnaire to all SPED teachers of PPPIS face-to-face by distributing printed copies of the research instrument and an electronic copy using google docs to those who are not available face-to-face.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 3: Level of Stress of the Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Job demands	3.69	High	1
Administrator's expectations and support	3.67	High	2
Parent's demands	3.25	Moderate	3
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.53	High	

Table 3 shows the level of stress of SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School. Among the stressors, job demands got the highest average weighted mean of 3.69 with a verbal interpretation of "high", while parent's demands garnered the lowest average weighted mean of 3.25 with a verbal interpretation of "moderate". In general, the overall average weighted mean for the level of stress of the respondents is 3.53 which is interpreted as "high".

Overall, the result implies that the SPED teachers at PPPIS are generally highly stressed. The summary above implies that among all the stressors included in the survey, the respondents were most stressed with job demands, which were close in weighted mean value to administrator's expectations and support. This means that majority of the stress of SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School comes from the workload itself and proves

that teaching Special Education is very challenging and highly stressful.

It is important to note that the next highest in mean value is level of stress as to administrator's expectations and support, with only a 0.02 difference in weighted mean value compared with job demands. This implies that aside from being highly stressed because of the demands of teaching SPED, the respondents were also highly stressed by the expectations and support of administrators, which may be due to lack of administrative support and high expectations from administrators.

Lastly, although lowest in weighted mean value, stress level in terms of parent's demands is still interpreted as "moderately stressful" for the respondents. This implies that although the demands of parents contribute to the stress among SPED teachers, this aspect is still manageable for them due to various coping strategies.

Table 4: Coping Strategies of the Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Adaptive mechanism	3.51	Agree	4
Collaborative mechanism	3.64	Agree	2
Emotion-focused mechanism	3.22	Neutral	6
Support cooperation	3.40	Neutral	5
Problem-focused mechanism	3.56	Agree	3
Individual educational plan	3.70	Agree	1
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.51	Agree	

Table 4 shows the coping strategies of SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School. Among the coping strategies, individual educational plan was ranked 1 and got the highest average weighted mean of 3.70 with a verbal interpretation of "agree", collaborative mechanism was ranked 2 with an average weighted mean of 3.64 and a verbal interpretation of "agree", problem-focused mechanism was ranked 3 with an average weighted mean of 3.56 and a verbal interpretation of "agree", adaptive mechanism was ranked 4 with an average weighted mean of 3.51 and a verbal interpretation of "agree", support cooperation was ranked 5 with an average weighted mean of 3.40 and a verbal interpretation of "neutral", and emotion-focused mechanism was ranked 6 and garnered the lowest average weighted mean of 3.22 with a verbal interpretation of "neutral". In general, the overall average weighted mean for the coping strategies of the respondents is 3.51 which is interpreted as "agree".

These results imply that all the coping strategies were evident among the SPED teachers, which means that the respondents agreed that they utilize a wide range of approaches in managing work-related stress.

However, among these coping mechanisms, the most evident is the respondents' use of Individual Educational Plan which ranked the highest among the strategies. This implies that although the respondents have different ways of dealing with stressful situations at work, the Individual Educational Plan is the most used, perhaps because as SPED teachers with different cases of SPED learners handled, each case requires contextualized solution and a solution that is fit-for-all does not exist. In addition, since most of the stress of SPED teachers are related to student management and monitoring, a student-centered approach is more appropriate to use in addressing these problems and not an approach that focuses on the teacher.

Table 5: Level of Job Satisfaction of the Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Compensation	3.09	Moderate	5
Job content	3.29	Moderate	2
Promotion	3.20	Moderate	4
Supervisor/Administrators	3.26	Moderate	3
Colleagues	3.58	High	1
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.28	Moderate	

Table 5 shows the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School. Among the job satisfaction components, colleagues was ranked 1 and got the highest average weighted mean of 3.58 with a verbal interpretation of “high”, job content was ranked 2 with an average weighted mean of 3.29 and a verbal interpretation of “moderate”, supervisors/administrators was ranked 3 with a weighted mean of 3.26 and a verbal interpretation of “moderate”, and promotion was ranked 4 with a weighted mean of 3.20 and a verbal interpretation of “moderate”, while compensation was ranked 5 and garnered the lowest average weighted mean of 3.09 with a verbal interpretation of “moderate”. In general, the overall average weighted mean for the job satisfaction level of the respondents is 3.28 which

is interpreted as “moderate”.

