



# Cognitive Appraisal as a Mediating Effect between Stress Coping Strategies towards Adaptation to Stress and Psychological Well-Being among Chinese University Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The job of university teachers often brings intensive and challenging situations and the demands of such a working environment requires the teachers to rely on various stress coping mechanism to face these challenging situations. Therefore, the present study evaluates the extent to which cognitive appraisal mediates the correlation between the stress-coping strategies of these teachers and their impact on their psychological well-being. The present study explores the mediating effect of cognitive appraisal between stress-coping strategies towards adaptation to stress and psychological well-being among Chinese university teachers.

**Methods:** The present study focuses on the population of university teachers in China and collected data through a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed using items from the literature.

**Findings:** The results indicated positive and significant impacts of co-regulation and self-regulation on psychological well-being and adaptation to stress. In addition, the study supported the mediating role of coping potential and threat perception.

**Conclusion and Implications:** The study provided insights into how both individual and interpersonal factors contribute to enhancing stress adaptation and psychological health of university teachers and adds value to the existing literature. In addition, the practical implications of the study recommend effective strategies for enhancing the well-being of teachers. Policymakers and educational institutions can benefit from the findings to foster positive work environments and support the psychological well-being of teachers.

**Keywords:** Cognitive appraisal, Stress-coping strategies, Adaptation to stress, Psychological well-being

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Among Chinese university professors, cognitive appraisal mediates the relationship between stress coping techniques and psychological well-being. Colleges and universities throughout the world have had significant rates of faculty turnover, and attracting and maintaining important faculty members has been a persistent issue for higher education institutions. Job stress and job happiness are consistent determinants of teachers' perseverance in their institutions (Liu et al., 2023).

The qualities of the stressful circumstance as well as those of the individual impact stress exchanges.

This study evaluated the associations connecting poignant work stress, teaching support, and well-being in university instructors, as well as the mediating role of emotional regulation methods in the job demands-resources affiliation. University professors in the mainland Emotional job demands and instructional support in China encouraged instructors to utilise reappraisal strategies, were found to have positive benefits on their well-being. Teachers' well-being benefited from reappraisal, whereas suppression was detrimental (Han et al., 2020). This research examines how mindfulness may lead to a greater sense of energy and aliveness (subjective vitality) during stressful times. Specifically, it looks at perceived stress level and three coping techniques (suppressing emotions, reinterpreting situations, taking direct action) as potential intermediary factors affecting the connection between mindfulness and vitality under stress. Overall, the results indicate that mindfulness can aid vitality in stressful contexts by reducing perceived stress and promoting helpful coping responses when challenges arise. (Wu & Buchanan, 2019).

Adolescent mental health has been demonstrated to improve with teacher help. However, the effects of negative emotions and resilience on the relationship between teacher support and adolescent mental health remain unknown (Azpiazu Izaguirre et al., 2021). This research investigated three areas related to teacher support, negative emotions, resilience, and mental well-being. First, it looked at whether negative emotions and resilience sequentially mediate the link between teacher support and well-being. Second, it examined if resilience in parallel mediate this relationship. Finally, it tested if negative emotions alone act as intermediaries between teacher support and mental well-being. Overall, the aim was to gain greater insight into the interplay between these key factors and how they impact student wellness (Batool et al., 2022). These findings point to a mechanism by which negative emotions can reduce

resilience, as well as the ways in which negative emotions (specifically, the three negative emotion aspects) and resilience (specifically, the five resilience factors) mediate the relationship between adolescent mental health and teacher support. (Guo et al., 2020).

## **2. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of Stress and Coping**

In 1984, Lazarus and Folkman put forward the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. This model proposes that the interactions, or "transactions" between a person and their environment determine how well that individual can manage and respond to difficulties. They found stress levels tie directly to how able someone feels to handle a threat. Lazarus and Folkman state our perception or reaction to a situation can often impact our stress more than the event itself. To help individuals regulate stress, they devised a framework utilizing coping methods and objective appraisal. This system for managing stressful situations is called the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. The coping skills used affect how well someone handles the stressor. According to Lazarus and Folkman, dealing with a stressful circumstance involves two components: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping refers to purposeful actions taken to address the situation. Emotion-focused coping relates to how one regulates emotions when under tension.

