



# Teaching and Balance: Emotional Labour, Stress, and Stress Management Techniques in the Eastern Galilee

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## Author's contribution

The author designed the study, analyzed and interpreted the data, and prepared the manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

Teaching is an emotional profession that requires delicate balances. This study aims to explore the ways in which teachers in the Eastern Galilee (Israel's northern periphery) cope with stress. Our main purpose is to examine the links between teachers' stress, its sources and consequences, and stress management techniques and their positive or negative effect on stress.

To reveal the associations between these variables, we posited four main hypotheses: 1) there is a positive correlation between stress and the intensity of negative emotions; 2) there is a negative correlation between the level of stress and the ability to cope with it; 3) there is a negative correlation between the intensity of negative emotions and the ability to cope with stress; and 4) there is a negative correlation between seniority and level of stress - that is, the more senior a teacher is, the less stress he or she will feel. To test the above hypotheses, we assessed emotional labour, negative emotion, and stress management techniques in a sample of 100 teachers, using validated self-reporting measures.

The main findings show the following:

- 1) There is a positive correlation between teachers' stress and the fact that they invest the majority of their time, whether at school or at home, in fulfilling their work responsibilities.

Moreover, we found a very strong and significant positive correlation of  $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.724$ , showing that the more a teacher experiences stress, the stronger their negative emotions will be.

- 2) We found a weak negative correlation of  $p > 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.142$  between level of stress and management techniques.
- 3) Over time, negative emotions can affect the manner in which teachers cope with pressure. This is an important point. Various studies have shown that as a teacher's work becomes more demanding, forcing the teacher to invest their internal emotional resources in order to cope with complex situations, feelings of frustration and discomfort increase, resulting in a heightened sense of stress and impaired functioning.
- 4) Seniority is a very important factor in balancing levels of stress. We found that the more senior a teacher is, the less stress they will experience. Teachers with seniority of one to five years had the highest measure of stress ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $Std = 0.77$ ), whereas the measure of stress among teachers with six to 11 years of seniority ( $M = 2.99$ ,  $Std = 0.53$ ) or those with more than 11 years' seniority ( $M = 2.79$ ,  $Std = 0.63$ ) was lower. This important point fills gaps in research in the field which examines the relationship between seniority and coping techniques.

Surprisingly, there is a discrepancy between the general perception that teaching is a very busy profession with high levels of stress and reports of average-reasonable levels of stress reported by the majority of teachers participating in this study. This does not mean that the profession of teaching does not produce high levels of stress.

However, new thinking may be required to see teaching as a profession which relates to emotional work and, as such, requires more emotional and social support as part of a broader professional and organizational approach.

*Keywords: Stress; emotional labour; teachers; management techniques.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are "emotional acrobats" who use different kinds of emotions, balances and techniques as part of their professional behavior. Teaching requires delicate balances. It is commonly recognized as one of the most stressful occupations in our nation. The consequences of teacher stress include early retirement, long and excessive absences, a high rate of new teachers dropping out during training, and an increase in teachers leaving the profession within their first five years.

Teachers in the eastern Galilee (Israel's northern periphery) often complain about their heavy workload. Complaints heard in the teachers' room often relate to the feeling of being overloaded with duties and responsibilities at work that spill over into home life. Some teachers have trouble balancing work and personal life, experiencing stress and facing complex situations both in and outside of school.

"Emotional labour" is a term that describes occupations in which employees must manage their feelings in order to be successful on the job. Employees in this type of work typically report high levels of job burnout. Teaching is one of the professional groups considered to be at high risk for burnout.

Hochschild [1] was the first to address the idea that labour is not divided between the simple dualism of the manual and the mental, but may, in fact, also incorporate the emotional. Studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional burnout began to appear at the beginning of this century (Budnik, [2]; Duran, Extremera & Rey [3]; Chan [4]). "Emotional labour" is used to describe the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with the requirements, defined rules and guidelines of their profession. Teaching involves working with a high emotional component, and therefore requires effective self-management of feelings (Hochschild).