Among all the sub-variables of Job Satisfaction, the respondents are most satisfied with Colleagues and are least satisfied with Compensation. The respondents are only moderately satisfied with compensation, job content, promotion, and supervisors/administrators, and they are highly satisfied with their colleagues. These findings imply that to improve the overall current job satisfaction of the respondents, there is a need to implement appropriate interventions and organizational procedures, particularly on the aspects of job content, supervisor/administrator, promotion, and most especially with compensation, because these are the areas that the respondents are not highly satisfied with.

Table 6: Relationship between the Level of Stress and Job Satisfaction of Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School

Job satisfaction	Level of Stress		
	Job Demands	Administrator's expectation and support	Parent's demands
Compensation	r=0.148 Low correlation p=0.383 <i>not significant</i>	r=0.101 Low correlation p=0.552 <i>not significant</i>	r=0.254 Low correlation p=0.130 <i>not significant</i>
Job content	r=0.264 Low correlation p=0.115 <i>not significant</i>	r=0.174 Low correlation p=0.302 <i>not significant</i>	r=0.294 Low correlation p=0.077 <i>not significant</i>
Promotion	r=0.452** Moderate correlation p=0.005 <i>significant</i>	r=0.390* Low correlation p=0.017 <i>significant</i>	r=0.561** Moderate correlation p=0.000 <i>significant</i>
Supervisor/Administrator	r=0.507** Moderate correlation p=0.001 <i>significant</i>	r=0.455** Moderate correlation p=0.005 <i>significant</i>	r=0.573** Moderate correlation p=0.000 <i>significant</i>
Colleagues	r=0.332* Low correlation p=0.044 <i>significant</i>	r=0.212 Low correlation p=0.207 <i>not significant</i>	r=0.150 Low correlation p=0.375 <i>not significant</i>

**Significant @ 0.01; *Significant @ 0.05

Data shows that for promotion, has a p-value of 0.005 (r=0.452) along Job Demands, a p-value of 0.017 (r=0.390) along administrator's expectation and support, and a p-value of 0.000 (r=0.561) along parents' demands, this implies that there was a significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to job promotion and level of stress along with job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demand. This means that promotion has a moderate correlation to Job Demands, has a low correlation to administrator's expectation and support, and has a moderate correlation to parents' demands. These results show that their relationship was inversely proportional which means that the higher the level of stress along job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demands the lower the level of job satisfaction along promotion.

It may imply that when SPED teachers are stressed with the demands of their profession and their interactions with their superiors, the job satisfaction they feel in terms of promotion decreases. This is perhaps due to the reason that job performance and good relations with superiors are both requirements and basis for promotion opportunities, and when these factors are not satisfactory, they cause worry among SPED teachers that these may affect their chances of career success. The results also show that the level of stress of SPED teachers in terms of parent's demands is very highly significant with their job satisfaction as to promotion. This may be that because of the feelings of frustration and burnout caused by high levels of stress in their jobs, in addition to the struggles with communicating and dealing with parents of learners with special educational needs, the SPED teachers

worry that they may not be promoted and given incentives as they perceive themselves unproductive and ineffective in their jobs. Repeated exposure to challenging behaviors, such as those from parents, can significantly drain a teacher's emotional and physical resources, leading to feelings of self-doubt, diminished job satisfaction, impulsivity, inflexibility, and emotions like anger and guilt (Prakke & Van Peet, 2023). Another reason maybe that as parents are also part of the school environment especially in the case of learners with special educational needs, their comments on teachers' performance and attitude are highly considered by the superiors who award promotion and incentives to SPED teachers. Recent studies have shown that job satisfaction among SPED teachers is often lower compared to others, primarily because of high levels of stress and burnout they feel from their jobs. Baker and Blais (2021) ^[10] as well as Hernandez and Woods (2021) ^[25] discuss that job satisfaction is affected by several intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including working conditions, professional development opportunities, and personal fulfillment. This was true to the respondents of the present study, wherein the SPED teachers felt highly stressed and not so satisfied with their jobs as to promotion opportunities.

