



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN REGION 2

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ABSTRACT: *Occupational stress or work-related stress are the physiological and at times physical effects of negative activity in our workplace which result to workers being affected in terms of external and internal events, job demands and even co-worker behavior. This study was conducted to determine the organizational effects of occupational stress to higher education institutions of Region 2 namely St. Paul University Philippines, Cagayan State University and Quirino State University. A total of 72 HEI personnel were randomly selected to become the respondents of the study. Survey questionnaire was the primary gathering tool utilized in data gathering. This was floated, tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequency count, percentage mean and weighted mean. Results of the study revealed that increase in employee turnover ranked first in the effects of occupational stressors to the personnel of HEI in Region 2.*

KEYWORDS: *Stress, Organizational Stress, Occupational Stress, Managing Occupational Stress, HEI, Productivity, Absenteeism, Stressors,*

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a natural reaction of the body to any change that would require it to make an adjustment or response. A typical person is capable of employing various responses to be able to deal with stress. These reactions vary and maybe physical, emotional or mental in form. It must however be noted that stress is a normal part of life. The effects of stress to the body can be positive such that it enables the person to be motivated and alert in avoiding daily danger. Stress can also become negative when a person becomes continuously challenged such that he becomes restless between stressors. This results to the person becoming overworked and overly-tensed.

Stress that is continuous without relief is referred to as distress which is a negative reaction. Negative stress or distress usually results to the disturbance of the body's equilibrium and is exhibited by symptoms such as headaches, elevated blood pressures, upsetting of stomach, chest pains, sleeping problems and even problems related to sexual functions. Uncontrolled



distress may also lead to panic attacks or other forms of anxiety or worse depression. There were also researches proving that stress can contribute or lead to death causing ailments like heart diseases, cancer, lung ailments and liver cirrhosis.

Colligan, T. Et al, 2008 defines occupational stress or workplace stress as the change in one's physical or mental state in response to workplace that pose an appraised challenge to a particular employee. Several factors were identified to be contributory to workplace stress to include a toxic work environment, negative work assignment or loading, the types of scheduling being given, role ambiguity, style of management to include lack of autonomy of the worker to make his own decisions in the performance of required tasks, challenging relationship with supervisors and/or co-workers, bullying by management in the workplace, organizational climate and harassment also.

Ongori, H and Agolla, J.E. (2008) mentioned in their research that occupational stress has become a huge concern of not only management but also to all the stakeholders of an organization. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that inefficiencies associated with occupational may stress account to 10% of a country's GDP (Midgley, 1996). Gmelch, W.H. Et al (1984) cited in their research entitled "Sources of Stress in the Academe: A National Perspective" that there is a growing body of evidence that occupational stress adversely affects the productivity, performance, job satisfaction and health of professionals and that those professionals who are drastically affected by this include the professors. It was also found out in the research that 60% of the total stress in the life of the adults emanates from work or related to occupation.

The effect of stress overreaches the personal level as it significantly impacts the organizational level also. Stress can have profound impact particularly to the levels of productivity and motivation of the employees.

Levels of productivity are affected due to the health constrains experienced by stressed workers or employees. Aside from the physical aspect, poor emotional health also significantly affects the immune system, making the employee more prone to infection. These issues generally result to absenteeism, spike in the usage of health insurance and also the occurrence of work related accidents. Stress is a huge contributory factor to poor performance as a stressed employee can hardly focus on his job and cannot utilize his memory. Stress also leads to the feeling of negativity such as a feeling of poor management



support which leads to lack of enthusiasm and ultimately apathy. Companies filled with stressed employees frequently experience high turnover rates. This is generally not favorable as the said company would have to incur additional cost of training newly hired employees to hone them into such a level that would enable them to perform at desired levels.

The American Psychological Association (APA) acknowledges that work-related stress doesn't just disappear when you head home for the day. Stress management mechanisms must be adopted by the employee to be able to adopt with work-related stress and stressors. Such mechanisms are useful to enable the employee to maintain an acceptable level of work-life balance and enable him to perform at the maximum levels at work and live a full life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to determine organizational effects of occupational stressors existing in the workplace of three Universities in Region 2, namely, St. Paul University Philippines (SPUP), Cagayan State University-Andrews Campus and Quirino State University.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents according to;
 - 1.1 Gender
 - 1.2 Civil Status
 - 1.3 Age
 - 1.4 Nature of Work
2. How do the respondents perceive the effects of occupational stressors in their respective organizations in terms of the following:
 - 2.1 Employees' Absenteeism
 - 2.2 Turnover Rate of Employees
 - 2.3 Low Productivity
 - 2.4 Co-workers Alienation From Each Other
 - 2.5 Job Dissatisfaction
 - 2.6 Reduction in Organizational Commitment and Loyalty



METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive research method where a structured survey questionnaire was used as an instrument to gather data from the respondents. The respondents were randomly selected from three (3) Universities in Region 2, namely, St. Paul University Philippines, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan State University-Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City and Quirino State University, Cabarroguis, Quirino. The 72 respondents are faculty of the HEI. The gathered data were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the descriptive statistics like frequency counts, rank, percentage and weighted mean. To measure the respondents' perception on the identified occupational stressors, the 5 point Likert Scale was used, where the following adjectival rating was used to analyzed and interpret the data gathered from the accomplished questionnaires:

Very High (VH)	4.20 – 5.00;
High (H)	3.40 – 4.19;
Moderate (M)	2.60 – 3.39;
Low (L)	1.80 – 2.59;
Moderate (M)	1.00 – 1.79;

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	33	46%
Female	39	54%
TOTAL	72	100%

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of respondents. As presented there are more females at 54% and males at 46% with a difference of 8% more females than males.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	23	32%
Married	49	68%
TOTAL	72	100%



Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to civil status. Sixty eight percent (68%) are married and 32% are single. The table shows that a majority of the HEI personnel in Region 2 are married.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	28	39%
31-40	38	53%
41-50	3	4%
60 and above	3	4%
TOTAL	72	100%

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to age. As shown, majority are within the age-range of 31-40 at 53%. There are 39% who fall within the age-range of 21-30 and only 4% each for ranges 41-50 and 60 and above. The results presented on the table indicates that generally the respondents are falling within the millennial or generation Y that is ages ranging from 21-34 years old.

