

Original Article

Teachers' Occupational Stress, Emotional Stability, Work Engagement, Stress Management Practices, and Job Performance during Covid-19

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Abstract: The main thrust of the dissertation was to determine if occupational stress, emotional stability, work engagement, and stress management practices can affect the job performance of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol, during the academic year 2021-2022. The study involves a total of 679 respondents. Part of its objectives is to present the profile of the teachers in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and length of service using frequency distribution and percentage. The study assesses the level of teachers' occupational stress, with three (3) dimensions; emotional stability level with five dimensions; work engagement with three dimensions; and level of stress management practices, with four dimensions, using the weighted mean. The study employs the cross-correlational study design in determining the relationship between the predictors (independent) and criterion (dependent) variables with the use of Multiple Regression Analysis. More so, the study employs Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient in determining the correlation in any two of the following variables: occupational stress; emotional stability; work engagement; stress management practices; and job performance. Major findings reveal that the implementation of modular distance learning (MDL) is slightly stressful and that the respondents are emotionally stable at a moderate extent. More so, they also manifest moderate levels of work engagement. However, they overcome work-related stress based on their ability to adjust with the new normal setup, resulting to a very satisfactory job performance. The study concludes that the respondents' highest educational attainment and stress management practices are the predictors for job performance. Moreover, the teachers' job performance in modular distance learning (MDL) relates to the level of their emotional stability, work engagement, and stress management practices. The study recommends for the formulation of an action plan to improve teachers' emotional well-being and work engagement.

Keywords: occupational stress, emotional stability, work engagement, stress management practices

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an unprecedented and unplanned change in the education systems around the world. Isolation, social distancing, the generalized feeling of uncertainty, and the absence of unanimously established guidelines or inequalities emerged, and the fear of contagion generated a high prevalence of anxiety, depression, stress, and sleeping disorders on the general population [1-3]. These effects were particularly evident in teachers since during the global health emergency, school buildings closed to protect the public's health, and many teachers, consequently, settled for innovative ways of teaching [4,5]. Therefore, instead of traditional teaching, teachers

learned an emergency remote teaching (ERT) technique defined as a transitory change from instructional delivery to an alternate mode of teaching due to crisis circumstances [6]. Consequently, teachers have experienced an important modification in their work format that has been perceived as an abrupt and unplanned change [7]. Although some teachers were ready to face the adversities, most of them had to adapt in a brief time without training and preparation [8]. However, even when school attendance was reinstated, teachers had to prevent the spread of the virus and face selective blocking and restriction measures during teaching activities [9]. However, some of the measures imposed to prevent contagion in schools also had a direct impact on the way teaching was carried out, with many classes adopting the hybrid format—with half of the students at home and half in the classroom—or bimodal [10,11], mirrored classrooms [12], small bubble groups [13], and even the use of the internet for all the school year [14]. Consequently, before the pandemic, teachers had little previous experience with integrating technology in their daily curricula [15]. That was made even more difficult by schools' lack of digital infrastructures and equipment, together with poor digital competences of the students, especially in relation to online safety [16]. Considering all that evidence, it is not surprising that during the pandemic period teachers tended to report higher levels of psychological difficulties, such as stress, anxiety, and depression [17-21]. In particular, the pandemic negatively affected teachers' experience of teaching and work-life balance in terms of higher levels of burnout and lower levels of both work engagement and self-efficacy. Burnout, work engagement, and self-efficacy in teaching, indeed, are highly interconnected. Burnout is conceived to be a state in which a person perceives having no more energy and having reached a point of no return in terms of mental, emotional, and physical resources [22-24]. During the pandemic, studies have shown increasing levels of burnout in teachers [25-28]. Over time, teachers have become more exhausted and under pressure, especially because of the change from classical teaching methods into remote teaching [29]. Furthermore, studies show that female teachers, compared to men, manifest a greater vulnerability in terms of experiences and consequences of burnout [30, 31]. Teachers' burnout can affect health and well-being, increasing the chances of suffering from physical and psychological pathologies [32]. More generally, the consequences of teachers' burnout are low satisfaction, absenteeism, substitution, early retirement, and deterioration in instructional self-efficacy and teaching effectiveness [33]. In addition, teachers' burnout is associated with a low teacher–student relationship, students' poor academic success, and behavioural problems [34-36]. As Covid-19 continues to affect millions of lives, adversities in education are also evident in many countries around the world. In the Philippines, most public-school teachers are driven to exert more effort in their job as the country implemented modular distance learning (MDL). As mentioned by [19], public elementary teachers in Maguindanao Province have to endure an hour-long trip from the city to rural schools in distributing and retrieving the learning modules of their pupils. The World Health Organization (2020) has defined occupational stress as an employee's response on work demands and pressures that are not suitable to their knowledge and abilities. Stress occurs in different work circumstances but is often made worse when employees received limited support from their leaders and colleagues. Even before the pandemic, [22] revealed that teaching is considered a highly stressful occupation, with teachers' work-related stress levels being the highest among professionals. According to [32], emotional stability maintains one's emotional balance under stressful circumstances. A person who is emotionally stable can tolerate and regulate minor stresses without becoming emotionally upset, anxious, or angry. In the academe, the unexpected new demands that educators are facing today have changed the perspectives of most teachers. In relevance to occupational stress and emotional stability, investigating the status of teachers' work engagement is also crucial in the wake of Covid-19. An author [25] cited that work engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right working conditions. The idea affirms to [30] who disclosed that employees with high levels of work engagement are energetic and dedicated to their work and immersed to their work. Another construct of the study aimed to explore the level of stress management practices among

