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Occupational Stressors and Stress Levels of Faculty Members at a Camarines Sur State College

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ABSTRACT Stress is a fact of everyday life, felt with the family, business, academe, workplaces, political organisations, and in any other social or economic groups and activities. Thus, this study determined the stressors and the stress level of the Camarines Sur Polytechnic College's (CSPC) faculty and formulated an action plan to help the faculty cope with stress. The descriptive survey method was used with a survey questionnaire, the main gathering tool for data supplemented by an unstructured interview. Purposive sampling determined the respondents. Percentage technique, weighted mean, and rank order were used to determine the percentage of the professional profile, sequence standing of data gathered, and the perceived stressors and level of stress. On professional profile along with educational attainment, the majority of the respondents were with Doctoral units. Stressors found to highly affect the stress level of the CSPC faculty were class size and workload. The study concluded that different academic activities, workloads, and time constraints contribute largely to the stress levels of the CSPC faculty.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an everyday life factor, especially in academe. Classroom setting, immeasurable heat, lack of learning materials and equipment, conflicting schedule of activities, crowded faculty room, noisy students in the lobby, and some other stressors are present in the academic environment. Nowadays, everyone talks about stress. High pressure cannot be felt in the higher position only, it is cascaded to the faculty rank and files and radiates to the students. One cannot avoid stress, as it has become an element of modern life, as the difficulty and competition increases in the current living standards. With the overwhelming and quite baffling pace change that has taken over the world today, with fast-changing times, no one and no profession can be free from stress.

Experiencing stress is a common event, whether it is within a personal, professional, social, and/or economic activity. Stress is now the primary concern and dilemma in everyone's life, but surely, everybody wants lesser, if not any of it is. Stress is a topic quite difficult to avoid, as it has become a part of day-to-day living, knowingly or unknowingly. Stress, according to Elizabeth Scott (2020), can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. After all, stress does affect both the physical and mental health as well as the overall performance of an individual, though this may vary depending on certain attributes like gender, workload, capabilities, educational attainment, and coping mechanisms, which are proven in the studies conducted by Thompson and Dey (1998), Salom (2013), King (2014), Anbumalar et al. (2017), and Seaward (2017). Faculty roles are challenging and often stressful. This is especially true for scholars who are marginalised due to their race. Seaward (2017) also specifically mentioned that stress has various types and if often experienced, can lead to serious mental and physical health conditions.

It is public knowledge that a college instructor or a teacher is performing a dual role like a teacher in the classroom and a family person at home. These responsibilities call for multiple actions and roles that bring the faculty to a greater strain who are still in need to manage a balanced life in school and at home. In Jintalan's study (2020), the family is found to be seen as one's top priority, and its pressure is considered one big factor for an individual like unemployment, which is another stress contributor. This can also be very complex to a simple human being who is mandated to perform a variety of functions like doing research, extension, and production (Aslam 2013). These alone can be considered as factors that can promote stress to a

faculty. Aside from these facts, few studies like Aslam (2013), are comparing the levels of stress of college professors

Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive study on occupational stressors among college faculty. Under the section of Review of Related Literature, it is also revealed that no such study on the topic has been attempted in the Philippines and the locality, and hence the present study on "Occupational Stressors of the Faculty Members of Camarines Sur Polytechnic College" has been undertaken. The output of this study can be used by the college to review the program and activities identified as occupational stressors of the faculty to lessen their stress.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the professional profile of the faculty members along with educational attainment, occupational stressors perceived by the faculty, and its level of stress along with classroom settings and workload related functions, with the intent to formulate an action plan that can help the faculty members cope with their stress along with the two parameters.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The descriptive survey was used, which involves the collection of factual data through the use of questionnaires as the main data-gathering instrument. Then, the descriptive-evaluative design was used in the analysis of the data, as the researcher focused on determining which stressors affect the stress levels of the CSPC faculty the most. The unstructured interview method was used to substantiate the analysis and interpretation of the data supplied by the respondents who were the sixty-eight regular faculty of the college. The respondents of this research were the faculty of the Camarines Sur Polytechnic College, which were determined through purposive sampling of all those who are occupying a plantilla position. This method was employed by the researcher to gather complete information regarding the perceived occupational stressors and their level of stress affecting the faculty.

The utilised questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on varying sources on stressors in the workplace. The occupational stressors perceived by the faculty were evaluated using a four-point Likert scale. The following scales were used to interpret the perceived occupational stressors, that is, 1.0-1.6: Never, 1.7-2.46: Seldom, 2.47-3.23: Sometimes, and 3.24-4.0: Always. On the level of stress affecting the faculty, the same four-point Likert scale was used, that is, 1.0-1.6: Very Low, 1.7-2.46: Low, 2.47-3.23: High, and 3.24-4.0: Very High.