Several studies suggest that managing emotions comes at a personal cost. Insights into organizational theory emphasize the importance of emotional labour in a professional context. In addition to developing pedagogical techniques, teachers are asked to find the balance between emotions and professional detachment. This requires employees to feel certain emotions - or at least act as if they indeed feel them - during their working interactions. Research indicates that the phenomenon of emotional dissonance (i.e. the discrepancy between inner feelings and outer emotional expression) presents symptoms

that indicate the approach of emotional exhaustion.

Bolton and Boyd [5] showed that the original concept of emotional labour needs to be considered in the integration of emotions and public sector work. This is an essential part of the development of our understanding of emotional involvement at work among teachers, because it is linked to the changes involved in expanding the teacher's role. It follows that managing emotions is essential. Due to the fact that this has not yet been identified as one of the integral elements affecting the quality of teaching, there is a notable disconnect between studies of teacher burnout and studies of teacher emotion. Furthermore, we have identified a need to deepen research on the impact of seniority on stress as a professional experience. There is similar need for further studies on how teachers balance emotional work, stress and coping techniques.

This article aims to shed additional light on the complex subject of teachers balancing emotional labour, stress and stress management techniques. It analyzes these issues in a specific geographical area, where teachers are exposed to both professional emotional labour and external stress emanating from military conflicts, ethnic unrest and additional factors associated with living in Israel's northern periphery.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

In this study, we focus on the connections between teachers' emotional labour, their feeling of stress and their techniques for coping with it. The key dimensions of this stress are "an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (Maslach et al. [6]). These facts contrast with the hypothesis that a teacher's career usually starts with enthusiasm and a sense of idealism. After several years, the teaching profession becomes a very stressful occupation, and many teachers suffer from physical and emotional health problems (Kyriacou [7]). These problems negatively affect their capacity to teach and their ability to function in the school environment (Travers & Cooper [8]). Aremu and Akpochafo [9] pointed out that without real commitment from teachers, schools cannot achieve their goals. Furthermore, a stressed teacher is a person who would have difficulty dealing with the multitude of tasks required for the heterogeneous classroom

instruction of 30 students. Bearing all of this in mind, it is worthwhile to study the subject of work-related stress among teachers, in order to find ways of reducing the negative effects on students, classrooms, schools, and the teachers themselves.

Several studies have suggested that there is a connection between teacher seniority (professional experience) and occupational malaise. On the other hand, recent studies suggest that there is an important consensus on the positive covariance between stress and burnout in relation to professional experience, although empirical evidence is less consistent. Most studies conclude that seniority is a 'protective' factor against occupational malaise. (Lopez, et al. [10]).

The conclusion of a recent study (Kourmoussi & Alexopoulos [11]) suggests that stress factors and manifestations vary among educators by gender, seniority, and teaching level. Training in coping and communication skills, starting in teachers' undergraduate studies, might have a major impact on their ability to alleviate stress. In our opinion, there is room for expanding research in this area.

The complex hardships faced by teachers beyond the professional context, and the different causes and effects of stress, must be examined from different angles in order to understand the phenomenon of teacher stress. In addition, teachers' techniques for coping and managing stress must be examined in order to see which ones work best. We have thus chosen to carry out a study to investigate the micro issue of emotional labour firsthand, using the specific instance of stress among teachers in the eastern Galilee in northern Israel.

### **2.1 Work Stress among Teachers**

Teacher stress is defined as any factor within the school environment that poses a threat to the teacher. Work stress can be understood as the harmful physical and emotional effects that can be observed when requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. In situations such as these, stress can result in health problems (Rehman [12]). Teacher stress specifically is defined as the experience of negative and unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, depression or rage - emotions that are consequences of certain aspects of their work (Kyriacou).

## **2.2 Sources of Work Stress for Teachers**

Various studies examine the following sources of work stress in teachers' emotional labour: a heavy workload and time pressure, education reform, external school reviews, the pursuit of higher education, and managing the learning and behavior of students (Chan, Chen, & Chong [13]). In addition, certain studies also report a lack of administrative and parental support and overloaded classrooms as sources of teacher stress (Richards [14]). As a result of this work stress, there can be a significant drop in teachers' ability to function properly, along with a resultant decrease in work performance.