The suggested study is consistent with the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman. This theory highlights the function of cognitive evaluation in the stress-coping process, implying that people evaluate stressors and pick coping methods based on their perceptions and appraisals. This theory can give a solid foundation for studying how cognitive appraisal regulates the link between stress coping methods, stress adaption, and psychological well-being among Chinese university professors in your environment.

This research will begin with the sections listed below; Section 2 begins with a thorough assessment of previously published material. The next part will go over our study design and data gathering processes. Following that, we will provide our empirical data in the Findings section and critically assess it in the Discussion section. Theoretical contributions will be examined for the study, as well as practical ramifications.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study examined the psychological discomfort, life satisfaction, and reported stress of teachers in Ecuador. This study looked at psychological variables such stress coping

mechanisms, stress adoption, psychological well-being, and cognitive evaluation in an effort to predict suicide conduct in Chinese university professors. The study included the prevailing patterns and psychological underpinnings of university instructors' dissatisfaction, which might be helpful to legislators, administrators, and teachers in formulating institutional policies and choices. We investigate certain implausible consequences in further detail.

### **3.1. Stress Coping strategies and Adaptation to Stress**

An examination of stress in teacher education students aimed to describe various levels of stress and coping strategies, explore the connection between stress, coping strategies, and academic achievement, and ascertain whether growing older can lessen the impact of stress on academic achievement. University teachers are subject to stress, and how they manage it impacts their academic performance (Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019). A study discovered that instructional obstacles, psychological confront, socio-religious problems, and All of the institutional difficulties showed a statistically significant relationship with distant learners' coping strategies and educational performance. Coping methods were also shown to have a statistically significant link with academic production. Problem-focused, emotion-focused, preventative, and positive coping techniques were the four most successful coping strategies observed among distance learners (Segbenya & Anokye, 2023).

All psychological components were strongly associated with age, females had greater levels of felt tension, and teachers with home care tasks reported higher degrees of psychological pain as well as perceived stress. Instructors who had previously received online teaching training and experience reported feeling less stressed and more comfortable in their lives. The most regularly used coping techniques were going out and getting social support, working out, and having fun (Hidalgo-Andrade et al., 2021). One of the most imperative discoveries is that the relationship between EI and burnout is mediated by a single JST mediator as well as both sequential mediators of SA-JST and DA-JST. It show that active coping and seeking assistance relieve the unwanted phenomena of burnout caused by emotional labour stress, but avoidant coping has no meaningful moderating impact (Choi et al., 2019).

***H<sub>1</sub>: Self-regulation is positively related to stress adaptation.***

***H<sub>2</sub>: Co-regulation is positively related to stress adaptation.***

### 3.2. Stress Coping strategies and psychological well-being

Job circumstances and personal resources, The job demands-resource model states that are important markers of employee engagement at work. The goal of the study was to examine how teachers' coping strategies mediated the association between psychological capital and burnout in teachers and the relationship between occupational stress and burnout in teachers. The outcome of the variable modelling process indicated that occupational stress is a risk factor and psychological capital has a protective effect in teacher burnout (b) a positive coping style plays an important role in mediating the connection flanked by psychological capital and teacher burnout (c) (d) The connection between occupational stress and teacher burnout is significantly mediated by a negative coping style. The relationship between occupational stress and teacher burnout is only significantly mediated by a positive coping style (Zhang et al., 2019). Notably, having a purpose in life both prevented suicide and served as a protective factor. This suggests that, in order to maximise the efficacy of counselling and suicide prevention programmes, it is essential to identify risk and protective factors pertinent to the target population group (Lew et al., 2019).

Based on outcome analysis, it was shown that nursing students had a low degree of resilience, high levels of stress, and some poor psychological health. There was a clear relationship between stress, resilience, and wellbeing. It has been demonstrated that resilience and reduced stress are better indicators of wellbeing. Every study cited recommendations for influencing educational policy and practise on the stress, resilience, and overall well-being of undergraduate nursing students (Li & Hasson, 2020). A study examined the role of psychological well-being (PWB) and emotion control as drivers of work engagement using a sample of 255 Iranian and 108 British English language instructors. Measurement invariance, including metric and scalar invariance, was found in the data, suggesting that the theoretical frameworks underpinning the three scales were the same for the two groups (British and Iranian). In addition, it was demonstrated that PWB and emotion management were significant indicators of work engagement across the board for Iranian and British educators. (Greenier et al., 2021).