Data were gathered during the second semester through a questionnaire that was distributed to all regular faculties through a student enumerator and the researcher herself who personally distributed and retrieved the same. After a couple of days that questionnaires were retrieved and data were tallied and statistically analysed.

The Percentage Technique was used to determine the percentage of the professional profile of the faculty along with educational attainment. Rank Order was also utilised to show the sequence standings of the data gathered particularly on the professional profile of the respondents being presented in terms of frequencies. Weighted Mean was used to present the work setting variables perceived as stressors and the level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational Attainment

The survey results on the professional profile of the respondents according to educational attainment shows that faculty with a doctoral degree is 16 or 23.53 percent of the total respondents, though the majority of which are already with doctoral units at 23 or 33.82 percent of the total respondents, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Professional profile along with educational attainment

Educational attainment	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Baccalaureate	2	2.94
Master's Degree	20	29.41
Doctorate Degree	16	23.53
Doctoral Units	23	33.82
MA Units	7	10.29
Total	68	100

Findings imply that the majority of the faculty are already enrolled in doctoral degree courses with

23 or 33.82 percent of the total respondents considering that faculty with doctoral units ranked one from among the educational attainment of the faculty. This can be related to the age of the majority of the respondents, which is 47-51 years old. As found in the study Rauschenbach (2016), age can play a factor in stress due to multiple subfactors like work and responsibility. This is also the stage of life where promotions are the top priority of the employees and the need to pursue graduate studies is a pressing need. Such has been supported by the National Teacher's College (N.D.) which viewed graduate studies as an important tool for professionals on changing gears and acquiring the necessary education and experience for possible succeeding careers, which Jintalan (2021) supported in her study, with a list of needed competencies gearing towards a professional who utilises information technology for a bigger leap from being traditional. There are measurable perceived differences in earnings with adults in their late twenties and early thirties who have taken graduate degrees.

Baum and Steele's (2017) study mentioned those graduate degree holders, having steeper earning paths, particularly those with doctoral and professional degrees, cause the growth in earning gaps, as individuals transition to their late thirties and forties. Also, this can be the prime reason why these ages of employees go back to graduate school studies.

A. Occupational Stressors and Level of Stress

The existing stressors in every working environment are perceived to affect the person differently as shown by the implications of the results of the survey conducted. Personality differences are perceived to be a possible big factor in how the respondents are being affected by these stressors.

Classroom Setting

A classroom setting can be a big factor in the teaching and learning process. If stress can be felt by the teachers and students the learning of the students can be sacrificed. Table 2 shows the survey results on perceived stressors and their level of effects on the faculty in the classroom setting.

The class size ranked first as the main stressor among the other four indicators with a weighted mean of 3.43 and a verbal interpretation of 'Sometimes'. It is also the highest level of stress with a weighted mean of 3.26 and a verbal interpretation of 'High'. On the other hand, the tables for teachers ranked last among the other four indicators with a weighted mean of 2.54 and a verbal interpretation of 'Sometimes'. Likewise, it is the lowest level of stress with a weighted mean of 2.47 and a verbal interpretation of 'High'. Overall, the average stressor in the instruction along the classroom is 2.94 and verbally interpreted as 'Sometimes'. Also, the average level of stress in the classroom is 2.83 and is interpreted as 'High'.

Table 2: The occurrence of stressors and the level of stress in the classroom setting

Instruction	*Stressor*			*Level of stress*		
	Weighted mean	*Rank*	*VI*	*Weighted mean*	*Rank*	*VI*
Classroom						
1. Tables for teachers	2.54	5	Sometimes	2.47	5	Low
2. Conduciveness to learning	2.90	3	Sometimes	2.75	4	High
3. Number of student chairs available	2.85	4	Sometimes	2.87	2	High
4. Class size	3.43	1	Sometimes	3.26	1	High
5. Instructional resources available for classroom use	2.99	2	Sometimes	2.81	3	High
						High
Average	2.94			2.83		High

The results imply that a large number of the members of the class contribute mainly to the stressor of the instructors in the academe. It is noted that for the past five years, according to the data of the registrar's office, the average class size of students is 50. Because of the large volume of students in the classroom, the instructors find difficulty in classroom management because of the diversity of the learners. Moreover, because of the large number of classes, proper ventilation of the classroom is compromised. When the classroom is not any more conducive to learn, the teaching and learning process is greatly affected. In an interview, Teacher A disclosed that for the more than ten years of her teaching experience in the College, she finds a hard time memorizing the names of all her handled classes.

