



INDIVIDUAL STRESS MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS OF HEI PERSONNEL IN REGION 2

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ABSTRACT : *Stress greatly impacts the individual. It eventually affects the organization where the individual is working or associated. This makes it imperative for one to immediately address or manage stress. This research was conducted to determine the individual stress management interventions adopted by higher education institution personnel in Region 2. A total of 72 respondents coming from Cagayan State University, Quirino State University and St. Paul University Philippines were randomly selected to be respondents. A survey questionnaire was utilized as the main data gathering instrument, was floated, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequency count, percentage mean and ranking. Results of the study revealed that listening to music is the most widely adopted individual stress management mechanism adopted by HEI personnel in Region 2.*

KEYWORDS: *HEI, Personnel, Organization, Stress , Individual Approaches to Overcoming Stress, Stress Management*

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.

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.

Stress can be managed using two approaches namely through individual and organizational interventions.

Stress can be managed by the individual himself, enabling him to once more take control of his life. To be able to do so, it is necessary for the person to:

1. Gain sufficient knowledge of stress to include its cause, how to deal with it as well as how to control or live with it. It is important for the person to know the major sources of stress in his life to enable him to anticipate stressful periods and craft effective plans to mitigate such. The person must also be personally honest enough to admit and decide what his capacities and capabilities are as regard to stress management;
2. A person may never discount the significance of being physiologically fit. Being involved in any form of advertising especially non-competitive physical exercise like swimming, aerobics or ballgames is an excellent way to deal with excessive levels of stress;
3. Proper Time Management. Being able to decipher what must be done when it should be done is one task that a person should master to avoid stressful situations. It will be helpful to prepare a daily list of activities to attend to or to prioritize activities based on importance or hierarchy;
4. A person should be assertive, that is, being able to say “No”, when he does not mean “Yes” to be able to reduce the levels of stress being carried day by day;
5. Strengthened social support network is important to enable the person to have a listening ear whenever he needs to confide something to somebody.



6. Readjusting goals in life is also helpful as the person must really be certain as to what he really wants to achieve. This easily relates to the major life decisions that must be undertaken by the person. Adjustment of goals must take into account the abilities and resources of the person and not simply the increased levels of competition that the person maybe surrounded with.

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 seeks to determine the individual stress management interventions adopted by personnel of higher education institutions in Region 2 particularly from Cagayan State University, Quirino State University and St. Paul University Philippines.



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. What are the individual stress management interventions adopted by HEI personnel in Region 2?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive research method where a structured survey questionnaire was used as an instrument to gather data from the respondents. 72 respondents were randomly selected from three (3) Universities in Region 2 namely Cagayan State University, Quirino State University and St. Paul University Philippines.

The gathered data were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the descriptive statistics, like frequency counts, percentage and ranks. Ranking was used to determine the most utilized intervention among the HEI personnel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution Respondents' Gender

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

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of respondents. As presented, there are 39 female respondents accounting to 54 % of the total number of respondents. There are 33 male respondents making up 46% of the respondents. According to gender the respondents are almost equally divided with the female respondents having a slightly greater number.



Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Civil Status

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

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to civil status. Sixty eight percent (68%) are married and 32% are single. Most of the respondents 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 indicate 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. Table 4 implies that majority of the personnel of HEI in region 2 are carrying out the main function of the educational institutions that is the delivery of education.



Table 5: Stress Management Intervention Practices Adopted by HEI Personnel in Region 2

Stress Management Intervention	Frequency	Rank
Listen to Music	55	1 st
Eat Comfort Foods	52	2 nd
Take a Nap	48	3 rd
Talk to Partner/Friends/Family	47	4 th
Go to Church/Pray/Meditate	44	5 th
Go for a Walk/Jog	27	6 th
Play a video Game/Games	23	7 th
Read a Book/Magazine	19	8 th
Take a Bath	18	9 th
Go to the Gym/Exercise	15	10 th
Drink Alcohol	6	11.5 th
Take Medications	6	11.5 th
Try to Block it Out	2	13.5 th
Smoke	2	13.5 th
Self-Harm	0	15.5 th
None of the Above	0	15.5 ^t