## **2.3 Emotional Labour as a Source of Stress for Teachers**

Teachers' work stress can seriously affect their health, as well as having a negative impact on students and the learning environment. It is also suggested that teachers' stress problems can lead to higher teaching costs for schools (Chan, Chen, & Chong). There is a relationship between stress among teachers and absenteeism, turnover and early retirement; this in turn has a negative effect on the school climate, resulting in poor academic and student behavior outcomes (Kipps-Vaughan [15]). In this way, teachers' work stress affects not only teachers, but also students and the school as a whole. Due to the fact that teacher stress affects so many areas, it is crucial to investigate ways to help teachers cope with pressure at work.

Teaching is a vocation that includes emotional elements and capabilities (Hochschild).

Ample evidence suggests that teachers' psychological experiences in their first year of practice are especially difficult and might lead to a high level of attrition. According to Ogbonna and Harris [16] and Ybema and Smulders [17]: "...teaching usually comprises face to face interaction with students. In order to teach well, teachers must draw students' attention, motivate their students and ensure the orderly conduct of classes. Most of these teaching aspects require that teachers show certain emotions and suppress others" (cited in Vlerick & Van de Ven, [18]). Teachers themselves reported that faking emotions is stressful. It means that they cannot freely express their naturally-occurring emotions, but rather need to channel their emotions, modify them and at times feign emotions that they do not experience at all. Evidence has been found

of a link between emotional labour and emotional exhaustion (Ogbonna & Harris). Such findings are in line with the more general idea that emotional job demands can lead to burnout (Maslach [19]).

Studies show that teachers' emotional states also affect the intra-organizational relationships that exist among them, their colleagues, and the school administration. School reforms may help with this problem. Stress-management educational programs for teachers should be conducted by specialized trainers, and should include follow-up and long-term evaluation, so that the impact can be maintained over an extended period of time.

Teachers regularly deal with situations involving emotions, and it is very important to develop and nurture their emotional abilities (Kremenitzer & Miller [20]). Emotions are integral to the work of the teacher, and have an impact on behavior and motivation, as well as an effect on the efficiency of teaching, (Sutton & Wheatley [21]). Insights into organizational theory emphasize the importance of emotional labour in a professional context. In addition to developing playing techniques, teachers are asked to integrate the balance between emotions and professional indifference. Bolton and Boyd showed that the original concept of emotional labour needs consideration regarding the integration of emotions and public-sector work. This is an essential part of the development of our understanding of emotional involvement at work among teachers, because it is linked to changes involved in expanding the role of teachers. It follows that managing emotions is essential.

## **2.4 Teachers' Stress-Management Techniques**

Teachers use a variety of stress-management techniques. Studies have found that these activities include sleeping, talking to neighbors and friends, relaxing and watching television, exercise, and sports (Chan, Chen, & Chong). Additional studies have found management techniques to include talking to good friends and family, the use of humor in challenging situations, a positive attitude, seeking periods of solitude, and exercising (Richards). Coping techniques are clearly an important factor to consider when it comes to teacher stress.

The question of control is also relevant: The conditions that lead to teacher stress are often

outside of the teachers' control (ibid.). For example, teachers have no control over the number of students placed in their classes. However, they do have the power to choose the coping techniques that suit them best, and to take advantage of the experience and suggestions of other teachers who are managing work stress (ibid.). Common positive techniques that teachers use to alleviate stress include exercise, social resources, avoidance, reading, hobbies, movement, and meditation (Gulwadi [22]).

Finding effective ways to handle stress can allow teachers to maintain their drive and commitment, thus helping them continue to put forth the effort needed for being involved, satisfied, and effective teachers. A proper response to stress via stress-management techniques and healthy coping mechanisms keeps teachers actively involved in what they are trying to accomplish, and allows them to fully invest themselves in their students.

## 2.5 Research Design

This research utilized a correlational study design using a survey tool.

## 2.6 Participants

100 teachers responded (out of a population of 300 teachers that received the questionnaire). 75 were women and 20 men; five did not report their gender. The majority of the respondents (52%) teach at elementary schools and 48% in high schools. Their average age is 42. This matches the average age of Israeli teachers, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2015 [23]). Most of them (69%) are senior teachers working 11 years and more in the profession.