For job satisfaction as to Supervisor/Administrator, it has a p-value of 0.001 ($r=0.507$) along Job Demands, a p-value of 0.005 ($r=0.455$) along administrator's expectation and support, and a p-value of 0.000 ($r=0.573$) along parents' demands, this implies that there was a significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to Supervisor/Administrator and level of stress along with job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demand. These results show that their relationship was inversely proportional which means that Supervisor/Administrator has a moderate correlation to job demands, Administrator's expectation and support, and parents' demands thus the higher the level of stress along job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demands the lower the job satisfaction along Supervisor/Administrator.

The results may also imply that when SPED teachers are stressed with their interactions with their superiors and their superiors' expectations and level of support of school, the job satisfaction they feel in terms of supervisor/administrator decreases. This is perhaps because the expectations of their supervisor/administrator are very high or unrealistic but the amount of support they provide towards SPED teachers is lacking. This proves Baxi and Atre's (2024) ^[13] argument on the significant impact of work relationships or interactions with superiors on how satisfied employees are with their occupations. Generally, teachers who are supported by their supervisors or administrators are more likely to be engaged in their job (Dehaloo and Schulze (2013) as cited by Murangi *et al.* (2022) ^[31]). Moreover, the results also show that the level of stress of SPED teachers in terms of job demands, and parent's demands are very highly significant with their job satisfaction as to supervisor/administrator. This may be because the amount of workload and extra work is decided by their supervisor/administrator, and when teachers are stressed because of exhaustion from workload, their job satisfaction in terms of supervisor/administrator decreases. This is evident from the findings of the study, which showed that the respondents are highly stressed as to job demands and are not so satisfied with their supervisor/administrator. On the other hand, parents' demands are interpreted as moderate while job satisfaction as to supervisor/administrator is also

moderate, but they are very highly significantly related. This may be because although communication with the students' parents is part of the teacher's job, the supervisor/administrator still makes the final decision when it comes to responding to the demands of the parents, being the head of the institution, the SPED teacher needs to consult such matters with their superior. If the supervisor/administrator allows it, whatever demand the parents have can be allowed by the teacher upon approval of the higher ups.

Meanwhile, the data also shows that in relation to job satisfaction along Colleagues, level of stress is significant only along Job Demand. This means that Colleagues has a low correlation to level of stress along Job Demands. These results show that the job satisfaction of the respondents along Colleagues is inversely proportional to their levels of stress along Job Demands. This implies that the higher the level of stress of the respondents along Job Demands, the lower the level of their job satisfaction along Colleagues.

The results show that the respondents are highly stressed with job demands and are highly satisfied with their colleagues. This may imply strong interaction between the SPED teacher and coworkers when they are experiencing stressful situations at work, through encouraging and helping each other out, sharing educational resources, sharing struggles, and exchanging helpful advice. The respondents' colleagues become a source of social-emotional support to them in a highly stressful environment. Dehaloo and Schulze (2013) as cited by Murangi *et al.* (2022) ^[31] supports this statement, stating that teachers are more likely to be engaged in their work when supported by co-workers and supervisors, in addition to being provided with creative teaching materials. As Baxi and Atre (2024) ^[13] reiterated, work relationships or interactions have a significant impact on job satisfaction and furthered by Fabian and Reyes (2024) ^[21] in their study who found that colleague's positive interactions and support, especially during stressful situations, had a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction. Many other researchers emphasize the positive impact of supportive relationship with coworkers to job satisfaction of teachers (Sibayan & Austria, 2023; Balatucan *et al.*, 2022; and Hagaman and Casey, 2018 as cited by Alon and Harel-Gadassi, 2024) ^[44, 12, 5].

