

Effects of Stress and Coping Mechanisms on Teachers' Organizational Commitment in the New Normal

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Abstract — Click and learn- the new normal in education that was brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. In an education setting, it does not only apply to the students but also to the teachers that cause them to make more adjustments and feel stress. The primordial objective of this study was to investigate the effects of stress and coping mechanisms on teachers' work commitment in the new normal. To achieve this aim, the researcher used a total population of 100 teachers in a private school in Baliwag, Bulacan during the academic year 2019-2020. Three standardized instruments were utilized in this study to collect the needed data. These were the Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI), Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE), and Work Commitment Scale (WCS). The collected data were analyzed and treated statistically through the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results of the regression analysis indicate that the 7 stress areas, job satisfaction (.406) appeared to be the only stress level that contributes a significant effect in teachers' work commitment which means that in every unit increase in the stress level in terms of job satisfaction will mean a 0.336 increase in teachers' work commitment. However, since the F-value is 5.881 with the associated p-value of 0.000 and does not exceed .05 alpha, the combined effect of the stress levels forms a set of significant predictors on teachers' work commitment. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results of the regression analysis revealed an R-square of .0.88 with a p-value of .811. It means that the coping mechanisms influence the work commitment by 8.8%. However, the p-value exceeds alpha (p>0.05) and analysis of the beta coefficients also produces an F-value of .446, the results are deemed insignificant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations were offered.

Keywords — Stress, Coping Mechanism, Organizational Commitment

I. Introduction

The year 2020 has been an unwanted year for everyone. The Corona Virus Disease-19 pandemic brought anxiety and vulnerability to people, a problem to the community and the government, and it has affected the educational system not only in the Philippines but worldwide. Amidst the dilemma our country is facing, the people are bound to live in the so-called "new normal" where our routines are changing as our lives are modified by the changes brought by COVID-19. This 15th of August, 2020, it was announced that the school opening for School Year (SY) 2020-2021 will be moved from August 24, 2020, to October 5, 2020, this is under Republic Act No. 11480, which amended RA No. 7797, "providing that the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Education, may set a date later than the last day of August for the start of the school year in the country or parts thereof in the event of a declaration of a state of



emergency or state of calamity. Therefore, many private schools have already started their school year, since indicated also in the law that it permits the private schools to operate or adopt their school calendar within the period allowed by the law, provided that they are strictly using only distance learning modalities and that there are no face-to-face classes."

The people started to embrace the new normal in education amid the situation. Yet there are many things to consider to make sure its effectiveness such as the readiness and diversity of the students and teachers, computer or device availability, and the internet connection. Moreover, it is agreeable that teaching and learning will not stop amidst COVID-19, and being receptive to the new ways would be a great help to be efficient in the new normal era. People are already living in a digital age, so the use of technology is something not new to everybody. It has been part of us, as it makes our lives easier and faster. Click and learn, this is the new normal in education – Flexible Learning. The teachers want the students to learn and be safe at the same time. It makes the learners free from constraints of time and place because this new approach provides learners with choices about where, when, and how learning occurs.

According to Hignasari (2020), most of the grade school students were not able to conform to the new normal in education. Children who were at the level of education were very vulnerable in the case of not getting the same study material if there was no good cooperation between the teacher and the parents. Therefore, the use of technology when it comes to acquiring information and communicating is relevant to the parents, learners, and teachers as well (Wijoyo & Indrawan, 2020). Lots of articles about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in any published material. This dilemma does not only apply to the students but also to the teachers that causes them to make more adjustments and feel stress to the new normal era. Countless research had been studied about stress but had difficulty understanding because individuals tend to react and experience it differently.

Teachers' Stress Level

Stress is a daunting subject. People all think they know what it is although no two people seem to define it the same way yet everybody agrees that it plays a critical role in the human condition because stress is a common experience. In today's society, people thrive on performance, competition, and perfection which leads to an increase in stress. People are continuously experiencing how stressful life has become. As the society is gearing to the rising technology, a new development in lifestyle and economic recovery, everyone seems to be busy doing all they can be pushed to their limit. Thus, numerous people have suffered from stress. Psychologically speaking, stress is a kind of disease of modern society (Hassard et al., 2018). As cited by Mazo (2015), "stress affects people from all walks of life regardless of age, gender, civil status, political affiliation, religious belief, economic status, and profession".