## 2.7 Sampling Method

Sampling was conducted in three stages. Stage 1: Three cities in the eastern Galilee were chosen (due to geographical proximity to the college which had trained them to become teachers). Stage 2: Random sampling was carried out in two elementary schools in each city. Stage 3: A convenience sample of 100 teachers was selected from six schools in three cities (only those who chose to answer the survey). Therefore, from a sample of 100 subjects, we needed to identify the power of the statistical test (itself) and its 82% significance.

## 2.8 Research Tools and Procedure

We used a comprehensive, validated survey (Richards), distributed by Google Drive to six different elementary schools in the eastern Galilee. The survey had 40 questions in six sections, as follows:

1. A questionnaire composed of eight demographic questions (state, grade taught, age, years of teaching, gender, ethnicity, ethnicity of students in school and socioeconomic status [SES] of school, defined according to the following levels: low, medium, and high).
2. A survey of stress: To assess participants' stress levels, we used the Teacher Stress Questionnaire (Friedman & Kass [24]), with 16 questions that were ranked on a five-point Likert scale. Reported internal validity is 80 (Richards).
3. A survey of negative emotions and causes of stress: The survey had 10 questions regarding causes and manifestations of teacher stress, adapted from the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI; Fimian [25]; Fimian and Fasteneau [26]).
4. A survey of coping techniques for dealing with emotional discomfort: The survey had 14 questions, based on "emotion-focused management techniques" (Trenberth, Dewe, and Walkey [27]).
5. A survey of management techniques: A validated questionnaire, based on the Management Techniques Scale for Adults (Fredenberg & Lewis [28]), was used to define stress management techniques.
6. An open section for teachers' comments was added.

We received online answers and carried out statistical tests, including the Pearson variance test and ANOVA, in order to support or refute our questions and hypotheses. This approach was adopted in an attempt to demonstrate statistical significance.

## 3. RESULTS

The current study examines the connections between factors with positive and negative associations to teacher stresses: Sources of stress, the consequences of this stress, and common stress management techniques. The findings demonstrate teacher balances among these variables.

All of the stressors in the survey questions received a relatively low score (less than 3) in the teachers' assessments. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the participants (69%) are senior teachers working 11 years or more. Hence, seniority has a positive impact on the professional ability of the teacher to cope qualitatively and more effectively with stress.

In order to predict which of the variables (the index of stressors, age, years of seniority at work, gender, socioeconomic status of the school and religious affiliation) has a significant effect on negative emotions, linear regression was performed using the Enter method. We found that the regression is significant:  $F(11,78) = 10.37, p < 0.001$ , and the percentage of variance explained by these variables is 59.4%.

We found a significant correlation between the stress factors index and the other independent variables. An increase in one standardized unit in the stress factors index increases negative emotions by 0.825 standardized units.

It was found that there is a significant effect of gender on negative emotions under the supervision of the other independent variables. Negative feelings of women are lower by 0.206 units than those of men. No significant effects of the other variables were found, suggesting significant gender implications in examining the results and findings. The findings illustrate the main sources of stress, the consequences of work stress, and stress management techniques of female teachers in this area.

We can consider gender to be a factor in the perception of work stress. However, while some studies reveal a gender difference in the perception of stress factors, and report that female teachers experience more stress than their male counterparts (Mantei [29]; Ravichandran & Rajendran [30]), others do not find gender difference in the level of perceived stress (Chan, Chen, & Chong). The current research examines teaching as a profession characterized by emotional labour, without gender differences.

**Table 1. Summary of answers (subscale score of stress variables)**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
Sources of stress	99	1.44	4.56	2.87	.65
Emotional factors	97	1.00	4.00	2.04	.76
Stress management techniques	97	1.29	4.15	2.75	.50
Valid N (listwise)	97				

**Table 2. Linear regression coefficients for predicting negative emotions**

	<b>Negative emotions</b>	
Average	(0.76)	2.04
	<b>P</b>	<b>β (SE)</b>
Sources of stress	<0.001	0.825 (0.092)
<b>Age (Ratio category: 50+)</b>		
Up to 30	0.863	0.017 (0.229)
31-40	0.909	-0.013 (0.226)
41-50	0.118	0.136 (0.146)
<b>Years of Seniority (Ratio category: 11 years and over)</b>		
1-5	0.429	-0.081 (0.199)
6-10	0.844	-0.018 (0.249)
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	<0.050	-0.206 (0.158)
<b>Socioeconomic Status (Ratio category: medium)</b>		
Low	0.961	0.004 (0.172)
High	0.847	-0.016 (0.155)
<b>Religious affiliation (Relationship category): Secular</b>		
Religious	0.530	0.057 (0.156)
Traditional	0.532	0.049 (0.168)