Examine student symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as the factors that influence them and their relationships to coping mechanisms, psychological health, and life satisfaction. The data indicate that higher levels of life satisfaction, psychological well-being dimensions, and adaptive coping may offer protection in students during a pandemic crisis.

The numbers also suggest a large frequency of symptoms related to sadness, anxiety, and stress (Lopes & Nihei, 2021).

The study's overall findings showed that people's levels of stress, anxiety, and depression were considerable. These investigations showed a strong and positive correlation between mental health problems and active avoidance, as well as coping strategies based on religion or denial. Conversely, it was demonstrated that problem-focused and constructive coping strategies had no impact on any of the three mental health disorders (Agha, 2021).

***H<sub>3</sub>: Self-regulation is connected with improved levels of psychological well-being.***

***H<sub>4</sub>: Co-regulation is connected with improved levels of psychological well-being.***

### **3.3. Mediation of Cognitive appraisal**

While numerous studies have investigated how challenge and hindrance stressors at work can impact job performance differently, limited research has looked at individual differences in how people cognitively assess stressors—a key component of stress interactions. The link between challenge stressors and perceiving a stressor as a challenge was stronger for those with learning goal orientation and performance-prove goal orientation. Learning goal orientation weakened the relationship between hindrance stressors and appraising a stressor as a hindrance, but performance-prove goal orientation strengthened this relationship (Ma et al., 2021). It is thus believed that changing cognitive evaluations such as poor self-efficacy beliefs will reduce exam anxiety and associated procrastination (Krispenz et al., 2019).

Teacher stress and burnout are linked to a assortment of negative effects for instructors, students, and the educational system. This special issue emphasises teacher stress and coping and aims to more explicitly identify three essential interrelated paths to teacher stress development and management (Herman et al., 2020). The law programme is not far last the conflict of alternative and authenticity since the course causes stress that requires evaluation and coping. A study depicts the assessment progression and the mediation of academic efficacy to coping strategies. Correlational and regression studies showed the straight and entirety favourable effects of stress appraisal on problem-focused and emotion-focused coping rather than avoidance-focused coping. The association between stress perception and problem-focused coping is mediated by academic efficacy (Ochoa, 2020). The purpose of the study was to support the idea that stress level and subjective assessment of one's illness were

related, and that the link between stress and disease perception may be mediated by coping strategies (Poręba-Chabros et al., 2022).

Personality influences susceptibility to emotional symptoms of sadness and anxiety. The purpose of a study was to see if stress mentality (general beliefs regarding the temperament of stress) and coping suppleness (the aptitude to abandon inadequate coping techniques and embrace new ones) moderate the relationships between the Big Five individuality characteristics and psychological discomfort. Challenge-flexibility-enhancement route in which coping flexibility mediated the relationship between a stress-is-a-challenge mentality and a reduced degree of psychological discomfort exclusive of being impacted by traumatic situations (Chen et al., 2022).

***H<sub>5</sub>: The association between self-regulation and stress adaptation among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by coping potential.***

***H<sub>6</sub>: The association between co-regulation and stress adaptation among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by coping potential.***

***H<sub>7</sub>: The association between self-regulation and stress adaptation among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by threat perception.***

***H<sub>8</sub>: The association between co-regulation and stress adaptation among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by threat perception.***

The study aimed to explore the role of coping strategies in the link between self-reported stress and psychological well-being in adults. To identify the direct and indirect associations between the variables of interest, the researchers developed a model that was assessed using path analysis. Stress perception was significantly impacted by a few coping strategies and psychological health. Coping strategies also served as a barrier between psychological health and perceived stress. The results showed that stress may have a significant impact on some people while simultaneously serving as a catalyst for fresh personal development in others. Individuals' perception of stress and the coping mechanisms they employ as a result have an impact on their overall well-being (Şahan & Karademir, 2022). A framework for formulating and assessing theories on the stress response and its effects on both physical and mental health is provided by the stress and coping theory. The framework highlights the role that two processes assessment and coping play as intermediaries in an individual's ongoing interaction with their surroundings (Folkman, 2020).