public elementary school teachers. Despite the challenges in the new normal, being an efficient worker remains a paramount concern. In that sense, a person's ability and style in managing stress is very critical in the teaching profession. An author [33] cited that coping with stress involves adjusting to negative realities while a person tries to keep positive at the middle of dire circumstances. Aside from the aforementioned variables, the study also assessed the level of job performance among public elementary school teachers in the Division of Bohol. Relevant to that, [34] cited that job performance pertains to the act of performing a job at an organization. It consists task performance and contextual performance in the workplace. Many studies have viewed that job performance is rather a complex activity. In other words, a boring and monotonous job is disastrous to an employee's motivation to perform at their best or at the optimum level. The study assessed the level of public elementary teachers' occupational stress, emotional stability, work engagement, stress management practices, and job performance in the Division of Bohol. The findings served as the basis in proposing an action plan in promoting a desirable teachers' work-life balance.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used correlational cross-sectional survey design. For the data gathering, pilot-tested questionnaires were distributed to the respondents through Google Forms in adherence to health and safety precautionary measures because of the pandemic. For the statistical treatment, correlational formulas were used in determining the relationship between variables. The study was conducted in the Division of Bohol, during one year. Bohol Division is one of the 19 school divisions in Central Visayas. It is considered the largest school division in Region VII covering three (3) Congressional Districts in the province composed of 47 municipalities. One of the prime reasons in choosing the study locale is based on the current situation that Bohol is one of the provinces in the Visayas region with surging cases of Covid-19. As such, the responses of the respondents are essential in drawing key principles and issues of concerns in proposing an intervention program for the teachers' work life balance in the new normal and so on. For the respondents, the study involved a total of 679 public elementary teachers coming from the three (3) Congressional Districts in the province of Bohol, during the academic year 2021-2022. Eight (8) schools in every Congressional District with the highest teacher population was the main criterion for the selection of respondents. The study adhered to the following phases: pre-data gathering, actual data gathering, and post data gathering. After all requests were granted, the study distributed the sets of questionnaires through *Google Forms* to the respondents, who are the elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol. Answered questionnaires were retrieved online upon the completion of the survey. The study collated and tabulated all the collected data. After the statistical treatment, the study analysed and interpreted the results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By using frequency count and percentage, the study revealed 223 out 679 respondents were aged between 30 to 39 years old, comprising 32.80% of the population. The study was dominated by female teachers with a frequency of 619, comprising 91.20% of the population. The majority of the respondents were married, with a frequency of 582, comprising 85.70%. For highest educational attainment, 372 out of 679 earned master's units, comprising 54.90% and for length of service, 237 out of 679, comprising 34.90% are employed in the Department of Education (DepEd) between 11 to 20 years.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents N=679