As seen from the data collected, having 'good friends and family' as social support is the primary management technique. Having a 'positive attitude' as a tool of thinking, 'no matter what is going on,' is in second place as a management technique. These factors relate to teachers' self-efficacy: a high level of self-efficacy plays an important role in the relationship between teacher stress and job performance. It seems to provide the teacher with strength to face the challenges at work. The lowest ranked strategies are eating healthy food, getting adequate sleep, and maintaining a healthy weight.

These answers in the teacher reports imply that a supportive social environment combined with positive thinking is the best way to cope with stress as a factor in the emotional labour of teaching. As mentioned above, this coping technique also appears to be dominant in the research literature.

### 3.1 Hypothesis Testing

#### 3.1.1 First hypothesis

There is a positive correlation between levels of stress and negative emotions.

To examine the connection between the measure of stress (statements 1-16) and the measure of emotions (statements 17-26), a Pearson test was conducted. According to the test, a very strong and significant positive correlation was found:  $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.724$ , showing

that the more a teacher experiences stress, the stronger their negative emotions will be.

#### 3.1.2 Second hypothesis

There is a negative correlation between increased stress levels and decreased ability to cope with it.

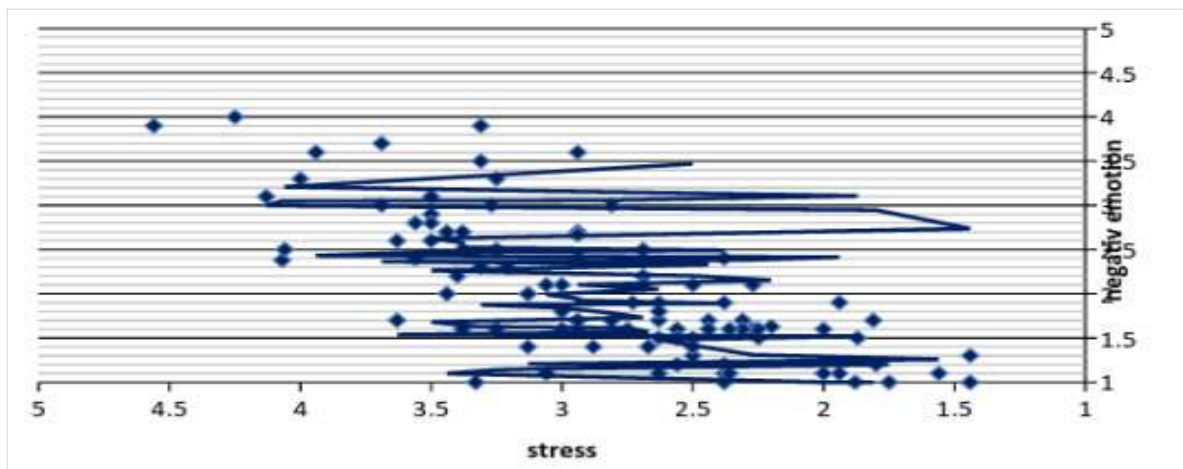
To examine the relationship between the measure of stress (statements 1-16) and the types of stress management techniques (statements 27-40), a Pearson test was conducted. According to the test, a weak significant negative correlation was found:  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.214$ , so that the more stress a teacher experiences, the less effective their manner of management will be. The hypothesis was supported.

