



Level of Stress Among Employees in the Local Government Unit of Batac: Basis for Intervention Programs

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Abstract. This study determined the Level of Stress among Employees in the Local Government Unit of Batac: Basis for Intervention Programs. This study used a descriptive research design, and it described the profile of LGU employees in terms of the following personal and professional variables: name, age, gender, civil status, number of years in service, highest educational attainment, job title, employment status, and stressors along with the job, organizational, and individual factors. It also investigated the relationship between the profile and the level of stress. Likewise, it also determined the relationship between stressors and the level of stress. The statistical tools used to treat the data gathered are frequency, percentage, mean, and correlation analysis.

The following conclusions were drawn: most respondents are 41–50 years old, male, single, and college graduates. A significant percentage hold positions as administrative assistants with permanent/regular employment status.

The employees of the Local Government Unit of Batac have a favorable feeling of satisfaction with their quality of working life, the policies and practices of the organization, and their personal lives. However, there are still potential stressors along with job, organizational and individual factors such as heavy workload, interpersonal relationships with co-workers, and health concerns.

The stressor on job factors is a heavy workload, stressors on organizational factors are employees' perception of working with persons of their liking, and stressors on individual factors are health concerns like headache, migraine, and fatigue. Age, civil status, years in service, highest educational attainment, job title, and employment status have no significant relationship with employees' stress levels. In contrast, gender has a significant relationship with employees' stress levels.

Keywords: Stress · Local Government Unit · Job-Related Factors · Organizational-Related Factors · Individual-Related Factors

1 Introduction

Today, stress is acknowledged as a global issue for workers and businesses. As a result, the firm may incur losses and the employees' motivation and health may decline. Employees

who struggle with work stress may be more prone to low motivation, illness, decreased productivity, decreased job satisfaction, and decreased workplace safety..

Changes are taking place everywhere—in the environment, in organizations, and in individuals. Environments are dynamic. Individual skills and abilities deteriorate. Organizations are encountering a wide variety of dramatic changes [1].

Organizations like Local Government Units were impacted by the changes in the environment as a whole. Their environment includes forces that affect the way organizations perform, and LGUs are composed of individuals who are vulnerable to stress because of the nature of the work they perform. Employees had similar effects from a variety of elements relating to their personal life, respective careers, and the company to which they belonged. Many government workers experience high levels of stress as a result of their many roles and responsibilities, and they have demonstrated specific reactions to stress, such as increased intention to leave their jobs, decreased performance, decreased job satisfaction, increased anxiety, and increased depression [2].

As LGUs undergo dynamic changes to perform at competitive levels, the stress levels among employees are likely to increase. The Local Government Unit of Batac is an organization that plays a vital role in the realization of the development of Batacuenos. Thus, all of these factors contribute to determining the level of stress among employees in the local government unit of Batac, laying the groundwork for intervention programs.

This study envisioned improving the performance of the administrators and employees. Specifically, it can be significant for certain groups:

1.1 Administrators

This helped administrators identify the level of stress present in the local government unit of Batac, which enabled them to manage it by adopting appropriate strategies. It is crucial for management to actively combat stress in order for administrators to defend the company against charges that its jobs and working circumstances are stress-creating and are the main contributor to extensive emotional issues [3].

1.2 Employees

The findings of this study helped employees identify their stressors, recognize their level of stress, and gain insights into what measures might be appropriate in managing their stressors. All of these actions led to increased employee morale, productivity, and operational efficiency.

1.3 Local Government Units in the Philippines

Stress-inducing external stimuli had an impact on the LGUS. The nation's decision-makers, who are aware of this, can create laws requiring educational institutions to offer their staff stress management programs. The welfare of the populace in general is important to policymakers.

The findings may serve as a basis for crafting intervention programs for the local government unit of Batac; this will reduce the stressors they have. Likewise, the Mariano Marcos State University, where I am employed, may assist in its implementation through the conduct of extension programs and activities in the concerned LGU.

2 Literature Review

The researcher got a variety of literary works, which she used to conceptualize the study.

Joseph P. Kennedy, a diplomat and banker from the United States, once stated, "When the going gets rough, the tough get going." This implies that strong individuals can stand up and handle a challenging circumstance. This means that LGU employees want to overcome difficult situations. Thus, it is important to discover what causes them to feel stressed and why they respond differently to stress. The more one knows about stress, the more effectively it can be handled. Hence, this section reviews the literature on job stress.