Numerous psychological and mental health problems have been connected to psychological resilience and coping mechanisms. Establishing successful health promotion programmes focused on resilience intervention to advance students' health and well-being requires evaluating the relationship between resilience and coping style among college students. Psychological resilience and coping strategies have often been investigated in adult patients. An investigation was conducted to examine the connections among psychological resilience, student attributes (gender, major, and grade), and coping strategies among undergraduate students (Wu et al., 2020). Overall, cognitive evaluation is an important aspect in understanding the link between stress coping techniques and psychological well-being, emphasising the significance of cognitive processes in stress management and response.

Subjective well-being (SWB) comprises both a cognitive constituent, such as life contentment, and an emotional module, such as a preference for positive affect over negative effect. Engaging in meaningful objectives and employing good coping strategies are two characteristics that have a significant impact on the development of SWB (Sanjuán & Ávila, 2019). Although the stress-coping literature has long acknowledged the theoretical effect of culture on the coping process, there is still a dearth of empirical research and efforts to pinpoint the precise relationship between culture and coping. Avoidance and Participation Coping) on the relationship between academic stress (AS) and Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and Collective Self-esteem (CSE), two positive psychosocial well-being outcome variables (Kuo et al., 2018).

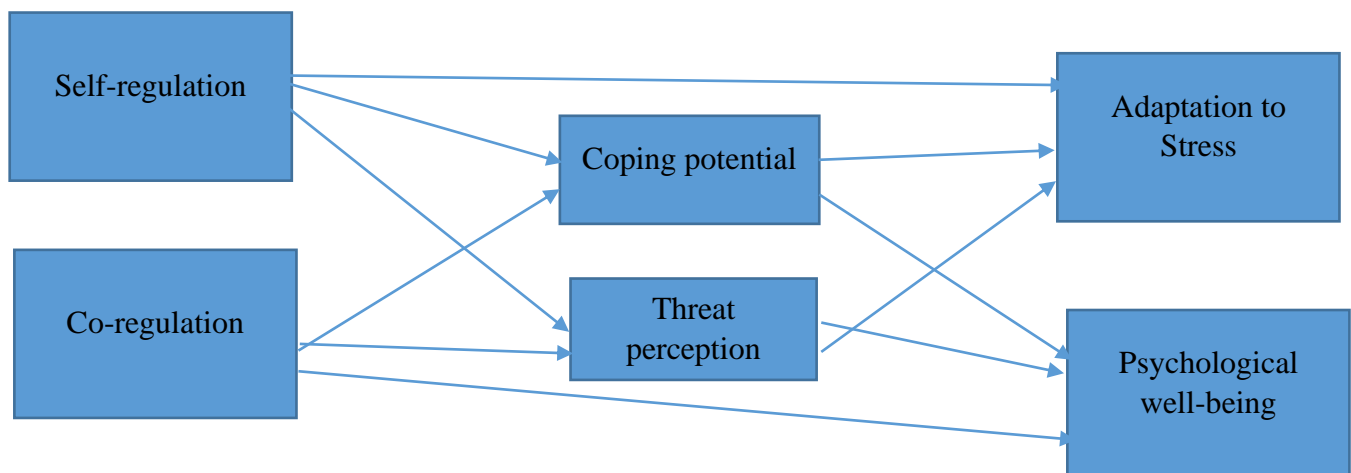
***H<sub>9</sub>: The association between self-regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by coping potential.***

***H<sub>10</sub>: The association between co-regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by coping potential.***

***H<sub>11</sub>: The association between self-regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by threat perception.***

***H<sub>12</sub>: The association between co-regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese university professors is positively mediated by threat perception.***





**Figure 2.1: Model**

The model in figure 2.1 describes that here are two dependent variables Adoption to Stress and Psychological well-being. Stress coping strategies is the independent variable. While Cognitive appraisal plays the role as a mediator to influence the connection involving stress coping strategies and adoption to stress, and affiliation linking stress coping strategies and psychological well-being. There exist positive association among adoption to stress and stress coping strategies (Trigueros et al., 2019). Psychological well-being and stress coping strategies also indicates the direct relation (Konaszewski et al., 2021). Cognitive appraisal postulates as a mediator to influence the positive and significant association among the dependent and independent variables (Ekatushabe et al., 2021).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1. Research Approach and Procedure

This study was conducted based on the underpinning concept of quantitative research methodology with primary data collection. This study targeted the educational sector as the pool of population in which the university teachers were chosen as the unit of analysis. The study particularly accessed the teachers, so the approach was required to effectively with purposive and convenience sampling as there was an unknown population size, so adopting a non-probability sampling was appropriate. The study involved both private and public sector university teachers and the purpose of selecting both universities was to include the diverse nature perception in the collected responses. Additionally, the researcher has the mindset to

have a more widely and demographically more generalized response sheet to provide more diversified and robust implications for the addressed concepts.

