

Occupational Distress Among Student Teachers

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Abstract — This study explores the occupational distress among student teachers in Jose Rizal Memorial State University, Dipolog Campus. The occupational distress measured their physiological, psychological, and behavioral manifestations. The coping behaviors which have the same variables were also measured. A descriptive survey method was utilized in the study using a questionnaire adapted from Environmental Organization Source of Stressors Scale by Telapulo and George and from psychological stress literature of Robertson and Cooper (2011). The statistical treatment used were weighted mean and T-test for dependent sample to test the significant relationship between the manifestations of occupational distress and their coping behaviors.

It was found out that student teachers only manifested physiological, psychological, and physiological behavioral occupational distress sometimes. Physiologically, they oftentimes feel pain on the back; psychologically, they oftentimes feel worried about assigned lesson; and behaviorally, they oftentimes use fillers whenever in front of the class. However, student teachers cope up with distress through sleeping a lot during free time, talking over stressful situations with partner and family, and using computer or surfing the internet. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship among the manifestation of occupational distress to the student teachers when paired as to physiological and psychological, psychological and behavioral, physiological and behavioral. Thus, the following recommendations are offered: student teachers should be very prepared on their lesson plans and actual demonstrations. Field stud students may also form group sessions or group chats to share their distressed experienced on their practice teaching. And the college, may organize a seminar workshop on coping strategies for occupational distress prior to deployment.

Keywords — *Occupational Distress, Physiological, Psychological, And Behavioral Manifestations, Coping Behaviors*

I. Introduction

In 2010, 75% of the general population experiences at least “some stress” every two weeks (National Health Interview Survey). The experience of stress is part of daily life, it may affect physical and mental health, unfortunately, and stress is inseparable from the teaching profession. Teaching has now become a very demanding occupation with many stresses for a teacher who has many deadlines to meet and many responsibilities to shoulder besides teaching a child. The teachers are not immune to stress but it can be harmful whether physical and emotional responses

often affects the teacher's ability to function effectively, sometimes to the extent of causing risk of burnout (Arjmand, 2012).

It is fitting to relate these studies to the experiences and performance of the student teachers since they are also in the teaching profession. Student teachers are part of the schools who teach like teachers. Traditionally, student teachers are assigned to cooperating teachers in school setting for five to eight weeks. As for the student teachers of JRMSU, Dipolog Campus, they are to complete a full semester (4-5 months) practice teaching as a requirement of their college. Given the span of time they have to complete, an occurrence of harmful stress will not be denied by the student teachers. The stress and anxiety experienced by student teachers has attracted an increasing amount of attention over the past ten years or so. However, a brief survey of the work in the area immediately reveals that it has focused almost exclusively on the pressures experienced by individuals in the classroom environment; the danger of taking this helpful but incomplete picture as the whole scene. It may reasonably be asked whether school experience is not just one factor among many, which may create stress for student teachers. Indeed, many who work in teacher education will recall examples of students who cope very well with teaching practice, but who become distressed by other factors.

It is therefore a high time to identify manifestations of stresses to the student teachers of JRMSU. The point of this study is to determine the different factors that contribute to occupational stress undergone by the JRMSU, Dipolog Campus student teachers. Also, this aims to determine the manifestations of these stressors to the student teachers' psychological, behavioral, and physical health and discover the different coping techniques applied for the goal to achieve a well-adjusted practice teaching experience.

Literature Review

Stress is an inevitable characteristic of life and work. In any job, there are wide variety of potential causes of stress, some of which are common to both men and women, and others are specific to each group. Stress, which is conceptualized as the mental, emotional, and physical drain brought about by the perceived incongruence between job demands and employess' capabilities and resources (Akinboye & Adeyemo, 2002 as cited by Ogungbamila (2011), may be an important factor in turnover intention. This is because high level of job stress has been linked to increase headache, cancer, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and emotional distress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997 as cited by Oginni, 2013) decreased ell-being, increased psychological distress, violence, and the desire to quit the job.

According to Selye (1976) as cited by Hupbach & Fieman (2012), stress in ways that emphasize the physiological responses that occur when faced with demanding or threatening situations (e.g., increased arousal). These conceptualizations are referred to as response-based definitions because they describe stress as a response to environmental conditions. For example, the endocrinologist Hans Selye, a famous stress researcher, once defined stress as the "response of

the body to any demand, whether it is caused by, or results in, pleasant or unpleasant conditions” where work stress is unrelenting, some negative physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences may result. Although many writers refer to Selye as being a pioneer of the concept. Stress was essentially a neutral physiological phenomenon; it could be beneficial (eustress) or harmful (distress). He articulated the term distress to explain the impact on the body of arousal through stress. The term psychological distress has since been embedded within the context of strain, stress, and distress, and incorporates anxiety and depression, as these two disorders commonly co-occur. In the literature on stress in education, as in everyday use, the term tends now to be associated with negative consequences, although it is used in different ways, and with different degrees of precision.