Seaward (2017) as cited in his book entitled Managing Stress: Principles and Strategies for Health and Well-Being, that the word "stress" had been defined in many other ways by various philosophers, researchers, and writers: Eastern philosophers considered stress to be an absence of



inner peace while in Western culture stress can be described as a loss of control. This definition confirms that stress is the incapability to deal with perceived pressure, and is very complex and affects the whole person as well as any other aspect. The concept of stress was introduced in life sciences by Hans Selye in 1978. This concept is borrowed from natural sciences and is derived from the Latin word, "stinger" which means to draw tight. The word stress had been used so many times and there are lots of confusing definitions have been formulated. According to Tan (2018), Hans Selye in 1978 describes stress as the body's non-specific response to any demand or stressors. A stressor is a perceived threat by a person in any occurrence or condition that leads to either adapting or initiating a response. Therefore, a stressor or perceived threat is a stimulus and stress is a response to a threat.

Stress is a reality of living and it cannot be avoided, it is in day-to-day living, and how people react to it is important. Some people were exposed to too much stress and a longer period while others not. Experts had studied its effects on our body physically and mentally. However, according to Hans Selye, as cited by Sies (2020), there are two kinds of stress, "distress" or negative stress and the other kind of stress which he calls "eustress" the positive kind of stress. It is the natural part of effectively meeting the challenges like deadlines. It gives the person better performance by having an extra boost, motivation, and being focused on what he is doing. It is important how individuals take or perceive stress. What is stressful to others may not be stressful to you. Others avoid stress and others are looking for it to have some extra pressures in what they are doing. It is important to have a better knowledge of it so that individuals may know or understand how to react to it.

Stress is not only a common result of unpleasant activities, the normal and even pleasurable activities can produce considerable stress without causing obvious damage. It is not necessarily undesirable because it all depends on how you perceived it. The stress of disappointment or embarrassment is detrimental but it can be beneficial. The stress reaction may have good or bad effects. People cannot and should not avoid stress. Thus everybody is always under stress for it will only be avoided by dying.

According to Carissoli et al. (2015), stress has become a pervading feature of people's lives in the modern world, wherein it is said to be a world of achievements with increasing needs, demands, and pressures, therefore it is also a world of stress (Amadi et al., 2019). It is a very common problem being faced today despite notable development in terms of science and technology. For the past decades, stress had been the most talked about phenomenon. Many researchers tackled its nature but have met difficulty because every individual reacts and experiences it in various ways. Parray (2016) has defined stress as a relationship between the person and the environment that is assessed by the person as demanding or exceeding his or her resources and compromising his or her well-being. Liu (2020) stated that stress is the awareness of a risk to one's physical or psychological wellbeing and the insight that one is incapable to handle the threat. Similarly, stress is a common cause of illnesses nowadays (Bhatti, 2016).



Based on the definitions cited above, the researcher formulated a definition of the term stress as a situation in which a person is over-tasked with some work and responsibility. To sum up, stress is challenging and useful. However, when stress becomes excessive, the body is no longer able to deal with the pressures placed upon it.

Coping Mechanisms

Baqutayan (2015) defined coping as circumstances that can affect their physical or psychological well-being for this is an interaction between stressors and efforts to manage the situation. Similarly, coping is a part of a process in which the human learns to adapts to the stressors or perceived threat (Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). But in some instances, there is no need to use coping strategies to deal with stressful events considering that stress could be positive or healthy especially when the stressor is perceived as a challenge.

Paquet & Rieg (2016), concluded that teachers' stressors include three main ideas of work overload, communication, and classroom management and discipline, and the coping mechanisms were comprised of relationships, exercise, time management, and the ability to schedule "downtime". Byrd (2017) elaborated that positive coping strategies that were utilized while at school were taking brain breaks, student engagement, time management, and talking to their students in a quiet voice. On the other side, getting frustrated with students is a negative strategy.