2.1 Stress and Its Characteristics

Stress is "the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it," according to one definition. (Selye, 1987) [4]. It is a phenomenon that compounds and grows. Even though a minor stressor may appear trivial, it can become distressing when coupled to a stressful situation..

Stress has a positive value and a negative value. An individual can adapt himself to enjoy a maximum of eustress (positive stress) and a minimum of distress (negative stress). Therefore, stress is beneficial. It is where employees can typically describe numerous occasions when stress increased their energy level and enthusiasm or motivated them to solve a personal or professional problem in a personally beneficial way. The same is true when employees could describe other situations when they experience emotional turmoil, decreased work effectiveness, or increased problems in working with others as a result of stress.

2.2 Types of Stress

That stress may be physiological or psychological [5]. When a stressor causes a chemical, neurological, event other general bodily response, it is considered physiological. Stress is psychological, though, when it interferes with a person's social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health.

2.3 The General Adaption Syndrome

The three-stage General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) process outlines the physiological alterations the body experiences in response to stress [4].

The "alarm reaction," which describes the body's earliest signs of stress, is the first stage. It is the physiological stress response known as "fight-or-flight." This instinctive response gets you ready to either run away or defend oneself in perilous circumstances. Your heartbeat quickens, your adrenal gland releases the stress hormone cortisol, and you get an adrenaline rush that gives you more energy.

Resistance is the second step. The body starts to heal itself after the initial shock of a stressful incident and the fight-or-flight reaction. The quantity of cortisol released decreases, and the blood pressure and heart rate return to normal. Even as the body

moves into this phase of recuperation, it continues to be on high alert for some time. The body keeps repairing itself until the hormone levels, heart rate, and blood pressure return to a pre-stress state if the person manages stress and the situation is no longer a problem. Some tense circumstances last for a long time. If the person doesn't deal with the stress and the body continues to be on high alert, it ultimately learns to cope with a higher level of stress. The stress hormone is still being released by the body, and your blood pressure is still raised. The exhaustion stage may occur if the resistance stage lasts too long without breaks to counteract the effects of stress.

Exhaustion is the third stage. Long-term stress has led to this stage. Long-term stress management can exhaust your body's ability to cope with stress by depleting its physical, emotional, and mental resources. A person could give up or believe that there is no hope. Symptoms of fatigue include:

- Fatigue
- Burnout
- Depression
- Anxiety
- decreased stress tolerance

Selye discovered a number of physiological alterations in lab rats during an experiment at McGill University in Montreal when the rats were exposed to stressful situations. [4]. Selye came to the conclusion through more research that these changes were not an unique incident but rather the typical stress reaction [4]. These phases were classified by Selye as alarm, resistance, and fatigue [4]. Respondents may find it easier to deal with stress if they comprehend these various responses and how they relate to one another.

2.4 Sources of Stress

However, numerous studies have previously identified the typical causes of work stress. Claimed that the perceived loss of job stability, a lack of safety, the difficulty of repetitive work, and a lack of professional autonomy are all drivers of occupational stress [6]. Furthermore, inadequate job performance contributes to work stress [7] and workaholism [8].

However, Stephen Robbin's model of stress identified three sources environmental, organizational, and individual pressures among other things. They become stressed depending on individual differences such as job performance, personality, and social support. (Robbins, 1993 and 1998) [3, 9].

Stress-causing environmental variables. Uncertainties in the economy, politics, and technology are some of these potential pressures. Uncertainty in the economy is brought on by business cycle changes. People become more fearful of uncertainty when the economy deteriorates. Political threats and developments, as well as political uncertainties, can be stressful. Innovations cause technological uncertainty because they can swiftly render a worker's knowledge and expertise out of date. Many people, especially the elderly, feel threatened by emerging technology such as robotics, automation, and other advances, which stresses them out..

