The Relationship Between Classroom Management, Coping Styles, and Stress

Shawna Hoots

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The Relationship Between Classroom Management, Coping Styles, and Stress

BY
Shawna Hoots

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Specialist in School Psychology

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE
The Relationship Between Classroom Management, Coping Styles, and Stress

Specialist in School Psychology Thesis

Shawna Hoots

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress and Coping</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management and Parenting Styles</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress, Coping, and Classroom Management</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Design</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: E-mail to Superintendents</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: E-mail to Teachers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Follow Up E-mail</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Main Variables................................. 38
Table 2: Correlation Between Main Variables.................................................. 39
Table 3: Regression Analyses of Teacher Stress Inventory, Emotion-Focused Coping, Problem-Focused Coping, and Classroom Management Profile................................. 40
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Abstract

One of the major demands that contributes to the stress of teachers is how to manage students' problem behaviors in the classroom. However, coping strategies may buffer the effects that classroom management styles have on stress levels in teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between classroom management styles and stress and how coping may moderate this relationship. Participants included 94 teachers from across northern and central Illinois. Indifferent classroom management style was associated with higher levels of stress, though no other significant correlations were found among stress and classroom management styles. Emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping were significant predictors of stress, but coping did not moderate the relationship between classroom management and stress. The implications, limitations, and direction of future research are discussed.
The Relationship Between Classroom Management, Coping Styles, and Stress

Teaching has become a more demanding profession over the past few decades. As a result, teacher stress is increasing and job satisfaction is declining (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Klassen, 2010; Malik & Ajmal, 2010). Lack of classroom management has been listed as one of the top causes of teacher stress (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen, 2010). In order to combat stress in the workplace, a variety of coping strategies are used, including emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. The purpose of this study is to examine classroom management styles relation to stress, and how coping buffers the relationship between classroom management and stress.

Literature Review

Stress

Psychological stress refers to the relationship between the person and the environment, in which the person appraises the environment to be demanding, taxing, or exceeding his or her resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress occurs in situations where individuals appraise demands to exceed their ability to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which can lead to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic complaints (Austin, Shah, & Muncer, 2005).

Individuals deal with stress in unique ways. A person’s judgment of stress depends on cognitive appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which is a function of individuals’ values, sensitivity, vulnerability, and interpretation of events. Individuals appraise a situation to determine its stressfulness. According to Frinker and Spiegel (1945) this “requires mental activity involving judgment, discrimination, and choice of
activity based largely on past experience” (as cited in Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, unique personal experiences play a large role in stress appraisal.

Stress can be due to a variety of emotional, physical, social, and economic factors (Sarmah & Baruah, 2012). Various occupations have been thought to be more or less stressful than others due to the combination of these factors. Recently teaching has been labeled as a highly stressful profession (Collie et al., 2012; Malik & Ajmal, 2010). The demands of teachers are becoming increasingly more strenuous and teachers are reported to be feeling a higher level of stress. Up to one third of teachers have reported to be stressed or extremely stressed (Collie et al., 2012). In addition, teachers report feeling that little attention is paid to their personal needs and wellbeing, and this too is leading to increased stress levels (Margolis & Nagel, 2006).

Teacher stress, specifically, is the experience of negative emotions in teachers as a result of job-related work in the classroom and within the school system (Kyriacou, 2001). More than 40% of teachers have indicated that they have experienced severe symptoms of stress due to an ever-demanding workload (Austin et al., 2005). Teachers feel unable to meet the demands asked of them due to the limited resources that are given to them within the school setting (Lambert, McCarthy, O’Donnell, & Wang, 2009). As a result, teachers have become more resistant to change or reform and felt increased levels of stress because of little support for implementation and lack of resources, insufficient time, lack of opportunities for professional growth, lack of social support and lack of collaboration with administrators (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). This indicates while more is being demanded of teachers, the resources, support, time, and opportunities for growth are diminishing.
Stress leads to decrease in teacher job satisfaction. Teachers' job satisfaction is based upon day-to-day work tasks and activities and influences performance, commitment, and overall health and wellbeing (Klassen, 2010). Stress has a negative effect on job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012; Malik & Ajmal, 2010) and is thought to be the main cause of job burnout among teachers (Sarmah & Baruah, 2012). McCarthy (2009) found that one-third of reported stress was due to high demands and low resources.

Research has found many causes of high stress levels but consistently found among the top are students' behavior and discipline (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008; Collie et al., 2012). Klassen (2010) found that heavy workload and inadequacy in classroom management were among the top causes of stress in teachers. When students were not motivated to do well and when it was hard to maintain classroom control, even with the use of discipline, teachers reported higher stress levels (Klassen, 2010). Malik and Ajmal (2010) found that most student teachers, in their first experience student teaching, experienced moderate levels of stress due to lack of effective classroom management. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) performed a meta-analysis to explore the causes and effects of stress and found that emotional responses, personality mediators, support variables, and burnout play the most important role in how teachers respond to stress from external sources. Interestingly, it was found that student misbehavior and workload had weak to moderate correlations with stress. Therefore, research is inconsistent when looking at how classroom behaviors and discipline relate to teacher stress, with some researchers finding lack of classroom management to be highly stressful, while others have found it to be weakly to moderately correlated with stress.
Stress has been found to be more likely to occur when negative experiences accumulate over time (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). Stress can cause physical and mental exhaustion. When teachers experience exhaustion physically and mentally, job performance and satisfaction were negatively impacted and higher levels of stress were reported (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). Contributing to physical exhaustion were changes made by administrators, in which the teachers did not feel as though they were included. Feeling that school administration valued the teachers and had their best interest in mind when making decisions that affected the teachers was found to reduce reported stress among teachers (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). This suggests that support within the school system helps reduce the amount of teacher stress.