### 3.2. Strategy of Data Collection

As mentioned above, the teachers were targeted as the target population so, a self-administered survey medium was selected to ensure the criteria defined in the targeted sector for the population. The paper-pencil was practiced and the researcher individually visited all the nearby private and public universities and only asked the teaching staff to participate in the survey practice and any other management authority was not considered for getting a response sheet filled. In some institutes, the teachers were accessed according to the ease of the researcher and a sufficient number of responses were gathered.

### 3.3. Tool of Survey: The Questionnaire

The tool of the survey was designed in a typical questionnaire format with different sections. The first part was occupied with the introductory prelude summary, the next part was arranged with the demographical questions related to the respondents and the third section was filled with the items adopted for the measurement of the measures. All the statements of the items were measured with the help of the most widely applied and accepted scale i.e., the 5-point Likert scale. The scale was designed in a specific range or score that started from 1 which was scored as strongly disagree to 5 which was scored as strongly agree. All the items adopted for the measurement of the targeted variables were extracted and borrowed from the authentic and empirically proven studies. To effectively present the brief required details related to the items and their sources, the following table was designed and the required details were arranged in different columns.

**Table 3.1:** *The summary detail of the measurements of the measures*

Constructs	Abbreviation	Items adopted	Source of items used
Self-Regulation	SR	4	(Fernandez-Perez & Martin-Rojas, 2022)
Co-Regulation	COR	2	(Horn & Maercker, 2016)
Coping Potential	CP	5	(Carver, 1997)
Threat Perception	TP	4	(Paredes et al., 2021)
Adaptation to Stress	ATS	10	(Alves et al., 2004)

Psychological Wellbeing	PWB	7	(Melin et al., 2022)
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### 3.4. The Ethical guidelines

The study was conducted by primarily focusing on the ethical regulations and guidelines so that no ambiguity could be raised against this research. In this domain, initially a prior consent was collected from all the targeted universities to collect data through survey. Additionally, the respondents were communicated with the approval from their respective universities and then they were assured of the confidentiality, trust and anonymity of the collected and then only those respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire who have willingness to participate on their own voluntary involvement.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Preliminary Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were first assessed as depicted in Tables 1 to 3. In terms of gender representation, it was noted that male respondents comprised 54.2% of the total sample which is slightly higher than female representation of 45.8%.

**Table 1: Gender**

Gender	N	%
Male	206	54.2%
Female	174	45.8%

Regarding age, majority of the participants were young between the ages of 20 to 39, where 35.8% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39 followed by the age group of 20 to 29. Around 20% of the respondents were in the age group of 40-49. While 12.9% of the participants were 50 or above.

**Table 2: Age**

Age range	N	%
20-29	119	31.3%
30-39	136	35.8%
40-49	76	20.0%

50-59	19	5.0%
More than 60	30	7.9%

Participants possessed a good amount of experience as evident from the values in Table 3. 44.2% of the respondents had an experience level of 3 to 5 years followed by 32.6% of the respondents had an experience of 6 to 8 years.

**Table 3: Experience**

	N	%
Less than 2 Year	53	13.9%
3 to 5 Year	168	44.2%
6 to 8 Year	124	32.6%
More than 8 Year	35	9.2%

Descriptive statistics offer insights into the distribution characteristics of the data. With a sample size of 380, Table 4 confirms the absence of missing values. The mean values range from 3.15 to 3.4 with slight negative skewness.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
ATS	380	1.00	5.00	3.2253	.83530	.087	.125
PWB	380	1.00	5.00	3.3466	.82360	-.362	.125
CP	380	1.00	5.00	3.2726	.94793	-.329	.125
TP	380	1.00	5.00	3.4217	1.10749	-.299	.125
COR	380	1.00	5.00	3.1974	1.23461	-.170	.125
SR	380	1.00	5.00	3.1592	1.18866	-.111	.125
Valid N (listwise)	380						

To ensure the adequacy of the sample, KMO test value must be greater than 0.8 (Shrestha, 2021). Table 5 validates the suitability of the data as well as the Bartlett's significance level (Pallant, 2020).