1.1 Age	f	%	Rank
21 to 29 years old	77	11.30	4
30 to 39 years old	223	32.80	1
40 to 49 years old	205	30.20	2
50 to 59 years old	164	24.20	3
60 to 64 years old	10	1.50	5
Total	679	100.00	
1.2 Sex	f	%	Rank
Male	60	8.80	2
Female	619	91.20	1
Total	679	100.00	
1.3 Civil Status	f	%	Rank
Single	86	12.70	2
Married	582	85.70	1
Widowed	11	1.60	3
Total	679	100.00	
1.4 Highest Educational Attainment	f	%	Rank
Doctor's Degree Holder	6	0.90	5
With Doctoral Units	16	2.40	4
Master's Degree Holder	48	7.10	3
With Master's Units	373	54.90	1
Bachelor's Degree Holder	236	34.80	2
Total	679	100.00	
1.5 Length of Service	f	%	Rank
5 years and below	129	19.00	4
6 to 10 years	148	21.80	2
11 to 20 years	237	34.90	1
21 to 30 years	138	20.30	3
31 years and above	27	4.00	5
Total	679	100.00	

Table 2.1.1 presents the level of teachers' occupational stress using the six (6) sub-dimensions of Occupational Role. The study used the weighted mean as the basis for discussion.

As shown, the first sub-dimension which is "Role Overload" obtained the highest composite mean of 2.61 and interpreted as moderately stressful. On the other hand, the fourth sub-dimension which is "Role Boundary" obtained the lowest composite mean of 1.96 and interpreted as less stressful. The grand mean of 2.33 implies that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol did not experience a highly stressful work life in the implementation of modular distance learning (MDL).

Table 2.1.1: Teachers' Responses on Occupational Role N=679

SUB-DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1.Role Overload	2.61	Moderately Stressful
2.Role Insufficiency	2.30	Less Stressful
3. Role Ambiguity	2.51	Moderately Stressful
4.Role Boundary	1.96	Less Stressful
5. Responsibility	2.31	Less Stressful
6.Physical Environment	2.26	Less Stressful
Grand Mean	2.33	Less Stressful

Table 2.1.2 presents the level of teachers' occupational stress using the four (4) sub-dimensions of Personal Strain. The study used the weighted mean as the basis for discussion.

As shown, the second sub-dimension which is "Psychological Strain" yielded the highest composite mean of 2.73 and interpreted as moderately stressful. On the other hand, the first sub-dimension which is "Vocational Strain" yielded the lowest composite mean of 2.18 and interpreted as less stressful. Conversely, the grand mean of 2.52 reveals that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol responded that dealing with personal strain in the psychological, physical, and interpersonal aspects were moderately stressful.

Table 2.1.2: Teachers' Responses on Personal Strain N=679

SUB-DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. Vocational Strain	2.18	Less Stressful
2. Psychological Strain	2.73	Moderately Stressful
3. Interpersonal Strain	2.55	Moderately Stressful
4. Physical Strain	2.60	Moderately Stressful
Grand Mean	2.52	Moderately Stressful

Table 2.1.3 elucidates the level of teachers' occupational stress using the four (4) sub-dimensions of Personal Resources. The study used the weighted mean as the basis for analysis and interpretation.

