

TEACHING-RELATED STRESS ENCOUNTERED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the teaching-related stress encountered by teachers from selected public and private high schools in Echague, Isabela, Philippines. There were sixty (50) teachers who took part in this study chosen through purposive sampling whose years in the service must be between 5-10 years. The survey questionnaire was patterned from the study of Juan (2008) where it ascertained the stresses encountered by teachers in terms of workplace environment, workload related and interpersonal relationships was used to gather the needed data. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) utilizing mean scores while t-test was used to test the hypothesis of the study.

Results showed that participants rated workplace environment to be less stressful; workload related to be stressful except of other related tasks to be moderately stressful while interpersonal relationship specially with peers and students appear to be much of the teachers' stressor. Result further showed a no significant difference between the stresses encountered by the teachers when they are grouped according to their type of school (public/private).

Keywords: Teaching; stress; workplace environment, workload-related stress, interpersonal relationship

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a persistent experience encountered during all human lifespans, it has been an inevitable part of life (Shahsavarani, Abadi & Kalkhoran, 2015). Within the scope of the workplace, stress is part of and reflects a wider interaction process between the person and his work environment, for example are the teachers, with the various tasks laid on their teachers, it is not surprising that they may become stressed and not able to perform their tasks (Juan, 2008).

Lazarus (1966 cited by Juan, 2008) proposed the Transaction Theory of stress, where stress is understood to arise from the interaction between an individual and their environment. The situation might actually threaten or merely be perceived as threatening. If an individual interprets an event and/or situation as harmful or stressful, the person will experience stress.

Stress is a general term applied to the pressure people experience at work. In the event of a teacher's great desire to implement in the best possible way, the new pedagogical standards of molding potential leaders, they cannot deny the fact that they are being pressured by the demand of their work as: hours or responsibilities which are more than they can comfortably manage, conflict with co teachers or bosses, constant threats to job security which hamper the effective and efficient performance of their work. One of the greatest challenges of teaching

is how to manage effectively their teaching schedules to have time for other activities, events and responsibilities.

Depending on the type of school, teachers may be juggling many responsibilities such as teaching a great number of students, overloads, time schedules and others. These factors may be compounded by student attendance, discipline, and lack of motivation. However, despite stresses encountered, employees of private and government institutions most particularly the teachers have learned to live with the stress they encounter in the performance of their functions and adopted some coping approaches. Heller (2000 cited by Juan 2008), in the book *Achieving Excellence* adopted the old adage, “prevention is better than cure”, which is done through regular exercise of at least 20 minutes three times a week, avoidance of situations that will cause stress, giving oneself time to relax each day and try to spend time with people who make one feel good, eat nutritional food, and have a good sleep.

Stress and Teachers’ Stress

Teacher stress has been a topic of significant research for the last two decades, reflecting the detrimental effects of stress. Bright (2001) stated that there is growing consensus on the definitions of stress as negative psychological state with cognitive and emotional components, and its effect on the health.

Albanese (2003 as cited by Juan 2008) further pointed out that stress refers to a personal or internal experience creating a physiological imbalance within an individual, that a great variety of environmental conditions are capable of creating stress. Calimpong (2002) also agreed that stress can cause depression, irritation, anxiety, fatigue, lowered self-esteem and reduced job satisfaction among teachers. The BUPA’s Health Information Team (2004) stated that stress is an inevitable but complex part of working lives. Without challenges and pressures, work would lack sparkle, but we all have the capacity to be overwhelmed by work-related stress, and to experience its exhausting effects. On the other hand, Beehr (2000) said that depression as one of the manifestations of stress is a feeling of hopelessness characterized by, among other things, sadness, rejection and lessened interest in physical activities regardless of the person’s status, cultural affiliation, gender, age and education. Kokkinos (2007) further argued that teacher occupational stress is associated with several contextual factors such as time pressure, discipline problems, lack of resources, and lack of professional recognition, lack of support and the diversity of tasks required. While Kyriacou (2001) stated that stress is the experience of negative or unpleasant emotions resulting from aspects of the work for example: imbalance between internal job demands and external resources. Thus, teachers may experience stress if the job demands do not fit their perceived capacity to meet demands on their educational values. Some of the stress issues related to teaching would be caused by workplace environment or emotional causes by a difficult supervisor or hard-headed students (Juan 2008). One of the greatest challenges of teaching is not to let stress consumes teacher’s time and energy.

