

# Job Pressure and Self-Knowledge as Coping Strategies of the Faculty

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## ABSTRACT

The 21st century have ushered new challenges for the educators. Much more so with the advent of new information technology, the paradigm shift in our curriculum and the onset of ASEAN 2015, the role of teachers has changed significantly. There is now a need for teachers to keep abreast with these changes to be able to cope with the demands of his or her profession and to cater to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century type of learners. Coping with these development may sometimes cause stress to teachers. Teacher stress affects various aspects of teacher health and may influence how effective teachers are in the classroom, with potential consequences for their students' behavior and learning ( University of Houston, 2011) Thus, this study aims to determine the stressors experienced by the faculty of Saint Michael College of Caraga and their coping strategies. The study used of the descriptive correlation research method. It was designed to determine the extent, to which different variables are related to each other in the population of interest. The researcher used universal sampling in this study. The respondents were all the full-time faculty members of Saint Michael College of Caraga. The researcher used validated questionnaires. The study revealed that the greatest stressor experienced by the teachers of SMCC is Job Pressure which includes maintaining *and cleaning the classroom facilities*. The least stressor is poor *human relations*. The coping strategy employed by the faculty of SMCC, *self-knowledge* ranked by the teachers as their common coping strategy employed

in dealing with stress. The least coping strategy employed by the teacher is *involvement in productive activities*. With the findings of the study as the baseline, the researcher proposed an Intervention Program. The said Intervention Program has two components namely, the Expansion of the school facilities as a mean to lessen the identified stressors of the teachers and the Personnel Development Program which includes establishment of the Professional Learning Community, Emotional Competence Training and the intensification of the Faculty Development Program.

### KEYWORDS

Stressors, job pressure, job scope, human relations, coping strategies, descriptive design, Philippines, Asia

### INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that along with serviceman, social workers and linguists, teachers have surfaced at the start of the new millennium as the most afflicted with rising stress (Joseph, 2000).

Teaching can indeed be a stressful occupation, since it is a continuous process of responding to the demands of the time and the changes in the learner's perspective. It does not only involve imparting a systematized knowledge but teaching also taps the performance skills of the learners to make them physically, intellectually, and socially equipped despite varied interventions (Anderson, 2004). To do this, the teacher must also provide avenues for achieving pleasure and delight in learning to be able to find the way to the learners' heart. Thus, a teacher then has to play many roles – manager, counselor, motivator, leader, model facilitator, and mother-surrogate just to mention a few (Ornstein, 1990).

In playing these various roles, a teacher then has the responsibility to hone his skills in the art of teaching. He should to demonstrate proficiency in the use of language, to adopt varied teaching strategies, to recognize changes, apply innovations, and to revise techniques for optimum results. More than knowledge and skills, a teacher is also expected to be compassionate and understanding to his learners (Anderson 1990).

It may be true that stress is part of everyday life, and that a healthy level is a natural part of the body's functioning, but without proper management, stress can lead to sleeplessness, tiredness, irritability, lack of appetite, ill-health and poor quality of performance (McShane 2000).

With these mentioned effects on an average individual or on an average teacher, it would seem to require some very healthy coping strategies to resist falling foul on surmounting pressures that are confronting teachers in the present educational and economic climate. Thus, stress management then should be one aspect that every school administrator should take seriously since it definitely can affect the performance of the teachers.

The need to provide quality education is one of the thrusts of Saint Michael College of Caraga being one of the educational institutions in this country. SMCC has transformed from a humble secondary school to what it is now at present after eight years. The institution now offers preschool education, elementary education, and college education.

Thus, this study is in line with the school's thrust on developing its human resource as the front liners of the organization. Since the school administrators have been looking after the welfare of the human resource, then, what stresses its faculty is also their concern because stress can have wide ranging effects on emotions, mood, and behavior of a person. Physical and mental stress may cause physical illness as well as mental and emotional problems (American Institute of stress, 2002).

## **FRAMEWORK**

Work-related stress is a multifaceted problem that can be linked to the organizational, physical or social characteristics of work and the work environment. It is therefore necessary to assess all aspects of work that can lead to stress, including work equipment and the physical and social environment. In education, work-related stress is often linked to violence, bullying (mobbing), harassment, and unacceptable student behavior (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2000).