**Table 5:** *KMO and Bartlett's Test*

<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</b>		<b>.869</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8012.200
	df	496
	Sig.	.000

The internal consistency of the variables was assessed using 0.7 as the benchmark (Taber, 2018). Table 6 confirms that all the variables achieved a value greater than 0.7.

**Table 6:** *Cronbach's Alpha*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>ATS</b>	10	.839
<b>PWB</b>	7	.750
<b>CP</b>	5	.777
<b>TP</b>	4	.838
<b>COR</b>	2	.900
<b>SR</b>	4	.936

## 4.2 Correlation Matrix

The strength of the associations among the constructs was assessed using Pearson correlation as shown in the table below. Positive and significant correlation was found among all the variable.

**Table 7:** *Correlation Matrix*

	ATS	PWB	CP	TP	COR	SR
ATS	1					
PWB	.487**	1				
CP	.526**	.607**	1			
TP	.354**	.445**	.664**	1		

COR	.387**	.392**	.436**	.320**	1	
SR	.434**	.409**	.539**	.359**	.582**	1

### 4.3 Direct Impact on ATS

Table 8 shows that COR and SR account for 21.6% of the variation in the dependent variable, ATS.

**Table 8: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.465 <sup>a</sup>	.216	.212	.74157

Table 9 indicates that the regression model is a good fit as per the significance level and there is a relationship among the variables, COR, SR and ATS.

**Table 9: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	57.113	2	28.557	51.928	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	207.324	377	.550		
	Total	264.437	379			

The impact of SR and COR on ATS was evaluated with the results presented in Table 10. The results showed that SR positively and significantly impacted ATS at a 1% significance level and similarly, COR was found to have positive and significant influence on ATS.

**Table 10: Coefficients**

Model		B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.084	.119	17.560	.000
	SR	.222	.039	5.643	.000
	COR	.137	.038	3.617	.000

When PWB is taken into consideration as the dependent variable, COR and SR explain 20.3% of the variability in PWB as indicated in Table 11.

#### 4.4 Direct Impact on PWB

**Table 11:** *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.451 <sup>a</sup>	.203	.199	.73705

Similar to previous results, Table 12 confirmed the fitness of the model with the F-calculated value and significance level.

**Table 12:** *ANOVA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	52.279	2	26.139	48.117	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	204.802	377	.543		
	Total	257.080	379			

The results in Table 13 demonstrate that SR positively influences PWB and the association is deemed significant at a 1% significance level. Similarly, COR positively and significantly impacted PWB, indicating that PWB can be enhanced with increase in COR.

**Table 13:** *Coefficients*

Model		B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.251	.118	19.082	.000
	SR	.189	.039	4.834	.000
	COR	.156	.038	4.128	.000

#### 4.5 Mediation with PWB

The indirect analysis was performed with the incorporation of two mediators, CP and TP. In model 2, TP is incorporated into the framework and the result indicates that 29.1% of the variability in PWB is accounted by COR, SR and TP. In Model 3, CP is also included which increased the R-square value to 39.3, indicating that the inclusion of CP adds to the overall goodness of the model.

**Table 14:** *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.451 <sup>a</sup>	.203	.199	.73705

2	.539 <sup>b</sup>	.291	.285	.69647
3	.627 <sup>c</sup>	.393	.387	.64508

In Model 2, TP has a significant mediating role at a 1% significance level while SR and COR also maintain their positive and significant impact. The inclusion of CP resulted in insignificant impacts of SR and TP while CP significantly mediated the association between COR and PWB, and SR and PWB.