The coping mechanism happens in response to stress to maintain mental and emotional well-being. Life stressors are often described as negative events like the bullying, death of a loved one, loss of a job, interpersonal problems, etc. (Nishikawa et al., 2018, however, positive changes in life such as marriage, birth, a new job and the like can also constitute life stressors, thus requiring the use of coping skills to adapt. Thus, coping strategies are the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions that you use to adjust to the changes that occur in your life.

There are many coping styles that people use, and some may prove more effective than others, depending on the nature of the situation and the perception of a person. Ineffective coping mechanisms, also referred to as maladaptive coping, may also be applied to stressful events or internal conflict, often unconsciously (Holton et al., 2016). Maladaptive coping mechanisms are counterproductive and were associated with higher teacher burnout as teachers negotiate these stressors (Skinner & Beers, 2017; Kamtsios & Lolis, 2016). Poor coping mechanisms have long been identified as a primary cause of stress.

Stress can be reduced by diverting attention through humor (Jiang et al., 2019) or physical activity (Sudani & Budzynska, (2015). Most coping strategies were in the form of social-support networks, particularly interactions with family and friends. Coping with stress can sometimes be difficult to know where to even begin because people perceived it differently, that leads to different coping mechanism. Folkman and Lazarus in 1984, as mentioned by Baqutayan (2015) developed two methods of coping with stress; problem-focused and emotion-focused. (1) Problem-focused, it deals with ways to tackle the issue to reduce stress around a given situation. Here, you seek support by speaking to others and trying to take control of the situation. You also might try to



weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of possible different options and seek a way through the difficult issue. Having someone to talk to can also decrease the amount of distress associated with the stressor. (2) Emotion-focused, gather tools to nurture one's emotional health during the stressful period. This is when you experience different emotions to try to deal with a problem such as denial,

crying, or getting angry and in some cases, you may experience wishful thinking about how things could have been different if you didn't feel so stressed. Additionally, coping can either be active or avoidant. Active coping strategies involve an awareness of the stressor, followed by attempts to reduce the negative outcome. By contrast, avoidant coping is characterized by ignoring the issue, often resulting in activities that aid in the denial of the problem like drinking, sleeping, isolating (Skinner and Gembeck, 2016).

Mohanty (2017) supposed that stress is a fact of life and individuals react to stress in different ways. Some individuals positively deal with stressors with a proper understanding of the situation and its effect. Taking appropriate action to reduce or prevent stress may be advantageous both for the individual and the organization. Stress management means enhancing coping with external stressors and their internal consequences (Ali, 2017). Stress management has three broad options – prevent or control, escape from it, or learn to adapt to it.

Coping is not a blink of an eye that is easily got. It is how the individual thinks to find solutions to the particular threat. Coping is important to be able to move forward in life in a harmonious way and to be able to live happily. It is that, when people cope with the particular threat, it will be easier the next time the threat arrives. It is simply the individual know already what to do. All of the mentioned coping strategies may be helpful for those who have a hard time coping with stress. It may serve as a guide in managing stressful events in an individual's life.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an employee's attitude in identifying his/her involvement in an organization that reflects teachers' cognitive, affective and behavioral intentions and attitudes towards the occupation. The greater the commitment, the greater the loyalty of the employees to the organization, which leads to being effective in the workplace and become better employees. (Al-Zefeiti, 2017; Ekhsan, 2019; Ozgenel, 2019). Competitiveness in the organization enhances the motivation, and engagement of employees and is the key factor in Organizational commitment (Hanaysha, 2016).

In the study of Sheikh (2019), the findings revealed that university professors with a higher level of professional commitment tend to be more organizationally committed. Furthermore, it is shown that university brands can increase the impact of professional commitment on organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer in 1990 developed a three dimensioned organizational commitment model, which was used in the present study that makes a relevant identification of organizational commitment and determines the reasons for employees' organizational commitment. According to the model, the three components capture the affective attachment, perceived costs, and perceived obligation aspects of organizational commitment.