As reflected, the first sub-dimension which is "Recreation" earned the highest composite mean of 2.68 and interpreted as moderately stressful. On the other hand, the second sub-dimension which is "Self-Care" earned the lowest composite mean of 2.13 and interpreted as less stressful. Consequently, the grand mean of 2.41 shows that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol generally reacted that dealing with their personal resources in the wake of Covid-19 was less stressful, specifically on self-care, social support, and rational/cognitive coping.

Table 2.1.3: Teachers' Responses on Personal Resources N=679

SUB-DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. Recreation	2.68	Moderately Stressful
2. Self-Care	2.13	Less Stressful
3.Social Support	2.47	Less Stressful
4. Rational/Cognitive Coping	2.34	Less Stressful
Grand Mean	2.41	Less Stressful

Table 2.2 exhibits the level of teachers' emotional stability in five (5) dimensions. The study used the weighted mean as the basis for discussion.

The fourth dimension which is "Optimism" acquired the highest composite mean of 3.40 and interpreted as very stable. On the contrary, the fifth dimension which is "Tolerance" acquired the lowest composite mean of 3.00 and interpreted as moderately stable. Based on the results, the grand

mean of 3.22 signifies that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol manifested moderate emotional stability concerning with the level of their tolerance and autonomy in dealing with the changes in the education system.

Table 2.2: Level of Teachers' Emotional Stability in Five Dimensions N=679

DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. Autonomy	3.15	Moderately Stable
2. Calm	3.26	Very Stable
3. Empathy	3.33	Very Stable
4. Optimism	3.40	Very Stable
5. Tolerance	3.00	Very Stable
Grand Mean	3.23	Moderately Stable

Table 2.3 illustrates the level of teachers' work engagement in three (3) dimensions. The second dimension which is "Dedication" compensated with the highest composite mean of 3.40 and interpreted as highly engaged. Contrarily, the first dimension which is "Vigor" compensated with the lowest composite mean of 3.00 and interpreted as moderately engaged. Similarly, the grand mean of 3.20 indicates that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol were moderately engaged in modular distance learning (MDL).

Table 2.3: Level of Teachers' Work Engagement in the Three Dimensions N=679

DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. Vigor	3.00	Moderately Engaged
2. Dedication	3.40	Highly Engaged
3. Absorption	3.19	Moderately Engaged
Grand Mean	3.20	Moderately Engaged

Table 2.4 elaborates the level of teachers' stress management practices in four (4) dimensions. The third dimension which is "Adapt" attained the highest composite mean of 3.45 and interpreted as highly practiced. In contrast, the second dimension which is "Alter" attained the lowest composite mean of 3.15 and interpreted as moderately practiced. However, the grand mean of 3.33 means that most of the public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol had successfully managed their stress levels through adaptation and acceptance.

Table 2.4: Level of Teachers' Stress Management Practices N=679

DIMENSION	COMPOSITE MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. Avoid	3.27	Highly Practiced
2. Alter	3.15	Moderately Practiced
3. Adapt	3.45	Highly Practiced
4. Accept	3.43	Highly Practiced
Grand Mean	3.33	Highly Practiced

Table 2.5 presents the level of teachers' job performance using the IPCR results. As revealed, the mean job performance of 4.000 deduces that public elementary teachers in the Division of Bohol demonstrated very satisfactory performance in modular distance learning (MDL).

Table 2.5: Level of Teachers' Job Performance N=679

Scale	Range	Adjectival Rating	(f)	(%)	Rank
5	4.500 – 5.000	Outstanding	11	1.62	3
4	3.500 – 4.499	Very Satisfactory	651	95.88	1
3	2.500 – 3.499	Satisfactory	17	2.50	2
2	1.500 – 2.499	Unsatisfactory	-	-	
1	1.499 & below	Poor	-	-	
Total			679	100.00	
Mean Job Performance:		4.000	Very Satisfactory		

Table 3 presents the linear relationships between the predictor variables and the criterion variable, which is the teachers' job performance. Using the Multiple Regression Analysis, it revealed that only the teachers' highest educational attainment and the level of their stress management practices predicted their performance in modular distance learning (MDL). On the contrary, teachers' profile on age, sex, civil status, and length of service had no influence on their job performance. Moreover, the level of occupational stress, emotional stability, and work engagement did not predict teachers' job performance in public elementary schools of Bohol Division in the new normal education.