**Table 15: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.251	.118		19.082	.000
	SR	.189	.039	.273	4.834	.000
	COR	.156	.038	.233	4.128	.000
2	(Constant)	1.734	.135		12.857	.000
	SR	.132	.038	.190	3.463	.001
	COR	.120	.036	.180	3.327	.001
3	TP	.238	.035	.320	6.798	.000
	(Constant)	1.423	.131		10.866	.000
	SR	.034	.037	.050	.925	.355
	COR	.089	.034	.134	2.655	.008
	TP	.050	.040	.068	1.258	.209
	CP	.415	.052	.477	7.956	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PWB

#### 4.6 Mediation with ATS

The mediating roles of CP and TP are tested in regards to ATS. Table 16 depicts that with the inclusion of TP in the model, the R-squared increased to 25.2 from 21.6, indicating that 25.2% of the variability in ATS is explained by COR, SR and TP. Similarly, R-square value improves with the incorporation of CP as now 32% of the variance in ATS is described by the predictors, COR, SR, TP and CP in the model.



**Table 16: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.465 <sup>a</sup>	.216	.212	.74157
2	.502 <sup>b</sup>	.252	.246	.72515
3	.565 <sup>c</sup>	.320	.312	.69260

Table 17 provides evidence into the significant mediating role of TP in the association between SR and ATS, and COR and ATS in model 2. The incorporation of CP revealed that CP also significantly mediates the association between SR and ATS, COR and ATS as shown in Model 3.

**Table 17: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.084	.119		17.560	.000
	SR	.222	.039	.316	5.643	.000
	COR	.137	.038	.203	3.617	.000
2	(Constant)	1.746	.140		12.431	.000
	SR	.185	.040	.263	4.667	.000
	COR	.114	.038	.168	3.034	.003
	TP	.156	.036	.206	4.274	.000
3	(Constant)	1.490	.141		10.596	.000
	SR	.105	.040	.149	2.618	.009
	COR	.089	.036	.131	2.455	.015
	TP	.001	.043	.002	.034	.973
	CP	.341	.056	.387	6.097	.000

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Discussion of findings

The present study seeks to investigate the impact of stress-coping strategies on the adaptation to stress and the psychological well-being of university teachers in China. The study focuses on the impact of two stress-coping strategies: self-regulation and co-regulation. The statistical

analysis indicates a significant and positive impact of both SR and COR on ATS, thus accepting H1 and H2. The significant impact of SR on ATS indicates the effectiveness of a person's ability to manage and regulate his emotions in order to adapt to stressful circumstances. Moreover, the significant impact of COR on ATS indicates the potential of interpersonal interactions and collaborative ventures for enhancing a person's capability to adapt to workplace stress. Thus, the acceptance of H1 and H2 affirms the significance of both the individual and the collaborative efforts for preparing an employee to work in stressful circumstances. In the context of university teachers in China, the acceptance of H1 and H2 implies the need to foster their self-regulation and co-regulation skills. This would empower them to perform their on-duty tasks and handle stressors more effectively. The university job often exposes university teachers to various stressors and makes it challenging for teachers to manage their workload effectively. The cultivation of SR and COR would enable university teachers to not only deal with stressors but also attain a work-life balance. In addition, the findings recommend the establishment of a collaborative workplace where university teachers can support each other and handle stressors together.

Furthermore, the results of the statistical analysis also indicate a significant and positive impact of both SR and COR on the PWB of university teachers, thus affirming H3 and H4. The acceptance of H3 indicates the need for university teachers to be able to manage their emotions themselves in order to experience a higher level of psychological health. Similarly, according to the acceptance of H4, individuals who are exposed to a positive and supportive workplace environment, tend to experience a higher level of psychological well-being. Thus, both personal capabilities and interpersonal interactions lead to the strengthening of the PWB of university teachers. The cultivation of SR and COR would promise psychological health for university teachers and empower them to perform their jobs more efficiently. Moreover, the introduction of peer support programs and mentorship would provide the necessary support to university teachers and have a positive impact on their psychological well-being.

In addition, the present study has also introduced two mediators in its research framework: coping potential and threat perception. The results indicate that in the case of the impact of SR and COR on ATS, the impact of both CP and TP is significant, thus accepting H5, H6, H7, and H8. The acceptance of H5 and H6 indicates that high levels of SR and COR are associated with high levels of CP, which empower an individual to cope with stressful situations, adapt to stress more effectively and experience strengthened psychological health. Fernandez De Henestrosa et al. (2023) have previously associated CP with enhanced