#### 3.1.3 Third hypothesis

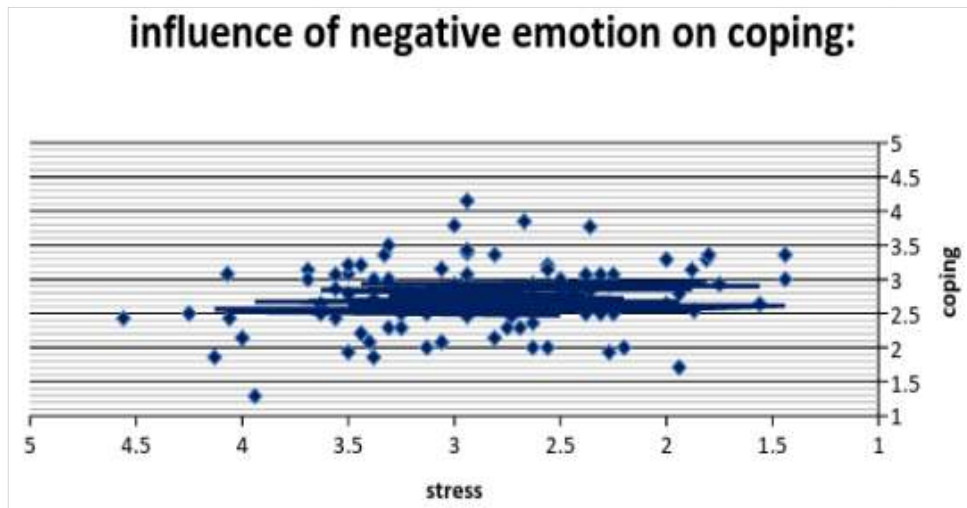
We expect a negative association between negative emotions and the engagement level of management techniques.

To examine the relationship between the measure of emotions (statements 17-26) and the manner of stress management techniques (statements 27-40), a Pearson test was conducted. According to the test, a weak and insignificant correlation was found:  $p > 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.142$ . Thus, negative emotions had no significant influence on the manner of coping and management techniques. The results did not support this hypothesis.

**Influence of stress on negative emotions**



**Fig. 1. Correlations between stress and negative emotions (n=100)**  
*The hypothesis was reinforced. Thus, levels of stress cause an increase in negative emotions*



**Fig. 2. Correlation between negative emotions and management techniques**  
*The assumption was not reinforced*

### **3.1.4 Fourth hypothesis**

There is a correlation between seniority and stress levels, such that the more senior a teacher is, the less stress they will experience.

To examine the differences among teachers with varying degrees of seniority as a measure of stress (statements 1-16), an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The findings were that among teachers with seniority of one to five years, the measure of stress was the highest ( $M=3.03$ ,  $Std=0.77$ ), whereas the measure of stress among teachers with six to 11 years of seniority ( $M=2.99$ ,  $Std=0.53$ ) or among teachers with more than 11 years' seniority ( $M=2.79$ ,  $Std=0.63$ ) was lower. In other words, among teachers with more seniority, the stress measure was less. Nevertheless, the Analysis of Variance showed no significant finding of differences:  $p>0.05$ ,  $F(2,95)=1.24$ .

The hypothesis was not supported. This test demonstrates that seniority may have an impact on stress levels, but stress has no influence on teachers' emotions and the manner in which they cope with it.

To summarize the four different hypothetical tests, we can clearly see that teaching is an emotional profession influenced by levels of stress. In the tests we conducted, the power in the first hypothesis was 1; the second hypothesis, 0.964; third hypothesis, 0.833; and fourth hypothesis, 0.704.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

Various studies indicate that teachers are asked to achieve a balance between emotions and professional indifference. Emotions are integral to the work of the teacher, and impact their behavior and motivation. As described in the theoretical background, stress affects a teacher's performance at school, and ultimately, their students as well.

In this study, several themes emerging from the theoretical background and data relate to the participants' experience with stress in school. These themes include heavy workload as a cause of stress; and negative, positive, and neutral techniques for coping with stress. We explored themes and various subthemes to gain a more in-depth view of the participants' experiences of stress, and how it affects teachers' ability to maintain balance in this complicated profession.

We aimed to explore the ways in which teachers in the eastern Galilee (Israel's northern periphery) cope with stress. Our main purpose was to examine the links between teachers' emotional labour, consequences of stress (and its sources), and management techniques and their effect.

The theoretical background describes the following factors as sources of work stress in teachers' emotional labour: a heavy workload and time pressure, education reforms, external



school reviews, the pursuit of higher education, and managing the learning and behavior of students.

The teachers who participated in this research feel that they are overloaded with duties and responsibilities at work, which spill over into their home life. Some have trouble balancing their work and personal life. Stress affects their performance at school, and ultimately, their students as well.