Perceptions about the workplace also have an effect on reported stress. Teachers who had positive perceptions of the workplace felt that workplace demands were realistic, whereas teachers who had negative perceptions about the workplace felt that it was overly demanding (Margolis & Nagel, 2006).

Schwarzer & Hallum (2008) found that nationality had an effect on teacher stress and burnout syndrome. In German teachers, stress had an effect on the interaction between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion. However, regardless of nationality, teachers who reported higher level of self-efficacy had more confidence and were less likely to suffer from burnout. It should be noted that national education systems have varying values and attitudes toward education and therefore sources of stress and effective strategies may differ by country (Kyriacou, 2001). Even so, job stress is negatively related to job satisfaction in North American teachers (Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010).
Klassen (2010) found that teacher efficacy to maintain student discipline mediates job stress from student behavior and job satisfaction. This indicates that teachers who believe that they are effective and capable of teaching and managing a classroom are less stressed by student misbehavior and report higher job satisfaction. Teachers who feel that they are not effective at teaching and managing a classroom are more likely to report higher stress levels and are also more likely to suffer from job burnout (Klassen, 2010).

Teachers stress has a negative impact on students learning and the learning environment. Teachers with higher levels of stress reported high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and distancing oneself from his or her students, and feelings of inferiority in regards to professional accomplishments (Lambert et al., 2009). Teachers who were less stressed built better rapport with their students, and were also thought to be more effective within the classroom (Kokkins, 2007). This shows that stress is not only affecting teachers, but it is having a negative impact on the students and how well they learning.

Teacher stress is caused by many different factors, including lack of resources, increasing work demands, lack of student discipline, and lack of support within the workplace. It causes decreased job satisfaction, depersonalization, increased burnout, and physical and mental exhaustion. It negatively impacts the relationships that teachers develop with students, and also impacts student learning. While we cannot always control all factors that lead to stress, teaching teachers to manage their classroom is an area that we can intervene.
Coping

When individuals appraise an event or situation as stressful, they must then cope with it. Coping is a process used to manage demands that are thought to be threatening because they exceed the individual’s resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping requires constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage these demands and resources and requires different actions based on different stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These different management techniques are referred to as coping styles.

There are two primary coping styles, emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping include efforts to regulate emotional response that may appear to be taxing by creating emotional balance to increase tolerance for these events. With emotion-focused coping an individual is managing the emotional distress caused by the situation appraised to be stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping focuses on minimizing the source of stress by taking initiative or doing something to alter the source of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Most individuals combine these coping styles when faced with a demanding situation; however, problem-focused coping seems to be used more when individuals feel that something can be done to alter the stress, whereas emotion-focused coping tends to be used more often when individuals feel the stress is something that they cannot alter and must be endured (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

Individuals who perceive stressors to be challenges and not threats are more likely to show active coping skills and are less likely to use avoidant coping strategies, or strategies that ignore the presence of the stressor. Active coping strategies, include
actively trying to change the situation and alter the stressor instead of perceiving it as stressful, was the most beneficial approach (Stoeber & Renner, 2008).

Maladaptive coping styles have been found to contribute to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, lack of personal accomplishments, and total burnout (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). However, these outcomes depended on the source of perceived pressure. Pressure from students was positively related to loss appraisal, pressure from parents was positively related to burnout, and pressure from other colleagues increased reported feelings of threat appraisal and burnout. Negative reactions to appraisal resources were correlated with avoidant coping styles (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008).

**Stress and Coping**

Teacher stress has been found to be affected by coping strategies (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Teachers who report higher levels of stress have been found to be more likely to use emotion-focused coping strategies (Austin et al., 2005; Baloglu, 2008; Lewis, 1999). Van Dick and Wagner (2001) found that teachers who used avoidance and ignoring, which are emotion-focused coping strategies, had higher levels of burnout. This suggests that using emotion-focused coping strategies may increase stress levels in teachers.

Baloglu (2008) found that prospective teachers preferred maladaptive emotion-focused strategies, such as helplessness, rather than problem-focused strategies for coping with stress due to lack of student control. This suggests that lack of student control is a stressful event and teaching programs lack teaching skills to cope within training.

Lewis (1999) found that generally teachers cope in productive ways to deal with the stress of classroom discipline. However, teachers who reported high levels of stress
were more likely to use maladaptive coping strategies that were thought to maintain their elevated levels of stress. Baloglu (2008) found that prospective Turkish teachers were more likely to use coping strategies such as helplessness and also more likely to have an authoritarian classroom management style. Lewis (1999) also found that teachers who did not talk about their classroom discipline issues had a higher level of stress, indicating social support is important for teachers dealing with problem behaviors. Peer and administrative support is an adaptive way of dealing with the stress that teachers often feel because of the vast responsibilities of their jobs.