Studies have identified the risk factors for work-related stress. These are a) the culture of an organization, and how it perceives stress; b) the demands made on workers, such as workload; c) the control workers have over their work; d) relationships at work such as the occurrence of bullying; e) lack of change management f) lack of clarity in workers' roles; g) lack of support from colleagues, and h) inadequate training provision (European agency for Safety & health Work, 2001).

Moreover, while there are many different occupations in the education sector, teaching is identified as a particularly stressful job (Smith, A, Brice, C., 2000).

Stress among teachers is a contributor to illness as well as a cause for some leaving the profession (Aitken, 2002), in Verdugo and Vere). A German study ranked the teaching professions as the occupations at highest risk of poor mental health, with teachers in schools for pupils with disabilities and those engaged in the complementary education of apprentices most at risk (Hasselhorn & Nuling, 2004).

In the education sector, work-related stress should be tackled at source, with a comprehensive strategy that; a) Identifies possible sources of work-related stress, and their underlying causes (whether the work environment, how the work organized, or the behavior of colleagues students, or parents) ; ) examines the potential impact of work-related stress; and c) works with the employees to identify and develop targeted solutions' works with the staff to implement those solutions and monitor their effectiveness, this work-related stress can be said to be experienced when, the demands from the work environment exceed the employees ability to cope with (or control) them. It is not a disease, but it can lead to mental and physical ill health. Work- related stress is a symptom of an organizational problem, not individual weakness (European Agency, 2002).

Motivation is one of the key ingredients in employee performance and productivity. Even if people have clear work objectives, the right skills, and supportive work environment, they would not get the job done without sufficient motivation to achieve those work objectives (Mcshane, 2000)

Most contemporary theories recognize that motivation begins with individual needs. Needs are deficiencies that energizes or trigger behaviors to satisfy those needs. Unfulfilled needs create tension or stress that makes the person wants to find ways to reduce or satisfy those needs. Content theories of motivation explain the dynamics of employee needs, such as why people have different needs at different times. (McNerney, 1996)

The role of motivation in performance is shown in Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory. Herzberg performed studies to determine which factors in the employee's work environment caused satisfaction or dissatisfaction. He called the satisfiers motivators and the dissatisfies hygiene factors, using the term "hygiene" in the sense that they themselves do not provide satisfaction (Herzberg, 2002).

Herzberg (1999) proposed that the employees are primarily motivated by growth and esteem needs, such as recognition, responsibility, advancement, achievement, and personal growth. These factors are called motivators because employees experience job satisfaction when they are received to obtain them. In contrast, factors extrinsic to the work, called hygiene, affect the extent that employees feel job dissatisfaction. Hygiene includes job security, working

conditions, company policies, co-workers relation, and supervisor relations. Improving hygiene will reduce job dissatisfaction, but they will have almost no effect on job satisfaction or employee motivation. If the motivation-hygiene theory holds, management not only must provide hygiene factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction, but also must provide factors intrinsic to the work itself in order for employees to be satisfied with their jobs (Herzberg, 1999).

Herzberg (1999) further argued that job enrichment is required for intrinsic motivation, and that it is a continuous management process. The job should have sufficient challenge to utilize the full ability of the employee, employees who demonstrate increasing levels of ability should be given increasing levels of responsibility. Prior to Herzberg's motivator-Hygiene theory were the content theories of Maslow ( Maslow's needs Hierarchy ) and Alderfer's ERG Theory (Herzberg, 2002)

The Alderfer's ERG Theory groups human needs into three broad categories: existence, relatedness, and growth. Existence needs corresponds with Maslow's physiological and safety needs. Maslow was a proponent of the earliest and best known content theory. Relatedness needs refer mainly to Maslow's belongingness needs. Growth needs correspond to Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs (Santos, 2005)

Although a few human activities occur without motivation, nearly all conscious behavior is motivated, or caused. A manager's job is to identify employees' drives and needs and to channel their behavior, to motivate them, toward task performance (Newstrom, 2002)

Internal needs and drives create tensions or stress that are affected by one's environment. Good performance results when motivated employees are provided with the opportunity (such as proper training) to perform and the resources (such as proper tools) to do so. The presence of goals and the awareness of incentives to satisfy one's needs are also powerful motivational factors leading to the release of effort when the employee is productive, then the organization also should take note of that and if possible rewards it. (Steers, 1991)

Motivation represents the forces within a person that affects his or her direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary behavior. Direction refers to the fact that motivation is goal-oriented, not random. Intensity is the amount of effort allocated to the goal. Finally, motivation involves varying levels of persistence that is, continuing effort for a certain amount of time (Steers, 1991).