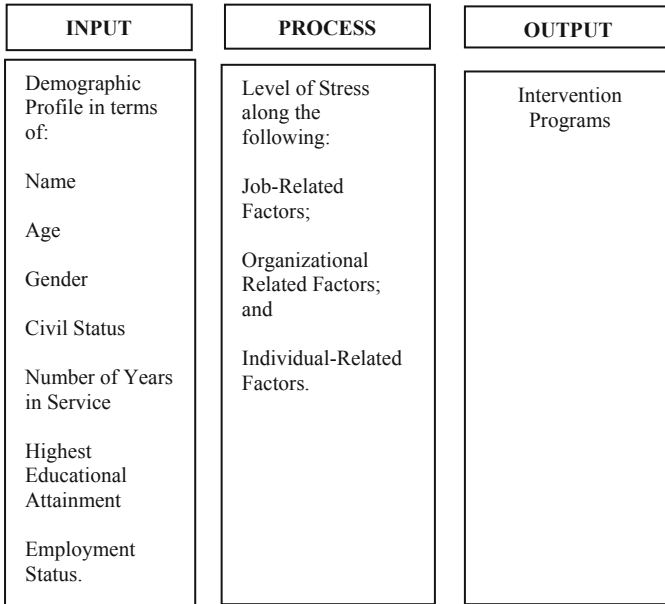


Fig. 1. The Research Paradigm

Stress-causing organizational factors. These are factors that an employee can do little about, although he can control his reactions to job demands and his relationships with others, not the organization’s characteristics.

Certain sources of stress. These factors are potential sources of stress that refer to family and financial problems, personal health issues, and employees’ lifestyles. Motivation is a factor that can cause and sustain an individual’s behavior.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Stress model, discussed in the preceding pages; which identified environmental, organizational, and individual stresses are the three categories of potential stressors (Fig. 1).

The study’s input, process, and output, or IPO, research paradigm. The respondents’ name, age, gender, civil status, number of years of service, highest level of education, and work status are included in the input, and the procedure also takes into account the respondents’ degree of stress as well as aspects linked to their jobs, organizations, and themselves. The product also includes intervention programs.

3 Method

The method describes the profile of the respondents and how they were chosen for the study. The research design and data-gathering procedure are also discussed. In addition, the statistical treatment and sampling techniques that were used in the study are presented.

3.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive and correlational research design. As used in the study described the profile of respondents in terms of the following personal and professional variables: age, gender, civil status, number of years in service, highest educational attainment, employment status, and sources of information on the level of stress. Additionally, it is a correlational study because it considered how the respondents' profiles and levels of stress connected to their jobs, organizations, and individuals, as well as other aspects.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population consists of 178 personnel currently employed in the Local Government Unit of Batac. A total enumeration was conducted.

The administrators, which are the city authorities such as the mayor, vice mayor, city councilors, engineers, health workers, social workers, utility workers, skilled workers, administrative assistants, and other heads of units, were the respondents.

The locale of the study is the Local Government Unit of Batac, Ilocos Norte.

3.3 Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher crafted the data-gathering instrument and validated it by experts incorporating the Likert Scale rating system; The respondents will be able to say how strongly they agree or disagree with a given statement. The survey comprises two Sects. (2) parts:

Part I determined the respondents' personal and professional characteristics to create their demographic profile, which is used as a basis for analysis concerning the level of stress along with job-related, organizational-related, and individual-related factors.

Part II is a set of questions that gathers information related to the respondents' stress levels. It consists of elements connected to the workplace, organizations, and people.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher crafted an instrument validated by three (3) experts in guidance and counseling, psychology, and human resources. They scrutinized the instrument, which was improved based on the comments and suggestions of the experts. Following validation, the researcher asked the Local Government Unit of Batac for permission to perform the study through the City Mayor. Following approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the LGU staff members. The questionnaire's responders had plenty of time to complete it. Following the collection of all the data, the results were totaled and statistically analyzed.

3.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were processed using the following statistical tools:

- A frequency and percentage to describe the respondents' demographics.
- Weighted mean to indicate respondents' levels of stress.

Simple correlation study to determine the association between respondents' stress levels and profile.

4 Result and Discussion

This presents the profile and stressors of employees along with job, organizational and individual factors. Furthermore, it presents the level of stress of employees among job, organizational and individual factors, the overall stress, and its relationship to gender with the job and organizational factors.

4.1 Profile of Respondents

The majority of the respondents aged 41–50 years old, are males, single, and college graduates. A great percentage hold a position as administrative aides and a permanent/regular employment status.