Global social support was found to be a coping mechanism for reducing stress at work (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Teachers who did not report having social support within the work place were more likely to feel higher levels of job stress. Principal support, specifically, was found to be an important factor in reducing workload stress (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Teachers who felt greater support from their principals were more likely to use positive active coping strategies to deal with stressors. Individuals who used avoidance or ignoring as coping strategies reported higher levels of burnout, whereas teachers who used adaptive coping strategies showed lower degrees of burnout (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Overall, self-efficacy, perceptions of support, and use of appropriate coping strategies can buffer the negative impact of stress on physical symptoms (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001).

**Classroom Management**

Classroom management is the process of keeping a controlled environment in order to enhance learning. One of a teacher’s most important jobs is to effectively manage the classroom to support learning for all students (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).
Classroom management techniques include “the prompt and efficient handling of routine tasks, the minimization of distractions and interruptions, having materials ready for use, and handling behavior problems in a manner that is minimally disruptive to the classroom” (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993, p. 277). One major reason that teachers leave the field is due to loss of control in the classroom and difficult student behavior (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1993). One way to prevent this is to emphasize positive classroom management skills. Classroom management helps teachers to control and organize their classroom. It is the process of setting up an environment where instruction and learning happen freely and easily (Bauer & Sapona, 1991).

Part of teacher management is teaching students to behave appropriately. About 70% of students are on-task at a given time, leaving 30% in need of redirection (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). When teachers demonstrate and model expected behavior, students are more likely to improve their behavior within the classroom (Belvel, 2010).

Instruction will not be effective when the classroom is not managed appropriately. Teacher’s behaviors affect the learning of the students, perception of school, and student self-perceptions (Bauer & Sapona, 1991). In a meta-analysis, Wang et al. (1993) found that classroom management had the largest effect on student achievement. This indicates that students learn better in a sound, well-managed environment, emphasizing the need for teachers to utilize strategies that maintain a positive learning environment.

One important component to consider in classroom management is creating a warm environment in which the children feel a sense of belongingness (Belvel, 2010). Teachers should strive to enhance students’ self-concept and sense of belonging by giving regular attention, making sure each student experiences success, accepting student
input about educational matters, and making sure students are recognized for their academic success (Belvel, 2010).

Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers with high classroom management self-efficacy had greater job satisfaction. Teachers who believed that they were capable of dealing with behavior problems were less likely to be stressed and more likely to be satisfied within the teaching profession, whereas teachers who had lower reported self-efficacy for dealing with student problem behaviors were more likely to be stressed and less likely to be satisfied with their job. This further supports that well developed classroom management skills are essential in reducing stress among teachers (Klassen, 2010).

Classroom management includes strategies for problem solving and prevention (Belvel, 2010). Eighty percent of classroom management has been found to be problem prevention rather than intervention (Freiburg, 1996). In order to prevent behavior problems from occurring, teachers must set up defined limits that students are aware of. Student participation in rule-making increases their likelihood to follow the rules that are set. All goals and activities should be clearly understood by all students; otherwise, they should be clarified or changed (Belvel, 2010). Teachers who had skills in behavioral prevention (controlling behaviors before they became problematic) found prevention to be effective in 85-90% of stressful classroom situations (Belvel, 2010).

**Classroom Management and Parenting Styles.** Many factors go into managing a classroom effectively and styles of managing classroom behavior are directly comparable to parenting styles. Teachers are similar to parents, as they are responsible for student growth and learning. Parents, as well as teachers, are responsible for a child’s
social emotional growth. Though teachers have an academic focus, parent and teacher management styles are assumed to be linked, though little research has been done to support this idea.

Proactive strategies are better at managing behavior problems, in the home and in the classroom, than reactive strategies. Gardner, Sonuga-Bark and Sayal (1999) investigated the effects of proactive versus reactive parenting strategies on the behavior of children. Proactive strategies lessen the likelihood of inappropriate behaviors, and include preventative measures in order to stop problems behaviors from starting (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Reactive strategies follow bad behavior and are more likely to be negative (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Reactive strategies include responses such as “sit still while I am talking!” and are often remedial in nature. It was found that parents who used proactive approaches had children with fewer behavioral problems. Parents who used reactive strategies had children who were found to have continued behavior problems up to 2 years later (Gardner et al., 1999). Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) found that teachers who used proactive strategies had more students who were on-task and exhibited less problem behavior, whereas teachers who used reactive strategies had more students who were off-task and exhibited more problematic behavior.

Student behavior is problematic for teachers when they use reactive strategies. In a multivariate analysis it was found that reactive strategies were significant predictors of teacher stress (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). Teachers who reported the use of reactive strategies reported higher stress from workload, student misbehavior, time and resource deficits, and poor relationships with colleagues. In a typical day, about half of the teachers reported 5 or more instance of misbehavior that had to be addressed.
Baumrind (1971) created parenting typology, also known as parenting styles. The four styles were first categorized as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and rejecting-neglecting. Baumrind (1971) found that young children were better behaved and had better developed social skills when the parent used the authoritative style. Santrock (1998) modified these style names and categorized them as authoritative, authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. These 4 styles have been applied to classroom management, but little research has been conducted to support the different teaching styles.