In management, what is important understands the employees' needs in order for them to be able to work effectively since Unfulfilled needs create tension or stress. People tend to develop certain motivational drives as a product of the

cultural environment in which they live or work, and these drives affect the way people view their jobs and approach their lives.

Much of the interest in these patterns of motivation was generated by the research of David C. McClelland of Harvard University. His studies revealed that people's motivational drives reflect elements of the culture which they grow up – their family, school, church, and books (Rheem, 1995)

It is important, therefore for managerial planning to consider the effect of any proposed action on the needs of the employees. The employee should perceive security in his job and feel confident and proud in all aspects of his job. In this way, the organization will have motivated employees and motivated employees working effectively.

In contrast, an organization who fails to consider the needs of its employees in terms of their job environment, the loading of their job and human relations will create dissatisfied employees who felt the stress of their jobs.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study is to develop an intervention program for the faculty of Saint Michael College of Caraga based on the identified job stressors and coping strategies employed by the respondents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study used of the descriptive research method. The study was conducted mainly to identify the different stressors experienced and the coping strategies employed by the faculty of Saint Michael College of Caraga.

### **Research Locale**

The study was conducted at Saint Michael College of Caraga, Located at Atupan street, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte. It is about 26 kilometers from Butuan City, the regional center of Region XIII – Caraga Administrative region.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

In gathering the data, the researcher secured a written permit to administer the research instruments from the school President, Msgr. Bienvenido A. Betaizar. Then a letter stating the purpose of the study were addressed to the respondents as noted by the Principal.

The researcher personally administered the filling-up of the two (2) sets of questionnaires after a brief orientation with the teachers who were the respondents of the study. The respondents of the study were all the full-time faculty of Saint Michael College of Caraga numbering to 48 members of the faculty distributed as follows:

Departments	Frequency
Elementary	10
High School	14
College	24
Total	48

After the questionnaires were accomplished by the respondents, the researcher then retrieved the accomplished questionnaires after which the data were collated and tabulated according to the problems presented. The researcher also conducted follow-up interview to let the respondents expound their answers.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher used of the validated questionnaires used by Ngo. The said questionnaire was intended for special education teachers, revisions were made on some items to suit the intended respondents and was validated by her adviser.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts:

Part I – This part is about the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, educational attainment and length of service.

Part II – This part is about stress-related factors which included four components namely: job pressures, job scope, physical environment and human relations.

Part III – This part deals with the coping strategies of teachers when confronted with stress while performing their functions in school. It had five items namely: self-knowledge, having varied interests, having varied reactions, acceptance of others values, and involvement in productive activities.

The statistical tool were the percentage to determine the relationships of the individual data with respect to the whole. The frequency count was used to find

out the number of responses to each item in the questionnaire and the weighted mean was computed for each component.

The F-test ANOVA was computed to determine if there is a significant difference of the different variables involved. And to determine the significant difference of the means computed, the z-test was conducted.

In order to determine which of the computed means differ from each other and which means are statistically equal, Multiple comparison Test was conducted – the Duncan Multiple Test was conducted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the profile of the faculty of Saint Michael College of Caraga (SMCC), the majority of the teachers of SMCC belongs to the College Department and is composed of mostly female teachers. Most teachers are married and they worked full-time and have masteral units. Majority of them have served SMCC for less than ten (10) years and are quite young (20-30 years old).

As to the Stress Related Factors, the table below shows the Summary of the mean computation on the Level of Stress Experienced by the Teachers of Saint Michael College of Caraga and the Coping Strategies Employed by the Teachers.