4.2 Level of Stress

The overall level of stress as perceived by the employees in the Local Government Unit – City of Batac is Moderate with a grand mean of 3.28.

4.3 Level of Stress Along with Job-related Factors

The stress level of employees due to job-related factors is moderate, with an overall mean of 2.96. Crispina C. Corpuz cited in her Human Resource Management textbook that moderate levels of stress bring out the best in employees, and allowing them to operate under a moderate amount of stress leads to employees learning the work faster, being able to juggle multiple tasks, and becoming more resilient.

4.4 Level of Stress Along with Organizational-Related Factors

The stress level of employees along Organizational-Related Factors is Low, with an overall mean of 3.67. This indicates that the leaders or administrators of the LGU promote employee development, ensure employee involvement, and make holistic decisions on the direction of the organization, as evident in this model, thereby contributing to the satisfaction of the employees.

4.5 Level of Stress Along with Individual-Related Factors

Employees' stress level on individual-related factors is moderate, with an overall mean of 3.26. This indicates that even though employees feel undecided about family and financial problems, respectively, they still feel well and are satisfied with their work-life balance.

4.6 Correlation of Gender to Organizational-Related Factors and Individual-Related Factors

The data reveals that the profile variable on gender is once and for all correlated to organizational and individual factors at 0.05 level. This means that the stress level along organizational and individual factors is independent of other profiles except for gender.

5 Conclusions and Suggestions

The results led to the following conclusions being drawn.:

This study supports Robbins' stress model, which states that organizational variables can be stressful. Individual differences determine whether they develop into true stress. The person may feel ecstatic (positive stress) or distressed (negative stress). When a person is under stress, physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms are some of the results.

Likewise, this study concludes that a moderate stress level allows employees to perform better, learn the work faster, and juggle multiple tasks. At the same time, Anxiety and ill health can result from both too little and too much stress, respectively. As a result, the correct amount of stress sharpens the mind and enhances performance and well-being.

In light of the summary, The following recommendations are given based on the study's results and deductions.:

5.1 Executive Development Program

Along with organizational-related factors, an executive development program can be implemented to sustain the quality of the working lives of the employees; this can be in the form of creative and relevant seminars and workshops on the following topics: strengthened visioning and goal setting, people empowerment, the habits of highly effective people, stress management, along with managing people with a human touch.

The Executive Development Program should include benchmarking with other LGUs in the Philippines. A linkage with government agencies abroad can also be established for benchmarking and government intervention collaboration. This will enable the LGU to confer with other LGUs and see for themselves what others are doing.

5.2 Health and Wellness Program

Along with organizational-related factors is the health and wellness program of the LGU, which involves the creation of a committee that will take charge of the wellness program. This includes healthcare and relaxation activities such as mini-Olympics, aerobics, walkathons, or a once-in-a-month free massage. These initiatives will keep them healthy and eventually ease the employees' health concerns manifested along with organizational factors.

5.3 Stress Management Advocacy

Along with job-related factors is stress management advocacy. This includes implementing stress exercises in the work environment, such as breathing, guided imagery, and meditation, or providing aromatherapy like scented candles or diffusers in offices, which will help employees feel energized, relaxed, and more present in the moment. Likewise, stress management seminars should be conducted frequently.

All LGUs in the Philippines may be mandated by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to offer their staff members stress management training. They will be better equipped to comprehend stress as a result.

5.4 Strengthened Gender-Responsive Programs

The importance of gender-responsive programming must be increased in addition to individual-related aspects. The LGU could establish connections with women's organizations in the Philippines, such as the Gabriela Women's Party or the Women's Rights Movement of the Philippines, as well as with the Philippine Commission on Women, the country's main policy-making and coordination body on issues relating to women and gender equality.

The LGU should frequently conduct GAD seminars, such as on the re-orientation of GAD laws and mandates, gender sensitivity, and the use of GAD tools. The employees were already familiar with these topics, but revisiting them will allow them to appreciate and apply the importance of GAD. Likewise, during the celebration of International Women's Month, it is recommended that the LGU conduct a film viewing program. Films on GAD can be shown, such as *The Barber's Tale*, *Ang Kababaihan ng Malolos*, or other related gender-equality films.

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