One style of teaching is authoritative. Authoritative teachers are demanding but also responsive. This style of teaching is thought to be the most balanced and well structured. Authoritative teachers encompass many necessary qualities discussed above. They are enthusiastic and aware of students' needs (Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok, & Tartwijk, 2006). Their classrooms are organized and activities are well planned. They have sincere interest in the students desire to learn and it is evident in their classrooms (Wubbels et al., 2006). All rules are logical and clearly known to the students. Authoritative teachers set up a classroom that is warm, pleasant and structured (Wubbels et al., 2006).

When students experience group spirit, or esprit de corps, it increases their desire to learn, willingness to participate, and likelihood to work beyond the benefit of themselves, but for the benefit of the group (Belvel, 2010). Teachers set the stage for this type of group spirit by being enthusiastic, giving students personal attention, include students in decisions, and giving the group a sense of purpose (Belvel, 2010). These
Characteristics are very similar to the authoritative type, which indicate that the authoritative style is the best for student learning and involvement.

Paulson, Marchant, and Rothlisberg (1999) found that when both parents and teachers used authoritative styles consistently, children had the highest level of achievement. Students had high perceptions of grade importance, and the highest perceptions of confidence. This displays that authoritativeness not only affects achievement, but also improves student confidence. Dever and Karabenick (2011) found that Hispanic and Caucasian students all had achievement gains when authoritative teaching styles were utilized.

The authoritative style of teaching has been shown to affect more than just learning. Students who had teachers who used the authoritative style of teaching were less likely to be negatively influenced by their peers (Hughes, 2002). Hence, they were less likely to exhibit behavioral problems within the school day.

The authoritarian style represents teachers who have firm limits and control on students. This style is made up of teachers who use extreme discipline and expect immediate obedience. There is often little discussion and students lack the opportunity to learn and practice effective communication skills. Dever and Karabenick (2011) found that authoritarian styles of teacher was positively related to academic achievement for Vietnamese students, indicating that cultural values may impact the students response to teaching styles.

Teachers who used punishment in attempt to control deviancy were found to have students who had little internal motivation (Belvel, 2010). By helping students regulate and improve their performance, outbursts were found to significantly decrease over time.
(Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991). However, other components of authoritarian style include punishment and lack of self-regulation, which have been found to increase problem behavior.

As described by Bosworth et al., (1996), the democratic style is less likely to monitor student behavior. The atmosphere is open and the teacher has little control and places few demands on the students. Teachers who display democratic styles often are overly sensitive to the emotional well-being of the students and have little classroom control. Teachers utilizing this style are often well liked by students, but have a hard time creating boundaries. Academic achievement is thought to have low value in classrooms with this type of management style.

Erozkan (2012) found that students who perceived their parents to utilize democratic or authoritarian parent styles predicted higher anxiety sensitivity. In the school setting, it may be assumed that similar results would be found. If so, students in these classrooms may display higher behavioral problems and lower achievement as a result of anxiety, leading to greater teacher stress. However, Cripps and Zyromski (2009) found that parents who were democratic or authoritative had children who rated themselves more positively; hence they displayed higher self-esteem and adjustment. These children were also more likely to be intrinsically motivated to learn. This indicates that research is inconsistent and inconclusive when it comes to democratic styles and the effects on children.

Very little research has been done on laissez-faire management styles. According to Bosworth et al., (1996), teachers who use the laissez-faire classroom management profile lack involvement with the students in the classroom. There are very little demands
placed on the children and teachers often lack interest in subject matter and student achievement. They find themselves less likely to impose rules on the students in order to avoid bothering them. There is little classroom discipline, and the teacher may lack the appropriate skills, confidence, and courage to discipline. Little learning and communication occur in this atmosphere. The classroom may seem to be "going through the motions," with students having low achievement and lack of self-control. More research should be done to see how this affects student learning and teacher stress.

**Stress, Coping, and Classroom Management**

Baloglu (2008) found that teachers who used authoritarian classroom management styles reported higher levels of stress. Teachers who felt that they had little control over classroom discipline also reported higher levels of stress (Baloglu, 2008). This indicates that classroom management styles and coping can impact stress levels. However, little research has examined the relationship between stress, coping, and classroom management.

**Hypotheses**

The purpose of the current study was to determine if the relationship between stress and classroom management styles would be moderated by coping, as shown in Figure 1. Classroom management styles (authoritative, authoritarian, laissez-faire, and indifferent) and coping styles (problem/emotion-focused) were treated as independent variables with stress as the dependent variable (measured by the TSI). It was hypothesized that:
1) Regardless of coping, authoritative and democratic classroom management styles will be negatively related to stress, while authoritarian and laissez-faire will be positively related to stress.

2) For classroom management styles that are predictive of high stress levels, problem-focused coping strategies will moderate or reduce stress levels, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies will not reduce stress level.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model of the Relationship Between Classroom Management, Coping, and Stress

Method

Participants

Participants (n = 94) consisted of classroom teachers (8 males, 86 females, $M_{age}$ = 42.58 years, SD = 11.52, range: 24-62) of Kindergarten through 5th grade students from districts across Illinois. The average class size was about 21 students (SD = 4.91). Of
teachers, 38.9% taught in rural areas, 32.6% in suburban areas, and 25.3% in urban areas. In addition, 91.6% of the participants were white, 3.2% were African American, 2.1% were Hispanic, and 2.1% were Asian.