Thus, she admitted that sometimes, she cannot properly address the learning needs of her students because of the overwhelming number of students every semester. Teachers B, C, and D divulged that they have almost the same experience. They said that because of the large number of students in every class, classroom activities are only limited. Hence, they opted to practice lecture-type of discussion most of the time. The table for teachers is not anymore, a problem for the instructors. In every classroom, there is always a teacher's table and a chair. They can place their instructional materials and personal things during classroom discussions. However, Teachers A and D suggested that although the tables should be larger since they are using multimedia equipment in their classes.

Forlin (2010) investigated the potential stressors for teachers in Queensland Primary School. It was found out that the number of students especially their behaviours affected the professional competence of the teachers. These findings are supported by the statement of Hatch et al. (2018), who mentioned that ultimately, a smaller class would be a more cohesive unit than a larger one. Also, it would be better for teachers to be able to determine each student's strengths, weaknesses, and needs, rather than simply an instructor, to become a genuine role model to the students. The behaviour of the students in a large class was also one of the findings of Borg et al. (2006) in their study about the occupational stress of Maltese primary school teachers. Because of this kind of problem, teachers' stress becomes high, and their job satisfaction level becomes low.

B. Workload Related Functions

The main objective of any organisation is to increase employees' performance by all means. Because of this objective, an organisation may sometimes overlook the workload of an employee, which will eventually result in a stressful working environment. Table 3 shows the stressor level re-

Table 3: The occurrence of stressors and its level of stress in the workload related functions

Instruction	*Stressor*			*Level of stress*		
	Weighted mean	*Rank*	*VI*	*Weighted mean*	*Rank*	*VI*
Workload Related Functions						
1. Process of preparing the lessons	2.49	4.5	Rarely	2.26	6	Low
2. Quantity of workload	2.69	2	Sometimes	2.84	1	High
3. Administrative support	2.59	3	Sometimes	2.75	2	High
4. Scheduling of subjects	2.79	1	Sometimes	2.69	3	High
5. Completion of Syllabi	2.46	6	Rarely	2.32	5	Low
6. TOS preparation Instructional resources available for classroom use	2.49	4.5	Rarely	2.41	4	Low
Average	2.58		Sometimes	2.55		High

sults of the faculty in instruction along with the workload-related functions.

The results imply that the scheduling of subjects contributes substantially to the stressor of the instructors in the academe. It is noted that for the past five years, according to some faculty, the scheduling of subjects is usually assigned until noon and starts again at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Because of the very high temperature together with the small classroom with a great number of students, the faculty was very honest in saying that unbearable warmth inside the classroom is being felt by everybody. Hence, the quality of learning is greatly affected. Because of the large volume of students in the classroom, the instructors find difficulty in classroom management because of the diversity of the learners.

Moreover, because of the large number of classes, proper ventilation of the classroom is compromised. When the classroom is not any more conducive to learning, the teaching and learning process is greatly affected. In an interview, the faculty freely express their opinions about the provision of more ceiling fans because their sweat is already getting into their eyes, thus affecting their efficiency to deliver their knowledge to the students. Also, students are already uncomfortable with the situation and consequently destructing their focus to learning and some students would usually go out to inhale some fresh air.

The process of preparing the lessons is not anymore, a problem for the instructors. Every semester there is always a need to prepare the lessons and the majority if not all are already used to that being a primordial concern of an instructor. Though in an interview, the majority of the respondents expressed their need to have a nice and comfortable faculty room where they can comfortably prepare their lessons.

Shabbir and Naqvi (2017) conducted research that explored the effect of workload and job complexity on employee job performance. The study found out that job stress and workload are positively correlated with a significant value, which shows the two variables had a positive correlation. The study explored by Kusters (2016) supported these findings by examining the role of HR on moderation as perceived by employees, enhancing their wellbeing, and relating the workload and burnout among teachers.

This study found out that a higher workload results in a higher level of burnout, thereby suggesting that workload is proportional to burnout levels. Abbas and Roger's (2013) study was conducted to understand the relationship between stressors, coping mechanisms, stress, and burnout. Specifically, it examines coping mechanisms and resources and their moderating effect on the relationship between different stressors and the resulting stress. Significantly, the results revealed that social support provides moderation in the relationship between overload and stress.