According to Arjmand (2012) teaching is a stressful occupation; the daily interactions with students with students and co-workers and the incessant and fragmented demands of teaching often lead to overwhelming pressures and challenges, which may lead to stress. Where work stress is unrelenting, some negative physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences may result. Many teachers would agree that teaching is not only hard work but can also be full of stress due to school reform efforts, inadequate administrative support, plenty of paperwork, poor working condition, lack of participation in school decision making, and the burden of resources which have been all identified as factors that can cause stress in school. Occupational stress, which is believed to have an effect on the health of workers, is the concern of every institution. Present studies prove that psychosomatic disorders are noted to develop if workers experience prolonged exposure to job stress. Therefore, there is a necessity to find out the manifestations associated with stress to be able to identify them and prevent exposure to these stressors.

Several studies including Weniggarden et al. (2013) have indicated that there is a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and satisfaction. Psychological burnout leads to job dissatisfaction, negative attitudes towards the self, the occupation, and life in general, and finally emergence of behaviors such as withdrawal from the job, absence, and quitting the job. In response to these pressures, the staffs try to psychologically detach themselves from the job in a defensive manner in order to cope with the psychological pressures caused by the job. This leads them to become indifferent, suspicious, and rigid towards a job (Van Wijngaarden et al., 2004, Dehkordi et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, Farquharson et al., (2013) asserted that high levels of physiological and psychological stresses had decreased employees’ competencies in managing, regulating and controlling their job demands and this condition could lead to decreased job performance in the respective organizations.

On the other hand, studies have shown that psychological-organizational damages as well as occupational pressures have a relationship with job satisfaction. Occupational pressures could have damaging effects on many of the variables related to performance due to irreversible damages to the mental health of individuals (Khayatan et al., 2013).

Along this context, in the study of Cook and Babyak (2019) examined the influence of spirituality, as measured by the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale on occupational stress as measured by the Teacher Stress Inventory. The regression results indicated that teachers' spirituality scores significantly predicted time-management stress and work-related stress among middle school teachers in Northeast Texas.

II. Methodology

A descriptive survey method was utilized to present a logical presentation of the subject matter or problem. As classified as a type of quantitative method of research, it was believed to be of great use especially for this study where it only demands for how many of the JRMSU, Dipolog Campus student teachers manifest occupational distress during their practice teaching and their personal coping mechanisms to address these stressors. In addition, the data gathered from our respective respondents were analyzed and systematically organized to present a logical illustration of the problem.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of sex. As shown on the table, there were 42 male or 26.75 percent and 115 female or 73.25 percent. The total number of respondents was 157. It shows that most of the respondents are females.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	26.75
Female	115	73.25
Total	157	100

Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of course. The table shows that Bachelor of Secondary Education had a frequency of 28 or 17.83 percent and Bachelor of Elementary Education that had a frequency of 129 or 82.17 percent. This table shows that most of the respondents come from Bachelor of Elementary Education.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Course

Course	Frequency	Percentage
BSED	28	17.83
BEED	129	82.17
Total	157	100

Table 3. Manifestations of Occupational Distress to the Student Teachers in Terms of Physiological, Psychological, and Behavioral

	Mean	Interpretation
Physiological		
Experiences sleeping disturbance or insomnia.	2.09	Sometimes
Suffers from ulcer or hyperacidity.	2.36	Sometimes
Feels tired after school.	2.56	Sometimes
Experiences headaches after reading and checking papers.	2.71	Oftentimes
Gets tensed and experiences excessive perspiration	2.76	Oftentimes
Experiences abdominal pains.	2.21	Sometimes
Feels pain on the back.	2.83	Oftentimes
Suffers from allergies (skin allergies, allergic rhinitis, etc.)	1.98	Sometimes
Feels breathless and run out of words whenever I am in front of the class.	2.72	Oftentimes
Experiences indigestion.	2.70	Oftentimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.49	Sometimes
Psychological		
Gets depressed when reprimanded.	2.39	Sometimes
Feels frightened when in front of the class.	2.29	Sometimes
Feels frustrated when given undesirable grade.	2.78	Oftentimes
Gets tensed when the mentors give a strict glance.	2.50	Sometimes
Gets angry to pupils/students who don't listen to the discussion.	2.73	Oftentimes
Gets bored whenever not interested with the lesson/task.	2.77	Oftentimes
Feels worried about assigned lesson.	2.94	Oftentimes
Feels scared when name is called by the mentor.	2.68	Oftentimes
Feels afraid of thinking about the future task.	1.77	Sometimes
Feels self-doubts whether the task can be well or not.	2.85	Oftentimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.57	Sometimes
Behavioral		
Applies corporal punishments to students whenever they misbehave.	1.00	Never
Gets distracted despite of the minimal students' misbehavior.	2.46	Sometimes
Commits errors in checking students' answer sheets.	1.82	Sometimes