**Materials**

**Teacher Stress Inventory.**

The Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) is a 49 item scale, with each item measured on a 5 point Likert-scale from 1 (*no strength or noticeable*) to 5 (*major strength or extremely noticeable*). The TSI is made up of 10 subscales that measure the cause and effect of stress specifically related to teaching. Each subscale consists of 3 to 8 questions. To score the subscales, items in each subscale are summed and then divided by the number of items in that subscale to obtain a mean. Five of these subscales measure the source of stress and five measure the manifestation of stress. The subscales measuring the source of stress are Time Management, Work-Related Stressors, Professional Distress, Discipline and Motivation, and Professional Investment. The subscales measuring manifestation of stress are Emotional Manifestations, Fatigue Manifestations, Cardiovascular Manifestations, Gastronomical Manifestation, and Behavioral Manifestations.

In the current study, the source of stress was seen as more important than the manifestation of stress; therefore, only the five subscales from this domain were included within the questionnaire. The TSI total score was calculated by adding the average scores for each of the five subscales and dividing by five. The TSI total score can range from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating greater level of stress. The overall score provides a collective measure of the sources of teacher stress.
Fimian and Fastenau (1990) completed a factor analysis with varimax and oblique rotations using 3,401 teachers representing 7 different states. All subscale alphas exceed 0.70. All correlations between the subscales were significant. This indicates that the TSI is a reliable measure of teacher specific stress. Cronbach’s alpha in the current sample was 0.93 for the whole scale, with subscale alphas exceeding 0.77.

**The Brief COPE Inventory.**

The Brief COPE Inventory was created from the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model of stress and coping, and the Carver and Scheier model of behavioral self-regulation (Carver, 1997). The Brief COPE is an adapted version of the COPE Inventory with 14 subscales and 28 items (Carver, 1997). The subscales consist of Active Coping, Planning, Positive Reframing, Acceptance, Humor, Religion, Using Emotional Support, Using Instrumental Support, Self-Distraction, Denial, Venting, Substance Use, Behavioral Disengagement, and Self-Blame. Items on the Brief COPE are rated on a 4-point Likert subscale ranging from 1 (I haven’t been doing this at all) to 4 (I’ve been doing this a lot). The items that make up each subscale are added together to obtain a subscale score. Higher scores indicated an individual’s greater use of that particular coping strategy.

All subscales on the Brief COPE have a Cronbach’s alpha ranging from 0.50-0.90. Venting, Denial, and Acceptance are the only subscales that fall below 0.60. This shows overall acceptable internal consistency for the subscales (Carver, 1997). Snell, Siegert, Hay-Smith, and Surgenor (2011) examined the factor structure of the Brief COPE and found that when 2 factors were extracted, each item loaded on only one factor with factor loadings greater than 0.40. The two factors have been categorized as problem-
focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping was made up of Active Coping, Planning, Positive Reframing, Acceptance, Religion, Accessing Emotional Support, and Accessing Instrumental Support. The Cronbach’s alpha for the current study for problem-focused coping was 0.89. Emotion-focused coping was made up of Denial, Venting, Behavioral Disengagement, Self-Blame, and Distraction. The Cronbach’s alpha for the current study for emotion-focused coping was 0.77. Two of the subscales, Humor and Substance abuse, failed to show significant loadings on either factor in the original study so they were not used in the current study.

**The Classroom Management Profile.**

The Classroom Management Profile was created by the Center for Adolescents at the Department of Special Education at Indiana University. It is a 12-item questionnaire that uses a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The subscales are authoritarian (“if a student is disruptive during class, I assign him/her to detention, without further discussion”), authoritative (“I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn”), laissez-faire (“I don't want to reprimand a student because it might hurt his/her feelings”), and indifferent (“I don't want to impose any rules on my students”). There are 4 subscales made up of 3 questions each. The score for each subscale can range from 3 to 15, with a higher score indicating a strong preference for that style. In the current study, Cronbach’s alphas were low: authoritarian (0.34), authoritative (0.38), laissez-faire (0.34), and indifferent (0.34).

**Procedure**

After the researcher obtained IRB approval, superintendents of school districts across Illinois were contacted to obtain approval to e-mail teachers within the district (see
Appendix A). Four districts granted permission to contact teachers. Teachers from those districts were e-mailed a link to the online questionnaire with optional participation (see Appendix B). Teachers were entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card for participating. After a week teachers were sent a reminder e-mail (see Appendix C). To obtain additional participants, a message was posted on a social media website to recruit teachers. Interested teachers who responded to the message were also e-mailed the link to the questionnaire.

The demographic and background questionnaire, TSI, Brief COPE, and the Classroom Management Profile were completed online using Qualtrics Online Questionnaire Research Suite. The teachers were able to repeatedly access the questionnaire to complete it at their convenience. All submitted questionnaires remained anonymous. One participant’s data was removed due to a number of missing items. Sixteen of the participants had missing data for one item. In these cases, the sample’s average score for the item was used in place of the missing response.