C. Other Occupational Related Stressors

As college instructors the job is not only centered on teaching or in the four mandated functions like instruction, research, extension, and production but also to do tasks related to the main function thus, facing other occupational-related stressors. Showed in Table 4 are the survey results on the level of stress of the faculty for other occupational-related stressors. It can be seen that Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCUP) and International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certification concerns ranked first from among the eleven indicators of occupational stressors with a weighted mean of 3.28 verbally interpreted as 'High'. On the other hand, committee membership ranked last with a weighted mean of 2.47 and verbally interpreted as 'Low'.

The findings of the study imply that [1]AACUP and [2]ISO accreditation, which are high standards-based national and international academic quality assurance activities that involve months of preparation for in-depth scrutiny of both documentary and performance-based compliance, and other activities contribute largely to the stressors of the faculty in the academe. It is noted that for the past years of submitting the college to these accrediting bodies, the faculty can no longer meet their students and most of the time stayed in the college overnight working on the needed documents. The researcher did some informal interviews with the faculty to validate some data gathered. A group of faculties disclosed that the stress felt during the preparation of documents and even during the accreditation proper were beyond compare.

Another group of faculties attested that ISO is a brain-cracking and emotionally draining activity

Table 4: The occurrence of stressors and its level of stress in the workload related functions

Other occupational-related stressors of faculty members	*Level of stress*		
	Weighted mean	*Rank*	*Verbal interpretation*
Committee chairmanship	2.66	8.5	High
Committee membership	2.47	11	Low
Meetings	2.79	6	High
Reportorial requirements	3.16	3	High
Accreditations	3.28	1.5	High
ISO	3.28	1.5	High
Appreciation for accomplishments from concerned officials or colleagues	2.84	5	High
The behavior of colleagues and superiors	2.87	4	High
Biases or discrimination	2.71	7	High
Accomplishment of reports	2.66	8.5	High
Role ambiguity/Conflict	2.57	10	High
Grand Mean	2.84		High

due to some sarcasm and unpleasant manner of some persons involved. Thus, stress effect on them is high, and according to them, this could be dangerous to health. Some faculty stressed that specific research for this activity is conducted to see the overall perceptions of the whole CSPCeans regarding these ISO and AACUP activities. Some faculty said it is not the activity per se that causes stress but the process of doing it. These groups of faculties suggested that a system should be adapted in the college to lighten the burden of the faculty as far as these activities are concerned. Such a system may lessen the days of preparation and at the same time the stress attached to it. There could be a system that will not sacrifice the classroom function of the faculty thus, adhering to the quality and excellent education of the college.

D. Proposed Plan of Action to Help Faculty Members Cope with Stress

A medical doctor, Ponton (2016), said stress hits everyone in life, though it is good to have it sometimes because stress keeps focus and stay motivated. But too much of it can shorten lives. When a person is feeling low and stressed out, one may become unable to think or act normally resulting in low performance.

Based on the summary of survey results on stressors and level of stress in Table 5, a proposed plan of action for the CSPC Management is developed and shown in Table 6. This proposed action is hoped to lessen the stress being faced by the faculty. Those stressors that rank 1st and 2nd in their level of stress as perceived by the respondents were listed as indicators and were given their respective plan of action, which is dependent on its need. The highest level of stress affecting the faculty also pointed out to be given the priority on the action needed to be implemented.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, which showed that on the professional profile along with educa-

Table 5: Summary table for the stressors and level of stress

Indicators	*Stressor*			*Level of stress*		
	Weighted mean	*Rank*	*VI*	*Weighted mean*	*Rank*	*VI*
Indicators						
Classroom setting	2.94	1	Sometimes	2.83	2	High
Students related stressors	2.77	2	Sometimes	2.81	3	High
Workload related functions	2.58	6	Sometimes	2.55	7	High
Occupational related stressors	-	-		2.84	1	High
Grand Mean	2.73		Sometimes	2.72		High