As we expected, the main findings of this study show that there is a link between the stress teachers feel and the fact that they invest most of their time, whether at school or at home, in fulfilling their work responsibilities. In this area, we received partial confirmation of the hypothesis that stress has an effect on the negative emotions of these teachers, which, over time, can affect how they cope with pressure.

While teachers' stress is caused by factors beyond their control, the responses to this stress are within their control. Reports from the teachers describe various stress management techniques. The most important technique mentioned is the support of good friends and family, other teachers, and school management. This gives teachers strength in times of stress and increases their self-efficacy. A high level of self-efficacy plays an important role in the relationship between teacher stress and job performance; it seems to provide the teacher with strength to face challenges at work. We can clearly see that teaching is an emotional profession, influenced by levels of stress. In this sense, our findings are in conformity with the theoretical background.

Surprisingly, there is a discrepancy between the general perception that teaching is a very busy profession with high levels of stress, and the average-reasonable levels of stress reported by the majority of teachers participating in this study. According to the findings, all of the stressors in the survey questions received a relatively low score (less than 3) in the teachers' assessments. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the participants in this study (69%) are senior teachers working 11 years and more. One of the important findings points to a significant correlation between seniority and decline in levels of stress.

We found that seniority has a balancing effect on the manner in which teachers cope with stress, such that the more senior a teacher is, the less

stress they will experience. Teachers with seniority of one to five years will experience a higher measure of stress ( $M=3.03$ ,  $Std=0.77$ ). We found that the more senior a teacher is, the better their ability to cope with stress and manage negative feelings in a more balanced way. This means that negative emotions have no significant influence on the manner of coping among senior teachers. In this area, the study is in need of further expansion, as the research base is small.

Most of our findings correspond to the research literature in this field. We believe that there is room to expand the observation of the relationship between seniority and balancing stress.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Teachers are "emotional acrobats" who use different kinds of emotions, balances and techniques as part of their professional behavior. Teaching is a stressful profession that requires emotional labour techniques and a delicate balance of various professional demands, stress and emotions. A teacher must be an emotional acrobat in order to manage and balance different emotions.

In our study, we demonstrate that stress has an influence on teachers' emotions and the manner in which they cope with it. The more a teacher experiences stress, the stronger their negative emotions will be. We found that teachers use different techniques to balance stress, including meetings with good friends and family, and consultation with colleagues. In other words, they create their own emotional balance-support framework.

One of the interesting findings illuminating the subject from a relatively new angle is the relationship between seniority, better coping techniques and managing stress. Seniority has positive significance in the professional ability of teachers to cope qualitatively and more effectively with stress. Seniority plays an important role here as a balancing factor: the more senior the teacher, the stronger their ability to cope with stress and manage negative feelings in a balanced way. This means that negative emotions have no significant influence on the manner of coping among senior teachers.

This study sought to describe the delicate balances between emotional labour and stress,

and the way in which teachers cope with them. It is important to listen to the aspirations and unique needs of teachers in order to improve training, support, and the infrastructure of the educational system, so as to enable a higher quality of teaching by reducing stress levels among teachers. We believe that in light of the conclusions, it is important to expand the study in this field.

## 6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In using a convenience, non-random sample of primary school teachers, specific generalizations cannot be made about the total population, because this sample is not representative of all school teachers, sectors or religions in all of northern Israel.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, there is an opportunity to increase the existing literature on teacher stress and management techniques - the most frequent causes of stress - and the coping behaviors used by teachers. Deeper reflection is needed regarding the approach which sees teaching as an emotional work profession which, as such, requires more emotional and social support as part of a broader professional approach.

It is important to expand the research on the relationship between seniority and the teacher's professional ability to cope qualitatively and more effectively with stress. Furthermore, in light of the findings of this study and the data in the field, we believe that there is room to expand the academic and research work by establishing institutional and organizational mechanisms that can help teachers deal effectively with stress - especially new teachers in their first years of employment.

## 8. OPERATIONAL PROPOSALS FOR ACHIEVING IMPROVEMENT

The educational system should be a central place that relates to the emotional aspects of teaching. The following suggestions are aimed at helping teachers achieve more effective balance in their emotional work:

- Teachers should be given legitimacy and a place to recognize and explore their

various emotions. Daily expression of emotion should be enabled, with a response from a therapist or other trained individual, so that stress and negative emotions can be handled and will not cause damage. The organization should create mechanisms that support teachers so they are not left alone with feelings of stress.