As defined by Odoardi (2019), affective commitment is a critical motivational force binding individuals to effective courses of action that sustain the organizational goals and values. It is a willingness to exert substantial effort to maintain affiliation and involvement in the organization. In contrast, Fayazzi & Aslani (2015) expound continuance commitment as lack of job alternatives and the fear of losing the present or potential job and they feel that they will have too much to lose by leaving the organization (Al-Jabari, 2019). Khan (2016) confirmed that continuance commitment is associated with employee job satisfaction. If an employee is satisfied, then his/her continuance commitment will be high and he/she will not have the intention to leave his/her organization. In addition, according to Ben Mansour et al. (2017) normative commitment is defined as a feeling of sense of obligation to stay with the organization and willingness to make sacrifices as it is morally good.

Teacher working conditions affect teacher commitment, suggesting that refining principal leadership, increasing opportunities for professional development, and lessening teachers' workload would be effective ways to promote teacher commitment in a charter school (Yongmei Ni, 2017). In the study of Ozgenel (2019), there is a moderate and positive significant relationship found between teachers' occupational commitment and their performance, and it was found that occupational commitment was a primary variable that predicts/affects teacher performance by 15%.

Effects of Stress and Coping Mechanisms to Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The study of Garg and Dhar (2014) explained that leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support both positively influenced organizational commitment, whereas job stress influenced organizational commitment negatively. Organizational commitment positively influenced service quality. Similarly, Bhati (2016) revealed that the results of their study demonstrate the negative and significant relationship between job stress and organizational commitment. It also shows that stress is a major cause that decreases the employee's commitment towards the organization.

Flexibility in the workplace brought some important benefits. Higher satisfaction with the work and employer, better employee performance, greater organizational commitment, and lower employee turnover and absenteeism are all outcomes of flexible working practices that in the end lead to increasing the company's productivity and profitability (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanfard, 2014).

Considerations on the part of the teachers should be placed and regard them as human beings subject to different pressures of life. Teachers play a vital part in educating and developing students. Likewise, the administrator should be responsible for ensuring their health, well-being and productivity. Stress and stressors are inherent in our daily lives and teachers have to study the ways and means to cope with them or overcome them. Being able to identify its causes and how to cope and manage them will enhance teachers' work commitment.



Research Questions

The general problem of the study is to determine the effects of stress and coping mechanisms on the organizational commitment of the teachers in a private school in Baliwag, Bulacan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. How may the stress level of teachers be described in terms of:
 - 1.1.role ambiguity;
 - 1.2. role stress:
 - 1.3.organizational management;
 - 1.4. job satisfaction;
 - 1.5.life satisfaction;
 - 1.6.task stress; and
 - 1.7. supervisory report.
- 2. What coping mechanisms are utilized in adhering the stressors of the teachers?
 - 2.1. emotion-focused coping (positive interpretation and growth, restraint, acceptance);
 - 2.2. problem-focused coping (planning, active approach, deletion of concurrent activities);
 - 2.3. social support-focused coping (social instrumental, social emotional, expression of emotions) and;
 - 2.4. avoidant coping (denial, mental deactivation, behavioral deactivation).
- 3. How may teachers' organizational commitment be described in the following indicators:
 - 3.1. affective commitment;
 - 3.2. continuance commitment; and
 - 3.3. normative commitment.
- 4. Which among stress and coping mechanisms significantly affect teachers' organizational commitment?
- 5. What management implication may be drawn from the findings of the study?



II. Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive correlational method of research that appraised the relationship between the independent variables namely stress areas, coping mechanisms amidst new modality of teaching, and the dependent variable specifically, organizational commitment. The survey form of the study was employed with the main concern of hypotheses formulation, testing, and analysis of the effects between independent variables and the dependent variable.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consist of a total population of 100 teachers in a private school in Baliwag, Bulacan as the sample size of the study.