**Statistical Design**

Using SPSS v20, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted with classroom management style, coping style, and the interaction between them predicting stress levels as measured by the TSI. Predictor variables were centered prior to use in the multiple regression, as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). Because there are four classroom management styles and two coping styles, there were eight separate multiple regressions to test all eight combinations of classroom management and coping style.
A two-step regression was conducted for all eight combinations. The predictors in the first step were the main effects of coping style and classroom management style. In the second step, the interaction term was added.

**Results**

To test the first hypothesis regarding the relationships between stress and teacher management styles, a Pearson’s *r* correlation was calculated. Contrary to the first hypothesis, indifferent classroom management style was significantly associated with higher, rather than lower, stress, $r (92) = .217, p = .036$. Furthermore, no other classroom management styles were significantly correlated with stress; however, the authoritarian and authoritative classroom management style correlations were in the predicted directions, see Table 2.

It was also predicted that problem-focused coping would moderate the relationship between classroom management styles and stress, while emotion-focused coping would not moderate this relationship. Although authoritative classroom management style significantly predicted stress levels, including the interaction term with coping style did not significantly add to the variability explained by the main effects in step one of the regression models, See Table 3. Thus, the second hypothesis that coping style would moderate the relationship between classroom management style and teacher stress was not supported.

Although not primary focus of the current study, emotion-focused coping had a higher correlation with stress, $r (92) = .544, p < .01$, than problem-focused coping $r (92) = .340, p < .01$. Additionally, there was a significant correlation between emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, $r (92) = .636, p < .01$. 
Discussion

The first hypothesis predicted that, regardless of coping strategy, authoritative and indifferent classroom management styles would be negatively related to stress, while authoritarian and laissez faire classroom management would be positively related to stress. Contrary to prediction, the indifferent classroom management style was positively correlated with stress and no other classroom management styles were significantly correlated with stress when using Pearson correlations.

For those classroom management styles that are correlated with high stress levels, it was predicted that problem-focused coping strategies would moderate stress levels, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies would not moderate stress level. The results did not support the initial hypothesis, as neither type of coping was found to moderate the relationship between teacher’s classroom management styles and stress, regardless of classroom management style. However, significant predictors of stress were found in step one of the regression equations. Together, emotion-focused coping and authoritative classroom management style accounted for the greatest amount of variance in stress scores, which was 32.3%; however, emotion-focused coping accounted for 29.5% of the stated variance. Problem-focused coping and authoritative classroom management style were also significant predictors and, together, accounted for 19% of the variance in stress score, though, problem-focused coping accounted for 11.5% of the variance. In all regression models, emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping were strong predictors of stress. However, due to the correlational nature of the study, it cannot be determined if there is a causal relationship between coping strategies or classroom management styles and stress.
Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) found that reactive classroom management strategies were significant predictors of stress. In the current study, the authoritarian classroom management style was a significant predictor of stress. Reactive strategies and authoritarian classroom management styles have similar characteristics, such as firm limits and control with the expectation that students will be obedient. When this expectation is broken, punishment is often the result. This indicates consistency among studies, showing that reactive or authoritarian management, or punishment and inflexibility, can predict levels of stress.

Previous studies found that little attention to the needs of teachers and their well-being lead to increased levels of stress (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). Student misbehavior and discipline have also been found to be one of the top causes of teacher stress (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008; Collie et al., 2012). In the current sample, TSI subscales of Time Management ($M = 3.40$) and Work Related Stressors ($M = 3.42$) were rated higher on average than Professional Distress ($M = 2.84$) and Discipline and Motivation ($M = 2.92$). This could suggest that there has been a shift in the causes of stress within the teaching environment from behavior and discipline problems to time pressure.

Teachers with high levels of stress have been found to be more likely to use emotion-focused coping (Austin et al., 2005; Baloglu, 2008; Lewis, 2009). In this sample, participants were more likely to use problem-focused coping ($M = 4.41$) than emotion focused coping. Even so, emotion-focused coping had a higher correlation with stress than problem-focused coping, consistent with previous research (Austin et al., 2005; Baloglu, 2008; Lewis, 1999).
Folkman and Lazarus (1980) found that individuals often use multiple coping strategies. The current study found a moderately strong correlation ($r = .64$) between emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping, indicating that participants using one type of coping were likely to also use the other type of coping. Thus, it appears that as participants encounter situations that require greater coping, both types of strategies are employed. Several limitations regarding the procedure should be noted. First, many superintendents declined participation due to the overwhelming demands that have been placed on teachers within the past few years, including the implementation of a new evaluation procedure and the common core curriculum. Some administrators felt that placing another demand on teachers would be unreasonable. This suggests that teachers experiencing the highest amount of stress or demands may not have participated in this study. In turn, this study had a low number of participants, which may have concealed possible effects that may have been evident with a larger sample. Similarly, the convenience sample may not be representative of the population, limiting the generalizability of the results. Future researchers may consider contacting principals for permission instead of the superintendent of a district, or recruiting participants through social media, listservs, and other regional and national organizations.