Not cooperating with my co-student teachers with regards to classroom task.	1.21	Never
Skips classes when I want.	1.00	Never
Feels sleepy during class hours.	2.05	Sometimes
Finds hard to sleep at night due to lesson preparation.	3.05	Oftentimes
Uses “fillers” (<i>kanang, kuan, ahm, etc.</i>) whenever in front of the class.	3.18	Oftentimes
Becomes clumsy and disorganize.	2.34	Sometimes
Lacks of concentration in doing classroom task.	2.21	Sometimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.27	Sometimes
Grand Mean	2.443	Sometimes

Table 1 shows the common manifestations of occupational distress among student teachers of JRMSU, Dipolog Campus in terms of physiological, psychological, and behavioral. On the physiological aspect, students felt pain on their back; psychologically felt worried about assigned lesson; and behaviorally, used fillers whenever in front of the class.

This means that student teachers manifested with occupational distress which is not alarming and quite normal and manageable. This distress is normal because the psychological feeling of worry, doubt, and frustration are normally experienced by people who do practice teaching. Similar with physiological and behavioral where student teachers feels tensed are breathless and finds hard to sleep at night can still be considered as healthy and normal form of stress.

According to Ogunbamila (2011), stress is conceptualized as the mental, emotional, and physical drain brought about by the perceived incongruence between job demands and employees' capabilities and resources, may be manifested to increase headache, cancer, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and emotional distress.

Table 4 Coping Behaviors Identified by Student Teachers in Terms of Physiological, Psychological and Behavioral

Physiological	Mean	Interpretation
Sleeps a lot during free time.	3.17	Oftentimes
Having an exercise regularly.	1.94	Sometimes
Cultivates a sense of humor and laugh.	2.58	Sometimes
Makes time for music, art, or other hobbies that help relax.	2.43	Sometimes
Improves study skills.	2.73	Oftentimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.57	Sometimes
Psychological		
Talks with my friends.	2.77	Oftentimes
Talks over stressful situations with partner/family.	2.85	Oftentimes
Sings my heart out in a song.	2.51	Sometimes
Shouts in a place where nobody could hear.	2.51	Sometimes
Writes down all my frustrations and distress.	2.78	Oftentimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.69	Oftentimes
Behavioral		
Eats junk foods and drink sodas.	2.48	Sometimes
Enjoys bar hopping.	2.55	Sometimes
Drinks alcoholic beverages together with my friends.	2.42	Sometimes
Uses computer or surf the internet.	2.59	Sometimes
Watches cartoon shows, movies, etc.	2.56	Sometimes
Average Weighted Mean	2.52	Sometimes
Grand Mean	2.593	Sometimes

Table 4 presents the coping behaviors identified by student teachers in terms of physiological, psychological, and behavioral aspects. From the table, the coping behaviors of the student teachers during practice teaching in terms of physiological aspect includes sleeping a lot during free time; psychologically, talking over stressful situations with partner and family; behaviorally, using computer or surf the internet.

This means that student teachers coped up with their stresses through sleeping during free time, talking with family, and friends and writing down all frustrations. Though student teachers were manifested with occupational distress, they have healthy ways of managing their stresses.

As stated by Hupbach and Fieman (2012), work stress may lead to negative physiological, psychological, and behavioral consequences, these stresses may even be beneficial to the person however if not well managed it can be harmful.

IV. Conclusion

On the basis of careful evaluation and analysis of the findings, the study revealed that student teachers manifested with occupational distress which is not alarming and quite normal and manageable. In the use of coping behaviors of the student teachers during practice teaching, like sleeps a lot during free time and improve studies skills that is in psychological aspect is very effective coping behaviors, because it helps to reduce stress during practice teaching. The same with the psychological aspect like talk with friends, talk over stressful situations with partner or family and writes down all frustrations and distress are useful coping behaviors of the student teachers to reduce stress during practice teaching.

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