Turna (2014) mentioned various sources of stress affecting teachers are demotivated students, time pressure, workload, disciplinary environment, coping with novelty, being evaluated by others, problems with co-workers, status, administrative reasons, conflict of duties and inappropriate working conditions. Vallence (2001 cited by Juan, 2008) further argued that the social status of teachers is not very prestigious. They have little scope for achieving recognition and professional advancement. The school system is also not uniform all over the country, the difference is so great that on one side there are numerous shelter-less schools while other schools have carpeted and air-conditioned classrooms. Differences can also be

seen at the level of curriculum, medium of instruction, teaching methods, examination system number of students in one class, etc. All of these circumstances are very stressful for teachers.

The effects of stress in a teacher have prompted many researchers to focus on this topic. The review of various literature gave the researcher information about stress and teacher's stress. The current study sought to find out the teaching-related stress encountered by the secondary school teachers from selected public and private schools at Echague, Isabela, Philippines in terms of workplace environment (facilities and distance of school buildings) workload-related (size of class, time schedule, other related tasks and attendance tool) and interpersonal relationship (relation with the principal, program/grade level coordinator and students) and also to analyze the significant difference between the stresses encountered by secondary school teachers from selected private and public schools. Hence, it is predicted that there is no significant difference between the stresses encountered by the teachers when they are grouped according to their type of school (public/private).

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the study were chosen through purposive sampling where fifty (50) teachers who were employed with permanent status and who are in the service between 5-10 years from selected secondary private and public schools in Echague, Isabela, Philippines took part in this study. The years in the service is particularly a criterion in choosing the participants of the study for they are expected to imbibe the challenges in the teaching profession.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive method of research. This research design is used to describe the characteristics of a population under study through collecting data to be used to answer a wide range of what, when, and how questions pertaining to the sample population or group under study.

Measures

The Survey Questionnaire used in this study was patterned from the study of Juan (2008). The questionnaire consists of three sections, the Workplace Environment, workload related and Interpersonal Relationship. The responses of the participants were placed using a five-point likert scale from 1-not at all stressful, 2-less stressful, 3-stressful, 4-moderately stressful, and 5-very stressful.

For its qualitative interpretation, the following scale was used:

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|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 1.0-1.49 not at all stressful |
| 2 | 1.50-2.49 less stressful |
| 3 | 2.50-3.49 stressful |
| 4 | 3.50-4.49 moderately stressful |
| 5 | 4.49-5.0 very stressful |

The data gathered were computer processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics using computed mean was used to identify the teaching-related stresses encountered by the participants while t-test was used to analyze the significant difference between teaching-related stresses encountered by the secondary school teachers when grouped according to type of school (public/private). In adherence to research ethics, the informed consent was also administered before the data gathering.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data gathered on the teaching-related stress of the secondary school teachers from selected public and private schools in Echague, Isabela, Philippines. The study looked into the sources of stress generally encountered by teachers in upholding their tasks.

Table 1. Computed Mean of Teaching-Related Stresses in Workplace Environment, Workload related and Interpersonal Relationship

Teaching-related stress Interpretation	Mean	Qualitative
A. Workplace environment		
1. Facilities		
Lack of classroom facilities; laboratory facilities; references and instructional materials for instruction	2.34	less stressful
Poor classroom ventilation and lighting	2.17	less stressful
Disorderly and dirty classrooms	2.32	less stressful
2. Distance of classrooms/Buildings		
2.1. Classroom/buildings not strategically located	2.0	less stressful
B. Workload related		
1. Size of class. Number of students in a class is more than the ideal size	2.71	stressful
2. Time schedule. Schedule of classes not properly and appropriately distributed	2.88	stressful
3. Other related tasks. Too much paper works/too many assigned tasks	4.14	Moderately stressful
4. Attendance tool. Use of biometrics	3.37	Stressful
C. Interpersonal relationship		
5. Relation with Principal		
Perceived negative attitude	3.37	Stressful
Leadership style is Authoritative	3.38	Stressful
Experience conflict with the Dean	3.25	Stressful
6. Relation with Program/Grade Level Coordinator		
Perceived negative attitude	3.27	Stressful
Leadership style is Authoritative	3.19	Stressful
Experience conflict with the Department Chairman	3.38	Stressful
7. Relation with peers		
Peers who are rumor-mongers	3.74	Moderately stressful
Peers who are fault finders	3.73	Moderately stressful
Experience conflict with peers	3.59	Moderately stressful
8. Relation with students		
Students are passive	3.62	Moderately stressful
Students have low class performance	3.93	Moderately stressful

As gleaned from the table, the teaching-related stresses encountered by the secondary school teachers from selected private and public schools in terms of workplace environment in terms of facilities was rated to be less stressful evident in the items “Lack of facilities, laboratory facilities, references and instructional materials for instruction”; “poor classroom ventilation and lighting” and “disorderly and dirty classrooms” with computed mean scores of 2.34; 2.17 and 2.32 respectively, similarly, the distance of classrooms/buildings was rated to be less stressful as seen in its mean score of 2.0. These findings gave a bird’s eye view that the teaching environment of both public and private schools are conducive for teaching and learning. This is a good thing because when a teacher performs in a situation that lacks facilities for instruction and exposing him to extreme temperature conditions such as too much heat or too much cold, poor lighting and ventilation, he is likely to experience stress (Roggio, 1996).