Research in the area of classroom management styles is very minimal. Finding a classroom management subscale was difficult, and, consequently, internal reliability of the Classroom Management Profile was very poor. Furthermore, the Classroom Management Profile is based on teachers’ self-report. Future researchers should consider creating a classroom management subscale that reliably assesses classroom management styles.
Authoritarian and Indifferent classroom management styles are seen as the least effective classroom management styles (Erozkan, 2012), and in this sample of teachers, were reported at lower levels than Authoritative and Laissez Faire management styles, see Table 1. These means could accurately reflect lower levels of these classroom management styles; alternatively teachers may have displayed a social desirability bias or they could have responded based on how they feel their classroom should be run instead of how it is currently run. For example, on question number 7 of the Classroom Management Profile, teachers may have been resistant to admit that they feel that class preparation is not worth the effort. Because no classroom observations were conducted, the actual management style of the classroom is unknown.

In summary, emotion-focused and problem-focused coping were significant positive predictors of stress in the regression equations. Indifferent classroom management style was positively correlated with stress, though it was not significant in the regression. However, based on the correlational design of the current study, it cannot be determined if there is a causal relationship between the three variables. The classroom management profile was a poor measure of classroom management; therefore, future research should focus on creating a classroom management questionnaire with sound psychometric properties. After establishing a reliable and valid classroom management questionnaire, it is recommended that this study is replicated to determine if coping is a moderator of the relationship between classroom management styles and stress. If it is, then coping strategies could be taught to teachers under high stress levels to help reduce stress.
References


classroom appraisal of resources and demands. *Psychology in the Schools, 46*, 973-988. doi:10.1002/pits.20438


Table 1.

Mean and Standard Deviation of Main Variables

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Note. N = 94
Table 2.

**Correlations Between Main Variables**

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Note: * denotes $p < .05$ (2-tailed), ** denotes $p < .01$ (2-tailed)
Table 3

Regression Analyses of Teacher Stress Inventory, Emotion-Focused Coping, Problem-focused Coping, and Classroom Management Profile.

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Note: * denotes p < .05, ** denotes p < .01
Appendix A

E-Mail to Superintendents

Hello,

This is Shawna Hoots. I am in my third year of school and am in the midst of completing my thesis at Eastern Illinois University for school psychology. My thesis examines the relationship between stress, coping, and teacher management styles. I need primary teachers to complete a questionnaire in order to collect the necessary information. Would you be able to give me permission to e-mail the questionnaire to your teachers in grades K-5?

The purpose of my thesis is to determine if the amount of stress teachers feel is affecting their classroom management style, and if that relationship is mediated by their coping strategies. No single teacher’s information would be revealed to your district. All information will remain confidential. I am looking for teachers from K-5th grade only. The questionnaire will be e-mailed to the teachers and can be completed online. Participation will be voluntary. I’m looking for districts across Illinois and I would love to have the __________ area in my data pool! Any support would be extremely helpful. I have attached the questionnaire so that you can look over the questions in order to aid your decision.

Thank you!
Shawna Hoots
Hello,

I am school psychology intern from Eastern Illinois University. As part of my graduate school requirements, I am completing a study and I need your help! I need participants to answer several short questionnaires that will take less than 20 minutes. All submissions will be confidential and your participation is greatly appreciated! Each participant will be entered into a drawing to win a $25 gift card to Walmart. If you are willing to participate, please click on the link below and you will be directed to the questionnaires. The questionnaire will be closing March 4th. Thank you for your consideration and thank you for your dedication to the field of education. Honestly, you don't hear thank you enough!

Sincerely,

Shawna Hoots
School Psychology Intern Lisle CUSD 202
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this link to the Questionnaire:
$\{l://QuestionnaireLink?d=Take the Questionnaire\}$

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
$\{l://QuestionnaireURL\}$

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
$\{l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe\}$
Hello!

As a reminder, I am a graduate student in school psychology. As part of my program I am conducting a questionnaire with K-5 general education teachers. If you complete the questionnaire you will be entered in a drawing to win a $25 giftcard! The questionnaire has been taking around 10-15 minutes.

I wanted to send one last reminder that the questionnaire will be closing March 4th. To complete the questionnaire just click on the link below. If you have already started the questionnaire and would like to finish it, you can continue where you left off by simply clicking on the link below as well. I currently need approximately 33 more participants so every questionnaire counts!

Thank you for your time and consideration! Good luck with the remainder of the school year!
Shawna Hoots

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Appendix D

Questionnaire

Demographic and Background Information

Age: 

Sex: Male Female

Ethnicity: White/Caucasian African American Hispanic/Latino Asian/Pacific Islander Native American Indian Other: 

What grade level do you teach? 

How many students are in your classroom? 

How many students are in the entire school? 

Describe the location of your school. Rural Suburban Urban

Does your school identify as a PBIS school? Yes No

Please rate the following items using the subscale below:

1: not at all 2: to some degree 3: very much so/very well

How familiar are you with RtI? 1 2 3

How well is your school implementing RtI for academics? 1 2 3

How well is your school implementing RtI for behavior? 1 2 3
Teacher Stress Inventory

The following are a number teacher concerns. Please identify those factors which cause you stress in your present position. Read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Then, indicate how strong the feeling is when you experience it by circling the appropriate rating on the 5-point subscale. If you have not experienced this feeling, or if the item is inappropriate for your position, circle number 1 (no strength; not noticeable). The rating subscale is shown at the top of each page.