Table 3: Linear Relationships between the Predictor Variables and Teachers' Job Performance N=679

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Standard Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.221 ^a	.049	.026	.222	.049	2.508	9	669	.000
ANOVA									
Model		SS	df	MS	F	p-value			
1	Regression	1.845	9	.205	3.808	.000 ^b			
	Residual	36.008	669	.054					
	Total	37.853	678						

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p-value	Decision (Ho)	Interpretation
	B	SE				
(Constant)	3.552	.127	28.040	.000		
Teachers' Profile	.013	.011	1.253	.211	Accepted	Insignificant
Age						
Sex	-.033	.032	-1.028	.304	Accepted	Insignificant
Civil Status	.019	.023	.853	.394	Accepted	Insignificant
Highest Educational Attainment	.030	.012	2.480	.013	Rejected	Significant
Length of Service	-.006	.006	-.925	.355	Accepted	Insignificant
Occupational	.030	.017	1.743	.082	Accepted	Insignificant

Stress						
Emotional Stability	.017	.033	.501	.616	Accepted	Insignificant
Work Engagement	-.010	.035	-.301	.763	Accepted	Insignificant
Stress Management Practices	.092	.032	2.902	.004	Rejected	Significant

Table 4 shows the relationship of the study's main variables. By using the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's Rho), it reveals that teachers' occupational stress is related to the level of stress management practices of the respondents, with no significant impact on the level of teachers' emotional stability, work engagement, and job performance. However, the level of teachers' emotional stability, work engagement, stress management practices, and job performance were significantly correlated variables.

Table 4: Correlations between Two Variables

Variable 1	Variable 2	r value	p-value	Decision (Ho)	Interpretation
1 Occupational Stress	Emotional Stability	-0.069	.074	Accepted	Not Related
2 Occupational Stress	Work Engagement	-0.053	.168	Accepted	Not Related
3 Occupational Stress	Stress Mgt. Practices	-0.127	.001	Rejected	Related
4 Occupational Stress	Job Performance	+0.121	.790	Accepted	Not Related
5 Emotional Stability	Work Engagement	+0.731	.000	Rejected	Related
6 Emotional Stability	Stress Mgt. Practices	+0.677	.000	Rejected	Related
7 Emotional Stability	Job Performance	+0.121	.002	Rejected	Related
8 Work Engagement	Stress Mgt. Practices	+0.677	.000	Rejected	Related
9 Work Engagement	Job Performance	+0.111	.004	Rejected	Related
10. Stress Mgt. Practices	Job Performance	+0.141	.000	Rejected	Related

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the teachers' highest educational attainment and the level of their stress management practices influenced their job performance in modular distance learning (MDL). It also concludes that teachers' emotional stability, work engagement and their practices on stress management are significant factors that affect the teachers' practices and their capabilities in managing stressful events which truly matter in dealing with the impact of Covid-19 to the education sector, specifically in the implementation of modular distance learning (MDL) in public elementary schools in the Division of Bohol.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn based on the major findings of the study.

- The school administrators are advised to conduct a district-wide emotional well-being enhancement program to provide the teachers with more emotional support in the aspects of autonomy and tolerance. They should also conduct a school-based teacher training on decision-making skills is suggested to increase their engagement level in the aspects of vigor and absorption. As such, teachers will be trained to be more enthusiastic and well-oriented in mitigating unwanted circumstances in the workplace.
- To the teachers, maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships is advised toward a sustainable emotional well-being amidst Covid-19. Participating in a district-wide emotional well-being enhancement program may also guide the teachers to be more authentic and enthusiastic with their job. Thus, it may also motivate them to improve the level of their engagement in modular teaching.

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