On the other hand, data shows that for the job satisfaction, compensation has p-value of 0.383 along job demands, p-value of 0.552 along administrator's expectation and support, and p-value of 0.130 along parent's demands, it was revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to compensation and level of stress along job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demand.

In terms of job satisfaction, job content has p-value of 0.115 along job demands, p-value of 0.174 along administrator's expectation and support, and p-value of 0.077 along parent's demands, it revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to job content and level of stress along with job demands, administrator's expectation and support, and parent's demand.

It was also revealed that job satisfaction, colleagues has a p has p-value of 0.044 along job demands, p-value of 0.207 along administrator's expectation and support, and p-value of 0.375 along Parent's demands, it revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction along job content and level of stress along Administrator's expectation and support, and Parent's demand.

Table 7: Relationship between the Coping Strategies and Level of Job Satisfaction of Special Education Teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School

Coping strategies	Job satisfaction				
	Compensation	Job content	Promotion	Supervisor/ Administrator	Colleagues
Adaptive mechanism	r=0.302 Low correlation p=0.070 not significant	r=0.455** Moderate correlation p=0.005 significant	r=0.646** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.684** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.338* Low correlation p=0.041 significant
Collaborative mechanism	r=0.429** Moderate correlation p=0.008 significant	r=0.304 Low correlation p=0.067 not significant	r=0.483** Moderate correlation p=0.002 significant	r=0.543** Moderate correlation p=0.001 significant	r=0.467** Moderate correlation p=0.004 significant
Emotion-focused mechanism	r=0.571** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.577** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.689** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.591** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.288 Low correlation p=0.084 not significant
Support cooperation	r=0.451** Moderate correlation p=0.005 significant	r=0.486** Moderate correlation p=0.002 significant	r=0.497** Moderate correlation p=0.002 significant	r=0.598** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.469** Moderate correlation p=0.003 significant
Problem-focused mechanism	r=0.309 Low correlation p=0.063 not significant	r=0.392* Low correlation p=0.016 significant	r=0.563** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.699** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.415* Moderate correlation p=0.011 significant
Individual educational plan	r=0.177 Low correlation p=0.293 not significant	r=0.420** Moderate correlation p=0.010 significant	r=0.390** Low correlation p=0.017 significant	r=0.531** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant	r=0.560** Moderate correlation p=0.000 significant

**Significant @ 0.01; *Significant @ 0.05

Table 7 shows the test of the relationship between coping strategies and job satisfaction among the SPED teacher at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School.

Data revealed that in coping strategy, Adaptive Mechanism has been found to be significantly related to job satisfaction along Job Content with a p-value of 0.005, Promotion with a p-value of 0.000, Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.000, and Colleagues with a p-value of 0.041.

These results revealed that adaptive mechanism was found to be moderately correlated with job satisfaction along Job Content, Promotion, and Supervisor/Administrator, and was found to be lowly correlated to job satisfaction along Colleagues. The result implies that coping strategies along Adaptive Mechanism is directly proportional to job satisfaction along Job Content, Promotion, Supervisor/Administrator and Colleagues. This means that the higher the application of adaptive mechanism, the higher the job satisfaction.

Furthermore, this coping strategy was found to be lowly correlated to Colleagues, which may imply that the respondents maintain relationships with coworkers for social-emotional support at work but is limited only to closeness as colleagues to maintain professionalism. Meanwhile, the results also show that adaptive mechanism is moderately correlated to Job Content, which implies that in order to navigate through their workload and teaching schedule, the respondents do their best to adjust and compromise if necessary to fulfill as many of their work responsibilities as possible. This means that as a SPED teacher, the ability to adapt to stressful situations is essential. Lastly, the findings reveal that adaptive mechanism is moderately correlated to Promotion and Supervisor/Administrator, which means that

for them to be qualified for promotion requirements and in maintaining professional relationships with their superiors at work, the respondents frequently adapt to the demands and changes at work. This also implies that because the respondents frequently adapt to perhaps impress their supervisors/administrators in order to be considered for promotion opportunities, these related factors of job satisfaction are important to the respondents.