Examples:

I feel insufficiently prepared for my job. 1 2 3 4 5

*If you feel very strongly that you are insufficiently prepared for your job, you would circle number 5.*

I feel that if I step back in either effort or commitment, I may be seen as less competent. 1 2 3 4 5

*If you never feel this way, and the feeling does not have noticeable strength, you would circle number 1.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW STRONG?</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no strength; not noticeable</td>
<td>mild strength; barely noticeable</td>
<td>medium strength; moderately noticeable</td>
<td>great strength; very noticeable</td>
<td>major strength; extremely noticeable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIME MANAGEMENT**

1. I easily over-commit myself. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I become impatient if others do things to slowly. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I have to try doing more than one thing at a time. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I have little time to relax/enjoy the time of day. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I think about unrelated matters during conversations. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I feel uncomfortable wasting time. 1 2 3 4 5
7. There isn't enough time to get things done. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I rush in my speech. 1 2 3 4 5

WORK-RELATED STRESSORS

9. There is little time to prepare for my lessons/responsibilities. 1 2 3 4 5
10. There is too much work to do. 1 2 3 4 5
11. The pace of the school day is too fast. 1 2 3 4 5
12. My caseload/class is too big. 1 2 3 4 5
13. My personal priorities are being shortchanged due to time demands. 1 2 3 4 5
14. There is too much administrative paperwork in my job. 1 2 3 4 5

PROFESSIONAL DISTRESS

15. I lack promotion and/or advancement opportunities. 1 2 3 4 5
16. I am not progressing my job as rapidly as I would like. 1 2 3 4 5
17. I need more status and respect on my job. 1 2 3 4 5
18. I receive an inadequate salary for the work I do. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I lack recognition for the extra work and/or good teaching I do. 1 2 3 4 5

DISCIPLINE AND MOTIVATION

I feel frustrated...
20. ...because of discipline problems in my classroom. 1 2 3 4 5
21. ...having to monitor pupil behavior. 1 2 3 4 5
22. ...because some students would better if they tried. 1 2 3 4 5
23. ...attempting to teach students who are poorly motivated. 1 2 3 4 5
24. ...because of inadequate/poorly defined discipline problems. 1 2 3 4 5
25. ...when my authority is rejected by pupils/administration. 1 2 3 4 5

PROFESSIONAL INVESTMENT

26. My personal opinions are not sufficiently aired. 1 2 3 4 5
27. I lack control over decisions made about classroom/school matters. 1 2 3 4 5
28. I am not emotionally/intellectually stimulated on the job. 1 2 3 4 5
29. I lack opportunities for professional improvement. 1 2 3 4 5
Brief COPE

These items deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you've been doing to cope with work. Obviously, different people deal with things in different ways, but I'm interested in how you've tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says, how much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all
2 = I've been doing this a little bit □
3 = I've been doing this a medium amount □
4 = I've been doing this a lot

1. I've been turning to work or other activities
to take my mind off things..........................................................1 2 3 4

2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing
something about the situation I'm in.............................................1 2 3 4

3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real." ......................................1 2 3 4

4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better........1 2 3 4

5. I've been getting emotional support from others..............................1 2 3 4

6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it........................................1 2 3 4
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better ..............................................................1 2 3 4
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened ..............................................................................1 2 3 4
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape ..........................................................1 2 3 4
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people ........................................................................1 2 3 4
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it ....................................................1 2 3 4
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive .......................................1 2 3 4
13. I've been criticizing myself ..................................................................................................................1 2 3 4
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do ............................................................1 2 3 4
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone ............................................................1 2 3 4
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope ..............................................................................................1 2 3 4
17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening ..............................................................1 2 3 4
18. I've been making jokes about it ............................................................................................................1 2 3 4
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping ...........................................................................................................1 2 3 4
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened .........................................................1 2 3 4
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings ...........................................................................................1 2 3 4
22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs .....................................................1 2 3 4
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do .........................................1 2 3 4
24. I've been learning to live with it ............................................................................................................1 2 3 4
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take........................1 2 3 4
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened........................1 2 3 4
27. I've been praying or meditating..................................................1 2 3 4
28. I've been making fun of the situation...........................................1 2 3 4
Classroom Management Profile

Answer these 12 questions and learn more about your classroom management profile. The steps are simple:

* Read each statement carefully.
* Respond to each statement based upon either actual or imagined classroom experience.

1. = Strongly Disagree
2. = Disagree
3. = Neutral
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly Agree

1. If a student is disruptive during class, I assign him/her to detention, without further discussion.................................1 2 3 4 5

2. I don't want to impose any rules on my students.........................1 2 3 4 5

3. The classroom must be quiet in order for students to learn.............1 2 3 4 5

4. I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn.................................................................1 2 3 4 5

5. If a student turns in a late homework assignment, it is not my problem.................................................................1 2 3 4 5

6. I don't want to reprimand a student because it might hurt his/her feelings.................................................................1 2 3 4 5

7. Class preparation isn't worth the effort........................................1 2 3 4 5

8. I always try to explain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.................................................................1 2 3 4 5
9. I will not accept excuses from a student who is tardy.............1 2 3 4 5

10. The emotional well-being of my students is more important
    than classroom control..............................................1 2 3 4 5

11. My students understand that they can interrupt my lecture if
    they have a relevant question.................................1 2 3 4 5

12. If a student requests a hall pass, I always honor the request........1 2 3 4 5