- Administrators should be aware of the effect of emotion on functioning in the workplace and on emotional well-being. Therefore, it is very important to develop and implement organizational tools for coping with stress.
- Building a network of professional, emotional and intra-organizational support will enhance teachers' emotional resources and increase their willingness to contribute voluntarily toward realization of the school's goals beyond the formal definition of their position.
- Teacher-training institutions, colleges and professional development courses should provide training aimed at coping skillfully with the teaching profession as emotional work.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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## APPENDIX

The Questionnaire: From Richards J. (2012) Teacher Stress and Management Techniques: A National Snapshot. The Educational Forum. 2012;76(3):299-316.

Teacher Stress and Management Techniques Survey Demographic Questions:

1. Grade level taught (K-5; 6-8; 9-12).
2. Age (under 30; 31-40; 41-50; over 50).
3. Years of teaching experience (1-5; 6-10; 11+).
4. Gender (M, F) 5. Socio-economic status (SES) of your school (Low, Middle, High).
6. Your ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, Asian, White, Other).
7. Ethnicity of student population (most are African American, Hispanic, Asian, White, Other).
8. State where you teach

Sources of Stress and Time Management Questions:

1. I feel overcommitted at work with too many duties and responsibilities. I often take work home.
2. I have little time to relax.
3. I have a hard time balancing my work life with my personal life.
4. I don't have enough time to prepare lessons.

Work-Related Questions:

5. The testing and pacing pressure is stressful for me.
6. Dealing with parents is stressful.
7. My class size is too large.
8. Teaching needy students without enough support is stressful.

Professional Stress Questions:

9. I feel a lack of control over school decisions that affect my students and me.
10. My personal opinion as a teacher does not count much.
11. I do not feel respected by those outside my profession.
12. Feeling the constant pressure of being "accountable" is stressful.
13. I often feel isolated and do not feel "safe" to speak my mind with colleagues or administrators.

Please rate each behavior or attitude from 1-5. 1 means seldom or never. 5 means often or always. Your responses will remain anonymous, and you can stop taking this survey at any time. Submitting your survey constitutes your consent at a participant. Thanks so much for your help on this important topic.

14. Discipline/student behavior problems cause daily frustration.
15. Teaching students who do not seem motivated to learn is stressful.
16. I don't feel that I have the administrative support that I need.

Manifestations of Stress, Emotional /Physical Reactions to Stress:

17. I feel vulnerable, unable to cope, anxious, or depressed.
18. I have insomnia because of school stress.
19. I feel generally irritated and impatient with students.
20. I find myself withdrawing from others.
21. I feel overwhelmed with what is expected of me as a teacher and have doubts about my ability to make a difference in students' lives.
22. I worry a lot about my job security.
23. Job stress has negatively affected personal relationships in my life.
24. I am not as idealistic and enthusiastic about teaching as I once was.

- 25. I suffer from frequent headaches, stomach pain, and/or high blood pressure.
- 26. I feel physically exhausted much of the time.

Management Behavior:

- 27. I take a day off when the stress really gets to me!
- 28. I tend to procrastinate when my stress level is high.
- 29. I take over-the-counter or prescription drugs that help me feel better.
- 30. I drink alcohol to feel calmer.
- 31. I exercise at least 30 minutes a day (walking, biking, going to the gym, etc.).
- 32. I have good friends and family who are there for me.
- 33. I seek social support when I feel particularly stressed with school issues.
- 34. I regularly use prayer or meditation to help me feel peaceful.
- 35. Times of solitude help me cope with stress at school.
- 36. I make time to enjoy a hobby—even when I am busy with school.
- 37. I make it a point to eat healthy food, get adequate sleep, and maintain a healthy weight.
- 38. I see stress as a problem to be solved, and I believe that I can succeed.
- 39. I tend to have a positive attitude no matter what is going on.
- 40. I have a good sense of humor that carries me through challenges.

Please add any further comments on what causes you the most stress, as well as your techniques for management techniques with stress.

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