Table 6: Proposed plan of action to help faculty members cope with stress

Identified stressors	*Level of stress*	*Proposed action*	*Objectives*	*Office responsible*	*Target date*	
					Start	*End*
1. Instruction						
A. Classroom A1. Class size	R - 1 - High 3.26-r1	Strict compliance with the approved class size of 1 faculty for every (40) student for lecture and (25) for laboratory subjects should be observed.	*To lessen the stress encountered by the faculty.* *Note: There is an approved CNA that more than 40 students 25 units are being added. However, the number of students should not be more than 50. More than 50 students promote a very high level of stress in the classroom.*	Academic Division Dean's office and the VFAAs office.	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	Year-round
A2. Instructional resources available for classroom use	R-2 High 2.81	Provision of instructional resources needed in the classroom. For example, multimedia projector in each room, and many more.	*To sustain the quality education and services and; to lessen the level of stress in the classroom.*	Deans offices, budget office, VPAAs office, and procurement office.	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	CY 2020
B. Students Related Stressors (Attitude)						
B1. Student preparedness	R-1 High 2.93-r3	-A dialogue with the students - Symposia	*To trace the problem of why they are not preparing their lessons.*	Deans office, SDS office, class advisers, and CSC	2nd semester S/Y 2018/2019	Continuous activity every year
B2. Students attitude and interest	R-2 High 2.87	Guidance counseling	*To analyze deeper the cause of such an attitude.*	Deans offices, Guidance office, class advisers, and parents Academic Division	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	Continuous activity every year
C. Workload Related Functions						
C1. Quantity of workload	R-1 High 2.84	Use a team or individual effectiveness process approach	*To determine the cause of overwork and excessive workload to lessen the stress encountered*	Deans offices, and VPAAs office	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	Continuous activity every year
C2. Administrative support	R-2 High 2.75	Provision of needed administrative support to the faculty in the conduct of their functions	*To provide the support needed by the faculty and lessen the stress encountered*	Deans offices, and VPAAs office, administration	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	Continuous activity every year
D. Faculty Room						
D1.Security of faculty valuables	R-1 High 2.84	Provision of an individual table with drawers where the faculty can safely keep their valuables while they	*To limit the chance of losing the valuables of the faculty.*	Deans office, VPAAs office, procurement, and faculty concern	2nd semester of S/Y 2018/2019	Continuous activity every year

Table 6: Contd...

Identified stressors	*Level of stress*	*Proposed action*	*Objectives*	*Office responsible*	*Target date*	
					Start	*End*
		are in the classroom. (Employees manual provision B-4 pg. 124)				
D2. Noisy environment	R-2 High 2.75	Provision of faculty room together with the department deans.	*To limit the noise and promote silence in the work area for a more productive faculty*	Deans office, VPAAs office, procurement, and faculty concern	1st semester of S/Y 2019/2020	2nd semester of S/Y 2019/2020
E. Research						
E1. Funding needed for research	R-1 High 2.97-r2	Provision of funds needed in the approved research proposal	*To add the fund allotment for every research considering the inflation rate of our Philippine peso*	Dean's office, VPAAs office, budget office, research office, and the administration	/Y 2019-2020	CY 2020
E2. Adequacy of time allotted for the conduct of research	R-1 High 2.91	Capacitate/re-orient researchers on the systematic process of data gathering	*To facilitate the data gathering process.*	Dean's office, VPAAs office, budget office, research office, and the administration	S/Y 2019-2020	Continuous activity.
F. Extension						
F1. Equivalent unit load	R-1 High 2.82	Provision of equivalent subject load unit for the extension program/ projects/ and activity leaders	*To compensate for the extra time and efforts rendered by the faculty extensionists*	Deans office, VPAAs office, budget office, extension services office, and the administration	S/Y 2019-2020	S/Y 2019-2020
F2. Merit incentive earned through extension services conducted	R-2 High 2.76	Provision of policy that may address these issues and concerns on the merits earned on extension services conducted	*To encourage the faculty extensionists to participate in the extension program*	Deans office, VPAAs office, budget office, extension services office, and the administration	S/Y 2019-2020	S/Y 2019-2020

tional attainment, the majority of the respondents were with Doctoral units and stressors found to highly affect the stress level of the CSPC faculty were class size and workload, it can be concluded that different activities like the AACUP and ISO accreditation, as well as the schedules, workload, and classroom setting contribute largely to the stress levels of the faculty in the Camarines Sur Polytechnic College. As the stress effect by these stressors is proven to be very high, it can be deduced that this will also contribute to the decline of the health of the College faculty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As suggested by the groups of faculties interviewed as well as the contemplation of the researcher, it would be best to propose and adopt a system or possible policies on de-loading and overload, the adaption of new, and flexible weekly-work schedules, to lighten the burden of the faculty. With the researcher's proposed plan of action to the CSPC Management, the levels of stress of the faculty may be lessened and the stressors perceived by the respondents to be the highest contributors may be avoided, eradicated, or lessened at the very least. This plan to help improve the faculty's stress management can only be achieved with the full cooperation of both the administration and the faculty members of the College.

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NOTES

[1] http://www.aaccupqa.org.ph/
[2] https://www.iso.org/home.html

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