Instrument of the Study

Three sets of instruments were utilized namely: Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI) which was developed by Pettegrew and Wolf, 1982 and was revised by Schutz & Long, 1988 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE) which was developed by Carver, Weintraub, and Scheier, (1989) and was revised by Crosavan and Sava (2013) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, and Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) which was developed by Allen and Meyer (2011) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

The data gathered from the questionnaire were organized in a tabular form. It was processed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical measures were used to analyze, interpret the data gathered, and examine the effects of the identified variables. Such statistical treatment was used to answer the null hypotheses.

1. The teachers' stress level was quantified using the following scale:

Rating Scale	Range	Descriptive Evaluation
5	4.50-5.00	To a very great extent
4	3.50-4.49	To a great extent
3	2.50-3.49	To a moderate extent
2	1.50-2.49	To a little extent
1	1.00-1.49	Not at all



2. The teachers' coping mechanisms was quantified using the following scale:

Rating Scale	Range	Descriptive Evaluation
5	4.50-5.0	To a very great extent
4	3.50-4.49	To a great extent
3	2.50-3.49	To a moderate extent
2	1.50-2.49	To a little extent
1	1.00-1.49	Not at all

3. The teachers' organizational commitment was quantified using the following scale:

Rating Scale	Range	Descriptive Evaluation
5	4.50-5.0	To a very great extent
4	3.50-4.49	To a great extent
3	2.50-3.49	To a moderate extent
2	1.50-2.49	To a little extent
1	1.00-1.49	Not at all

4. To determine the effects of stress and coping mechanisms on teachers' organizational commitment, multiple correlation and regression analysis were utilized.

Ethical Compliance

This study considered the ethical standards set by generic research ethics. In so doing, the participants were informed about all the steps that will be taken in this research. The participants were more important than the study, and therefore always respected. They were informed that the study is completely voluntary and would not affect their lives as students and as persons, even their families, in any way. Confidentiality was provided, as the participants' identifying information was not sought. The data collection material kept and destroyed on completion of the study.

III. Results and Discussion

Problem 1: Stress Level of Teachers

The stress levels of teachers were assessed in terms of role ambiguity (3.24), role stress (2.87), organizational management (3.88), job satisfaction (3.86), life satisfaction (3.28), task stress (3.02), and supervisory report (4.41).

Problem 2: Status of Coping Mechanism of Teachers

The coping mechanisms of teachers were assessed in terms of problem-focused coping (3.16), emotion-focused coping (3.31), avoidant coping (2.15), and social support coping (2.89).



Problem 3: Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The teachers' work commitment was assessed in terms of affective commitment (3.70), continuance commitment (4.78), and normative commitment (4.63).

Problem 4:

Stress Levels That Affect Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Table 1

Regression Analysis of Stress Levels That Affect Teachers' Organizational Commitment

	Unstandardized		Standardized			
Variables	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
(Constant)	2.801	.750		3.733	.000	
Role Ambiguity	169	.145	112	-1.170	.245	
Role Stress	.018	.105	.020	.169	.866	
Organizational Management	.089	.120	.084	.743	.459	
Job Satisfaction	.336	.092	.406	3.644	.000	
Life Satisfaction	021	.154	013	135	.893	
Task Stress	025	.101	028	246	.806	
Supervisory Support	.162	.108	.174	1.503	.136	
R-squared = .309						
F-value = 5.881						
p-value = .000						
alpha = 0.05						

As can be gleaned from the results, the obtained Beta coefficient of .406 (Job Satisfaction) appeared to be the only stress level that contributes a significant effect in teachers' organizational commitment. The B coefficient results indicate that in every unit increase in the stress level in terms of job satisfaction will mean a 0.336 increase in teachers' work commitment.

Further analysis of Table 1 reveals an F-value of 5.881 with the associated p-value of 0.000. Since the associated probability does not exceed .05 alpha, it is, therefore, safe to conclude that the combined effect of the stress levels namely role ambiguity, role stress, organizational management, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, task stress, and supervisory support form as a set of significant predictors on teachers' organizational commitment. Hence, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis which states that the stated stress levels have no significant effects in teachers' organizational commitment.