Collaborative Mechanism was revealed to be significantly related to job satisfaction along compensation with a p-value of 0.008, promotion with a p-value of 0.002, Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.001, and colleagues with a p-value of 0.004. Furthermore, collaborative mechanism was found to be moderately correlated with job satisfaction along compensation, promotion, Supervisor/Administrator, and colleagues. The result implies that coping strategies along collaborative mechanism is directly proportional to job satisfaction along compensation, promotion, Supervisor/Administrator and colleagues. This means that the higher the application of collaborative mechanism, the higher the job satisfaction.

The results show coping mechanism was highly practiced by the respondents. This means that in coping with stressful situations at work, the SPED teachers seek support and assistance from stakeholders such as the parents, coworkers, supervisors/administrators, with the community and even with outside organizations related to Special Education. This proves that the respondents acknowledge the need for social-emotional support from other people who can help them in solving problems that arise at work or in addressing the stressors directly. Receiving help and support from other people lowers their stress levels and increases their job

satisfaction, encompassing satisfaction with compensation, promotion, supervisor/administrator, and colleagues.

Emotion-focused Mechanism was found to be moderately correlated to job satisfaction along Compensation with a p-value of 0.000, Job Content with a p-value of 0.000, Promotion with a p-value of 0.000, and Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.000. This implies a directly proportional relationship between emotion-focused mechanism and job satisfaction along all sub-variables except Colleagues. It means that the higher the utilization of this coping strategy, the higher the job satisfaction among the respondents.

Among all the coping strategies, emotion-focused mechanism was found to be the least applied by the respondents when facing stressful situations as they responded "agree". Interestingly, the test of correlation shows that this coping strategy is very highly significant to almost all the sub-variables of job satisfaction. This is supported by Davis and Wu's (2022) ^[16] claim that emotion-focused coping strategies are also commonly used by SPED teachers to alleviate stress. This implies that to increase their job satisfaction in terms of Compensation, Job Content, Promotion, and Supervisor/Administrator, the respondents utilize emotion-focused coping strategies, such as seeking personal relaxation time, mindfulness practices, or engaging in hobbies outside of work, however only moderately perhaps because their workload and schedule limits their free time.

Support Cooperation has been found to be moderately correlated to job satisfaction in terms of compensation with a p-value of 0.005, Job Content with a p-value of 0.002, promotion with a p-value of 0.002, Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.000, and colleagues with a p-value of 0.003. This implies a directly proportional relationship between support cooperation mechanism and job satisfaction along all its sub-variables. It means that the higher the utilization of this coping strategy, the higher the job satisfaction among the respondents.

This shows similar findings with Collaborative Mechanism indicating the need for emotional support to feel satisfied with compensation, job content, promotion, and colleagues. However, with Support Cooperation, the results imply a stronger support in terms of emotional level, emphasizing the value of teamwork and strong emotional intelligence from administrators in helping teachers feel less stressed and happier while teaching students. It is important to note that based on the results, this coping mechanism has the highest significance to job satisfaction as to supervisor/administrator, which implies that in terms of receiving emotional support and avoiding emotional exhaustion from work, the respondents expect this the most from their superiors, who have the capability and authority to provide them resources, trainings, and memberships to professional organization that provide mental health and emotional support.

Problem-focused Mechanism is lowly correlated to job satisfaction along of Job Content with a p-value of 0.016, and is moderately correlated to job satisfaction along Promotion with a p-value of 0.000, Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.000, and Colleagues with a p-value of 0.011. This implies a directly proportional relationship between problem-focused mechanism and job satisfaction along all its sub-variables except Compensation. It means that the higher the utilization of this coping strategy, the higher the job satisfaction among the respondents.