Table 5 shows that stress management intervention practiced by HEI personnel in Region 2. It can be seen that listening to music top ranked intervention mechanism adopted by 55 respondents. Eating comfort foods followed is the second most adopted mechanism adopted by 52 respondents followed by taking a nap which is adopted by 48 respondents. This is closely followed by HEI personnel talking with partner/friends/family that is being adopted by 47 respondents and is ranked as the 4th most utilized intervention for stress management. 44 respondents seek divine intervention by going to church, praying and meditating, which is the 5th most widely practiced stress management mechanism.

Other stress management mechanism that are considered significant are the following, go for a walk/jog which is adopted by 27 respondents making it the 6th most adopted mechanism, playing video games which is adopted by 23 respondents, reading books and magazines which is preferred by 19 respondents and taking a bath which is practiced by 18 respondents.



There are two (2) identified negative reactions like drinking alcohol and smoking being practiced by at least 6 and respondents respectively. Likewise, 6 respondents seek the help of meditation and two (2) respondents practice blocking the stress out of one's mind.

Table 5 shows that listening to music is the most preferred individual stress management intervention. This can be attributed to the availability of gadgets that enable the personnel to listen to their preferred sounds. Also, this type of intervention is relatively cost-free.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of the following variables:
 - 1.1 Gender - Females outnumber the males with a frequency of 39 or 54% and 33 or 46% respectively;
 - 1.2 Civil Status – Most of the respondents are married having a frequency of 49 or 68% while the remaining 23 or 32% are single.
 - 1.3 Age – Majority of the respondents are within the range of 31-40 having a frequency of 38 equal to 53%. 39% or 28 respondents fall within the age range of 21-30 while there are 3 respondents whose age ranges from 41-50. They compose 4% of the total number of respondents. The same number of respondents was taken from the oldest respondents or those whose ages ranges from 60 and above. According to age, it can be perceived that most of the respondents are classified as millennial or under the Generation Y.
 - 1.4 Nature of Work - A great majority of the respondents are designated as faculty members having a frequency of 50 or 69% of the total number of respondents. 14 or 19% of the respondents work as administrative staff while the remaining 8 are working as administrators of HEIs. They comprised 11% of the total number of respondents.
2. Stress management interventions practiced by HEI personnel in Region 2. Listening to music is the most frequently applied stress management intervention practiced by the respondents followed by the practice of eating their comfort foods. It is worthy also to note that stress management mechanisms that tend to inflict self-harm to the respondents ranked the lowest among the mechanisms identified.



CONCLUSION

Working with high levels of stress creates havoc on a person's or employees' equilibrium as well as on his physical health. It effectively narrows one's capacity to function clearly, think effectively and enjoy life and work. Stress management, enables one to break the bonds of stress has over the life of an individual to enable the person to live a livelier, healthier and become more productive in the workplace with the ultimate objective of having a balanced life.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher was able to find out that HEI personnel in the Region 2 employ various stress management interventions to enable them to mitigate the negative impact of stress. Stress management is carried out in solidarity or whenever they are alone and also with the help of their closest peers to include their partner, friends and also members of the family. Effective management of stress is also carried out by channeling it toward other more productive undertakings like going to gym, reading magazines and also seeking divine intervention. However, despite the generally constructive stress management interventions adopted by the HEI personnel, a small number still resort to smoking to alleviate its debilitating effects on them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- 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. Implement physiological fitness programs for HEI personnel. Sample activities to be included in the program may be non-competitive physical exercise such as aerobics, walking, jogging or playing any ballgame as a way of dealing with excessing levels of stress.
- c. Strengthen the social support network within the organization to encourage the personnel to open up lines of communication and develop trust and confidence with each other. Support systems become premium in times of stress and crisis and expanding your social support system due to trust in the organization would enable the personnel to get through stressful situations.



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