emotional well-being of individuals. Similarly, the acceptance of H7 and H8 indicates that the effectiveness of stress-coping strategies for improving stress adaptation and the psychological well-being of individuals is also determined by how they perceive the stressors. An individual's perception of stressors is very significant for directing the impact of their stress-coping strategies on ATS and PWB. The results also indicate the significant mediation of CP for the impact of SR and COR on the PWB of university teachers, which supports H9 and H10. The acceptance of these hypotheses entails that university teachers who have higher coping potential would better be able to experience a higher level of PWB. On the other hand, the mediation of TP for the impact of SR and COR on PWB is insignificant, which rejects H11 and H12. The rejection of these hypotheses indicates that the impact of SR and COR on PWB is not influenced by the mediation of TP. The findings of the present study support those of ElSary and El-Sherbiny (2023) suggested a significant impact of stress-coping strategies for empowering individuals to overcome perceived stress.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

The present study has offered an empirical investigation to analyze the impact of stress-coping strategies on adaptation to stress and the psychological well-being of university teachers in China. The study, thus, offers statistical evidence for proving the impact of stress-coping strategies on university teachers' ability to adapt to stressful situations and exhibit higher psychological well-being. Thus, the study showed how both individual and interpersonal factors contribute to strengthening the stress adaptation and psychological health of university teachers. Thus, such interventions should be introduced inside universities, which promote a positive workplace environment and enrich teachers' self-regulation and co-regulation strategies, which would support them in managing their routine workloads and experiencing enhanced mental health.

## **5.3. Research implications**

### **5.3.1. Theoretical implications**

The present study draws its theoretical foundation from the transactional model of stress and coping presented by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). By applying this model to an investigation of stress-coping strategies of university students in China and its impact on their adaptation to stress and psychological well-being, the study advances the theoretical discourse related to the aforementioned theory. The study has significant theoretical implications for understanding the stress-coping mechanisms of university teachers in China, an area which

has been rarely investigated in the past. In addition, the study offers a significant understanding of the role of cognitive appraisal in bridging stress-coping strategies with the adaptation to stress and the psychological well-being of university students. Thus, the theoretical implications of the study help advance the existing literature and models of stress-coping strategies. These theoretical implications can serve as guidelines for future studies on stress-coping strategies.

### **5.3.2. Practical implications**

The practical implications of this study are valuable in terms of their relevance to the field of education in China. The jobs of university teachers can be physically as well as emotionally exhausting, therefore, the practical implications of the present study can delineate various ways of strengthening stress adaptation and psychological well-being of university teachers. Moreover, the findings of this study can help university teachers in adopting various stress-coping strategies to deal with stressful workplace circumstances. In addition, the findings of this study can be particularly helpful for policymakers to design such policies that focus on promoting a positive workplace environment aimed at revitalizing the mental health of university teachers. Workplace well-being of employees should be one of the primary goals of universities, which can be made possible by prioritizing the mental health of employees. Furthermore, the present study's findings are also significant due to their emphasis on the cognitive evaluation of university teachers. University teachers need to adopt such strategies that not only strengthen their mental health but also promote the enrichment of their cognitive skills to work under stressful situations. In addition, the findings of the study imply the need for policymakers to introduce such interventions, which focus on developing the coping potential and threat perception of university teachers so that they can experience higher levels of stress adaptation and psychological well-being. This would allow them to cope with stressors and sustain a positive outlook towards their work. Moreover, the findings also offer guidelines for universities to introduce such professional development programs, which focus on developing stress-coping capabilities of teachers and introduce them to various strategies to deal with stressful routines.

### **5.4. Limitations and future directions**

The present study offers noteworthy findings regarding the impact of stress-coping strategies of university teachers on their adaptation to stress and psychological well-being. However, its limitations cannot be overlooked as they help address the challenges faced by the researcher

and to set a roadmap for future studies in the area. The present study targeted the educational sector in China and selected the sample for the survey from the teaching faculty of the university. Therefore, its findings may not accurately reflect the stress-coping mechanism of employees from other sectors. In addition, the findings may not be reflective of other demographics. Future studies can target other industries and investigate the impact of stress-coping strategies of employees in those industries on their adaptation to stress and psychological well-being. Moreover, adaptation to stress and psychological well-being are multifaceted variables. Therefore, there may be several mediators that can influence these factors. However, it is quite challenging to analyze every variable in a single study, therefore, future studies can analyze the impact of other mediating variables such as self-efficacy.

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