Table 4: Distribution on the Nature of Work of the Respondents

Nature of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Administrator	8	11%
Faculty Member	50	69%
Administrative Staff	14	19%
TOTAL	72	100%

Table 4 presents the distribution of the respondents' nature of work. Majority are faculty members or teaching staff at 69%, while administrators or supervisory presents only 11% and the rest at 19% are doing administrative or support staff.



Organizational Effects of Occupational Stressors to HEIs in Region 2

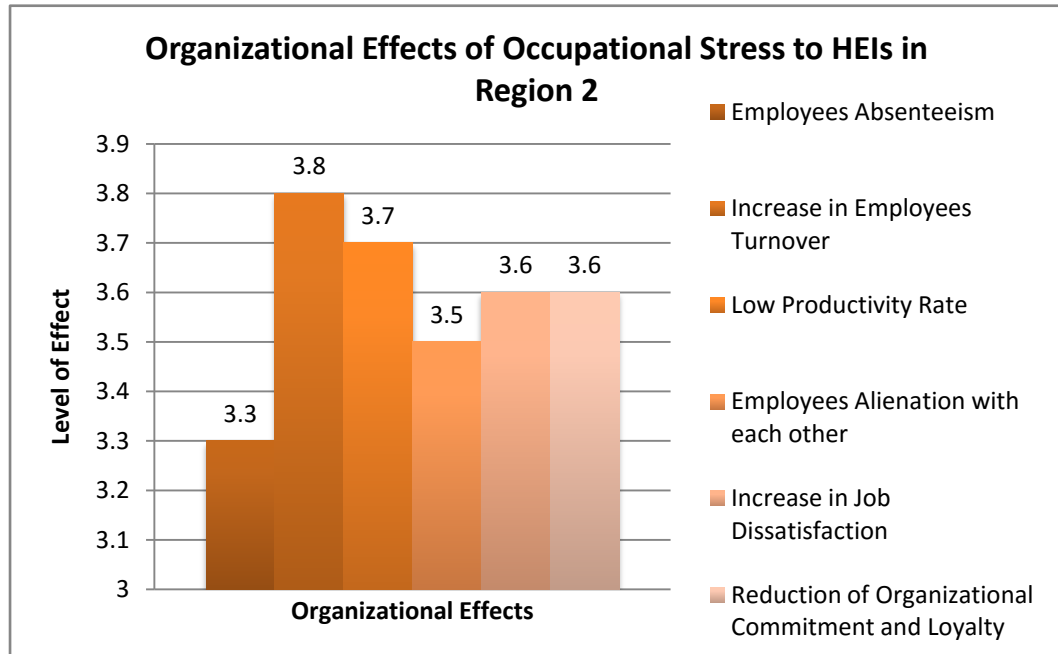


Figure 1

Figure 1 presents the perceived assessment of the respondents on the organizational effects of occupational stressors. As shown, the highest perceived effect is the “Increase in the Employees Turnover” with a weighted mean of 3.8. This is followed by “Low Productivity Rate” at 3.7. “Job Dissatisfaction” and “Reduction of Organizational Commitment and Loyalty” were both rated at 3.6. “Employees’ Alienation with each other” was rated 3.5. All of the stated perceived effects were falling under the “High” adjectival range with the exception of “Employees Absenteeism” rated at 3.3 thus falling on a “moderate” adjectival range. The resulting overall rating for the effects of stressor in the organization with a general weighted mean of 3.5 is considered “High.”

Result of the study gives with the results of the study conducted by Ongori, H and Agolla J. E. (December, 2008) which revealed that occupation stress affects employees in several ways and is considered as among the biggest contributory factor of employee turnover in many organizations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recognizes that occupational stresses do exists in higher education institutions of Region 2 and that it highly affects the personnel of these organizations. The findings of the study reveal that occupational stress adversely



affect higher education institutions in Region 2 primarily through increase in employee turnover, low rates of productivity, increase job dissatisfaction levels and reduction of organizational commitment and loyalty. The failure of HEI to address these issues might lead to the erosion of its profitability and also drastically affect its credibility and ability to deliver its primary mandate of delivering quality education. Administrators of HEIs would stand to gain hugely if they are able to identify the problems early on or at their infancy stage so that mitigating actions could immediately be undertaken.

Higher education institutions may also utilize secondary and tertiary intervention measures to address the effects of occupational stress among their personnel. These may be done through:

- a. Conduct of seminars program enabling the participants to recognize and deal with stress and identify organizational stressors. These activities also create a huge impact in tooling the participants enabling them to deal with future stressors.
- b. Hiring of stress counselors to implement counseling and assist in employee programs leading to improved mental health and aid them in coping with stress, most specially those who are already suffering from it.

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