Based on the results, this coping strategy is highly applied by

the respondents when facing stressful situations. This means that when facing challenges in terms of job content, the respondents are more likely to tweak their teaching strategies and management to eliminate the source of stress, especially in managing students' learning needs. The findings also show that in terms of colleagues, the respondents use behaviors that directly reduce stress or deal with the problem directly. Lastly, the results show that problem-focused mechanism is very highly significant to supervisor/administrator, which implies that when feeling stressed with their superiors (e.g. when being observed when teaching, when monitoring teacher's work performance), the respondents use behavioral and cognitive actions to address the problem causing them stress. This further implies that the respondents work hard to maintain good reputation in the eyes of their supervisors/administrators.

Lastly, Individual Educational Plan was revealed to be lowly correlated with job satisfaction along of Promotion with a p-value of 0.017, and was found to be moderately correlated with job satisfaction along Job Content with a p-value of 0.010, Supervisor/Administrator with a p-value of 0.000, and Colleagues with a p-value of 0.000. This implies a directly proportional relationship between individual educational plan and job satisfaction along all its sub-variables except Compensation. It means that the higher the utilization of this coping strategy, the higher the job satisfaction among the respondents.

This means that in managing stress when feeling unsatisfied with their job content, promotion opportunities, and their relationship with supervisor/administrator and colleagues, the respondents develop plans that will help them navigate through these stressors at work. They anticipate possible problems that may arise depending on the available information and prepare how they will respond to the problems when they occur, thus, reducing the stress they feel because they are prepared. This allows them to manage stressful situations better, and this increases their job satisfaction.

On the contrary, the data shows that in relation to coping strategies in terms of adaptive mechanism, job satisfaction along compensation has a p-value of 0.070 and it was revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to compensation and coping strategies along adaptive mechanism.

Meanwhile, coping strategies in terms of collaborative mechanism, job satisfaction along job content has a p-value of 0.067 and it was revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to job content and coping strategies along collaborative mechanism.

Moreover, in relation to coping strategies in terms of emotion-focused mechanism, job satisfaction along colleagues has a p-value of 0.084 and it was revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to colleagues and coping strategies along emotion-focused mechanism.

Furthermore, in relation to coping strategies in terms of problem-focused mechanism, job satisfaction along compensation has a p-value of 0.063 and it was revealed that there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to compensation and coping strategies along problem-focused mechanism.

In addition, in relation to coping strategies in terms of individual educational plan, job satisfaction along compensation has a p-value of 0.293 and it was revealed that

there was no significant relationship between level of job satisfaction as to compensation and coping strategies along individual educational plan.

Proposed Action Plan based on the findings of the study

Based on the in-depth study of the data, the researcher has devised a plan of action to be considered in order to further improve the job satisfaction of SPED teachers at Paaralang

Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School. Since the degree of the study variables was described at a high level as established on the results, the researcher opted to offer an action plan based on the indicators that earned the least weighted mean. And, because the research variables are highly connected to one another, i.e., one is directly proportional to the other, a holistic strategy and/or activity that covers all areas was proposed.

Table 8: Action Plan

Key Results Areas	Objectives	Activities	Time frame	Persons Involved	Expected Outcomes	Budget Allocation	Sources of Funds	Success Indicators
Assessment	To orient the SPED teachers in the program components and implementation.	Meeting with the school principal and faculty; brainstorming of the instructional plan and program.	Sept. 2025	SPED teachers, Principal, Nurse, Psychologist, Life Coach, School Staff, Guidance Coordinator	The memo will be rendered for the approval of the activities to be done.	Php 5,000	MOOE/ Donation from stakeholders	98% of the plan were finalized
Preparation Instructional Plan/ Program	To prepare the activities to be implemented.	Outlining instructional activities and program for the whole year.	Sept. 2025	SPED teachers	The plan regarding the activities to improve the job satisfaction of SPED teachers.	Php 5,000	MOOE/ Donation from stakeholders	98% of the activities to be implemented were prepared.
Instructional Plan/ Program	To prepare the learning modules/ worksheets/ best practices/ learning resource center.	Making learning modules/ worksheets/ best practices/ learning resource center.	October 2025	SPED teachers	Contextualized program plan will be created by teachers.	Php 30,000	Stakeholders	98% of the modules/ worksheets/ best practices/ learning resource center were prepared.
Reassessment	To assess and improve the job satisfaction of SPED teachers.	Reporting and documenting the outcome and results of the assessment of SPED teachers.	October 2025	Coordinator	The current level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers will be assessed.	Php 5,000	MOOE/Donation from stakeholders	100% of the SPED teachers' job satisfaction were improved.
Evaluation	To evaluate the implementation of the plan through the results of assessment.	Evaluating the learning modules/ worksheets/ best practices/ learning resource center.	June 2025	Principal, Coordinator	The plan will be implemented.	Php 5,000	Stakeholders	98% of the instructional materials and/ programs were successfully evaluated.