As to workload related, the size of class; time schedule and the use of biometrics as attendance tool were found to be stressful while other related tasks was seen to be much of

the teacher’s stressor as evident in the computed mean score of 4.14. Despite the number of years in the service, these remain to be some of the workload stressors encountered in the teaching profession. The teachers were able to meet the needs of their students’ learning development, had the opportunity to provide challenging and meaningful learning environment as well as adequate and appropriate materials for student learning, however related tasks such as preparation of reports and other paper works that the teachers need to accomplish aside from instruction were observed to be the sources of their stress. These high demands are found to be correlated with the stress experienced by teachers, it is observed that high level of stress causes low job-fulfilment and low commitment (Manthei, Gilmore, Tuck & Adair, 1996 cited by Aydin & Kaya, 2016).

Also, under the category of interpersonal relationship with the principal and the program/grade coordinators, a stressful rating was evident in the mean scores, conversely, with relation to peers (peers who are rumor mongers; fault finders and experienced conflict with peers with mean scores of 3.74, 3.73 and 3.38 respectively) and relation with students (students are passive and students have low class performance with mean scores of 3.62 and 3.92 respectively) were found to be moderately stressful. Findings coincide with the discussion done by Klassen & Chui (2011 cited by Collie & Mansfield, 2022) when they posit that student’s behavior and class performance could impose excessive stress on teachers and has been associated with greater emotional exhaustion and lower occupational commitment among teachers. Documented studies that confirm the foregoing findings were that conducted by Plan (2003) and Juan (2008) which stated that organization climate (such as relation with peers as found in the current study) acts as determinant in experiencing physical and psychological strain.

Table 2. Significant Difference between the Teaching-Related Stresses Encountered by the Teachers in Selected Public and Private Secondary Schools

Teaching-related stress	t-value	p-value
Workplace environment	0.623 ^{ns}	0.538
Workload Related	0.015 ^{ns}	0.988
Interpersonal relationship	1.94 ^{ns}	0.061

Employing t-test to analyze significant difference between the teaching –related stresses encountered by the teachers from the selected public and private high schools revealed a no significant difference particularly in their workplace environment, workload related and interpersonal relationships. Results revealed that teaching-related stress on the parameter workplace environment between public and private schools obtained a t-value of 0.623 and p-value 0.538. Job-related stresses encountered by the teachers from the public and private schools obtained a t-value of 0.015 and p-value 0.988. While interpersonal relationships encountered by the teachers from the public and private school reveal a t-value of 1.946 and p-value of 0.061, hence, the perceived teaching-related stresses encountered by the teachers in selected public and private secondary schools do not vary which means that the hypothesis posted in this study is accepted. This can be attributed to the supportive role of organization received by teachers working in private and public schools and as a result, they experience less occupational stress, however Raj and Julius (2016) found that private school teachers have faced more stress than the government school teachers. Kaur (2011) made a comparative study of occupational stress among teachers of private and public schools and found that the strongest predictor of work-related stress is occupational commitment. It also showed that significantly higher levels of perceived stress were reported from primary school teachers than secondary school teachers. This study has therefore established that individual

contributory features are significant to the prediction and understanding of occupational stress encountered with the teaching profession.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

The teachers seemed to be well- adjusted with their workplace environment, hence, it is safe to say that when the teaching environment is conducive, it is likely that teachers will perform at their best. Given that the teaching profession requires various workloads, teachers are accepting this reality as the job requires, however, interpersonal relationship particularly with their peers and students requires proper coping strategies to prevent and alleviate the stress encountered. It is then suggested that the school's Guidance Office to consider conceptualizing program of activities for supervisors, faculty and students, for example, activities may include casual games to strengthen interpersonal relationships. Also, to increase students' class performance, it is worthy to consider the student's multiple intelligences. Moreover, the workplace environment be maintained as to its proper ventilation, lighting and accessibility of equipment needed in the performance of their job. For future researchers, to look into other variables to associate the construct of stress.

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