Table 2

Coping Mechanisms That Affect Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Regression Analysis of Coping Mechanisms That Affect Teachers' Organizational Commitment

	Unstandardized		Standardized		
Variables	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.873	1.425		3.419	.002
Problem-focused Coping	.028	.233	.026	.122	.904
Emotion-focused Coping	.162	.336	.104	.482	.634
Social Support-focused Coping	113	.266	115	426	.674
Avoidant Coping	102	.340	084	299	.768
Other Coping Scales	209	.272	174	769	.450
R-squared = $.088$					

R-squared = .088 F-value = .446

p-value = .811

alpha = 0.05

The results of the regression analysis revealed an R-square of .0.88 with a p-value of .811. It means that the independent variable influences the dependent variable by 8.8%. However, the p-value exceeds alpha or the margin of error (p>0.05). Having a closer look to the individual predictors makes one glean that not even one significantly influences the dependent variable. Analysis of the beta coefficients also produce an F-value of .446. Again, since the p-value exceeds alpha (the margin of error), the results are deemed insignificant. It only means that the independent variables do not influence the dependent variable. Therefore, the researcher accepts the null hypothesis which states that the coping mechanisms do not significantly influence teachers' organizational commitment.

Problem 5. Management implications drawn from the findings of the study

Some significant management implications were pulled from the results of the study to wit:

- 1. Teachers must identify the causes of their stress, and make appropriate actions such as applying effective coping mechanisms.
- 2. Teachers should acquire new skills to cope effectively in the dynamic society. They have to equip themselves in terms of critical thinking and planning, creativeness, resourcefulness, innovations, and modernizations.
- 3. Teachers should be given the opportunity to take part in the design of his/her own work situation, and in the processes of change and development affecting his/her work.
- 4. School administrators should be confident and decisive. Also, they should define the framework and give clear instructions to the employees.



5. School administrators should take necessary measures for the optimal provision of job rewards to make their teachers productive, satisfied and committed.

IV. Conclusion

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1. The job satisfaction was experienced by the teacher respondents as it is well evident from the results obtained and that it is not contributory to the stress level of teachers. However it is contributory to the teachers' organizational commitment.
- 2. The most used coping mechanism by the teacher is the Emotion-focused Coping to be specific is the religious approach.
- 3. The continuance commitment appears to have the highest mean compared to the other components of organizational commitment.
- 4. The combined effect of the stress levels namely role ambiguity, role stress, organizational management, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, task stress, and supervisory support form as a set of significant predictors on teachers' work commitment; but the job satisfaction was the only stress level that contributes a significant effect in teachers' organizational commitment. The independent variable which is coping mechanisms do not influence the dependent variable.
- 5. Significant management implications were drawn from the findings of the study: (1) the need for teachers to identify the causes of their stress, and make appropriate actions such as applying effective coping mechanisms, (2) the need for teachers to acquire new skills to cope effectively in the dynamic society, (3) the need for teachers to be given the opportunity to take part in the design of his/her own work situation, and in the processes of change and development affecting his/her work, (4) the need for administrators to be confident and decisive. Also, to define the framework and give clear instructions to the employees, and (5) the need for administrators to take necessary measures for the optimal provision of job rewards to make their teachers productive, satisfied and committed.

V. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

- 1. Teachers should attend seminars, trainings and workshops about awareness on stress and coping mechanisms. (Work-Life Blending, Positive Psychology, and the like) This is a way of encouraging teachers to be more productive and enthusiastic in their work.
- 2. Prevent confusion of work and responsibilities in school. The delegation of work within the school premises should be clearly stated to the teachers.



3. School administrators should take necessary measures for the optimal provision of job rewards to make their teachers productive, satisfied and committed. Working conditions should provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

- 4. A parallel study should be conducted to other schools/universities and other variables not covered by the study be considered.
- 5. Significant insights can be learned from the management implications drawn from the study. It appears imperative that closer attention and consideration may be extended in the interest of further improvement and development of school management system.

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