4. Conclusions

Based on the salient findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School demonstrate a “high” level of stress in their profession.
2. The SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School demonstrate utilization of varied coping strategies, with Individual Educational Plan as the most evident among the strategies and the Emotion-Focused Mechanism as the least evident among the strategies.
3. The SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School demonstrate a moderate level of job satisfaction in their profession. Findings revealed that in particular, it was discovered that the respondents were least satisfied with their salary and most satisfied with the relationship they have established with their coworkers.
4. Based on the significant relationship between level of stress and job satisfaction, it can be concluded that the higher the level of stress, the lower the job satisfaction among SPED teachers.
5. The significant relationship between coping strategies and job satisfaction has a direct relationship, which implies that higher the application of coping strategies, the higher the job satisfaction among SPED teachers.
6. An action plan is drawn from the findings of the study,

which will be proposed to enhance the job satisfaction of the SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations for possible action are made in light of the salient findings and conclusions:

1. The researcher suggests to implement strategies to lessen job demands, such as streamlining paperwork and providing adequate resources. Offer training and support for administrators to improve their communication and support for SPED teachers. Facilitate workshops for parents to better understand the challenges SPED teachers face and promote collaborative partnerships. Provide additional teacher aid or teacher support to lessen the stress and workload of SPED teachers in Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School.
2. Given the teachers' reliance on coping strategies, particularly Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and collaborative mechanisms, the school should invest in professional development opportunities that enhance these skills. Additionally, targeted training on emotion-focused coping strategies, which were identified as the least evident, is crucial. Fostering a culture of peer support and collaboration, along with providing resources to improve IEP development and implementation, will empower teachers to effectively manage the challenges they face.

3. The "moderate" job satisfaction among SPED teachers, particularly the dissatisfaction with compensation, necessitates immediate attention to improve teacher morale and retention. Advocating for better salaries and benefits is paramount. Simultaneously, the school should focus on maintaining and strengthening positive collegial relationships, which were identified as a significant source of satisfaction. Creating opportunities for professional growth and ensuring adequate administrative support will further contribute to a more fulfilling work experience.
4. The significant inverse relationship between stress and job satisfaction underscores the importance of implementing stress management programs. Workshops on stress reduction techniques, mindfulness practices, and access to counseling services can provide teachers with the tools they need to cope with the demands of their profession. By addressing stress proactively, the school can positively impact job satisfaction and overall well-being.
5. The direct relationship between coping strategies and job satisfaction highlights the importance of equipping teachers with effective coping mechanisms. Promoting collaborative partnerships through regular meetings and establishing support networks can further enhance their ability to manage stress and improve job satisfaction. Ensuring that teachers have access to and are trained in adaptive, collaborative, emotion-focused, support, problem-focused, and IEP strategies is crucial for their overall well-being.
6. To ensure the long-term success of these recommendations, a comprehensive action plan derived from the study's findings must be implemented. This plan should prioritize initiatives that enhance job satisfaction, such as advocating for improved compensation and providing professional development on coping strategies. Regular evaluations of the plan's effectiveness and securing necessary funding are essential to sustain positive changes and create a supportive environment for SPED teachers.
7. Future researchers should focus on subgroup analyses, intervention effectiveness, school climate, long-term trajectories, intersectionality, and stakeholder perspectives to deepen understanding of the job satisfaction of SPED teachers at Paaralang Pag-ibig at Pag-asa Integrated School.

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