Stress Related Factors	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Job Pressure	2.67	Sometimes	1
2. Job Scope	2.38	Seldom	3
3. Human Relations	2.14	Seldom	4
4. Physical Environment	2.42	Seldom	2
GRAND MEAN	2.42	Seldom	
Coping Strategies			
1. Self-Knowledge	3.66	Quite True	1
2. Having varied Interest	3.42	Somewhat true	4
3. Having varied reactions	3.44	Somewhat true	3
4. Acceptance of others' values	3.60	Quite true	2
5. Involvement in Productive Activities	3.30	Somewhat true	5
GRAND MEAN	3.48	Somewhat true	

The greatest stressor experienced by the teachers of SMCC is the stressor due to Job Pressure which includes maintaining and cleaning the classroom facilities. Job Pressure refers to the demand caused by the habitual employment in profession experienced by the teachers which results into a burden, tension and constraint which becomes a crucial and disturbing in the exercise of teachers' functions. The least stressor is one that is due to human relations. The identified greatest stressor is in accordance with survey by teachers.

The findings of the study showed that the most common coping strategy employed by the teacher is self-knowledge, teachers' confidence in teaching and managing their students lessens their stress, and by being widely informed in variety of topics, and by having a healthy relationship with their family and friends, recognizing the uniqueness of persons and by listening to music had helped a lot of teachers in coping with stress experienced by teachers in their workplace.

Confidence can boost one self-esteem. According to Abel (1995) individuals with low self-esteem exhibit more distress from negative events than those with high self-esteem. High self-esteem may protect the individual from distress by allowing the individual to feel less vulnerable and be more able to bounce back from stressful situations, High self-esteem may result in more active and effective coping and in enhanced motivation in response to stress.

## **PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

This intervention Program is proposed in the context of the findings of the study. Since the study identified the different stressors and the coping strategies of the teachers, this program is intended to reduce the stressors and to enable the teachers to cope with these stressors.

The proposed Intervention program has two components. The first involved the physical set-up of the school which is the expansion of school facilities. This program aims to lessen the high level of noise in the school environment, by designating areas which is at a distance from the academic classes for extra-curricular practices. The second part is the personnel development program, the goal of this program is to promote and strengthen the teachers' potential to deal with workplace stresses.

The Personnel Development Program includes the following:

Establishment of Professional Learning Community composed of teachers and administrators. This could be a small-group that will meet on a regular basis

to share and benchmark from each other's experiences on how to cope with the work demands.

Emotional Competence Training for the non-teaching staff which should include the institutional workers. This program aims to develop the emotional competence of the non-teaching staff as partners and support staff of the teachers in delivering quality education. This should be conducted at the beginning of the school year and twice in a year.

Intensify the Faculty Development Program to enable the teachers enhance their knowledge and skills thus develop their self-confidence and competence in delivering their role as educators effectively. And the Wellness Program which includes regular physical exercise (Zumba) or team building activities which will serve as stress reliever for teachers as well as to maintain their well-being.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings on the profile of the faculty of SMCC revealed that the Faculty Development Program of SMCC is very effective since most of the teachers are with masteral units and the population is quite dynamic since majority belongs to the age range of 20 – 30 years old and have been with SMCC for ten (10) years and above.

The stressor experienced by the teachers of SMCC is Job Pressure which refers to the demand caused by the nature of their employment which further results into a burden, tension and constraint which becomes a crucial and disturbing in the exercise of teachers' functions.

The teachers at SMCC are confident in teaching and managing their students and finds comfort in their family which made them able to cope with their stresses. The study also signifies that the teachers have confidence in themselves and in knowledge on the subject they taught such that they were able to cope with their classroom stress.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is highly recommended that for teachers to become most effective in their functions administrators must provide adequate resources or avenues for physical, intellectual, and professional development of the teachers. In this way, teachers may adjust and cope with the different stressors that their job entails.

To address the identified stressor of teachers which is the physical environment, it is highly recommended recruiting working students in high school who will be assigned to help maintain the cleanliness of the classrooms. It is further recommended that college students should also be assigned to one classroom to hold their class for easy monitoring as to who caused the untidiness and disorderliness of the classrooms. Institutional workers should also be assigned to clean the classrooms.

Since it was found out that self-knowledge is the most common coping strategy used by the teachers, then Faculty Development should be intensified to boost the morale and self-confidence of the teachers in coping with the demands of their jobs.

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