

“STRESS INDICATORS AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES”

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ABSTRACT:Government employees are the backbone of public service, taking on crucial responsibilities such as policymaking and addressing citizen needs. However, workplace challenges, including heavy workloads and bureaucratic procedures, often give rise to a pervasive issue: stress. Stress is a prevailing concern affecting employees across different organizations, including public agencies. Understanding employee stress is critical in promoting employee well-being and cultivating an efficient public service. The study examines the stress indicators among government employees and its relationship to employee engagement and commitment. The study used a descriptive-correlational research design with questionnaire as the main tool in collecting data from one hundred twenty (120) government employee-respondents who were randomly selected from government agencies in Zambales, Philippines. The researchers used Pearson Correlation Coefficient to ascertain the significant relationship between the variables under investigation. Data indicates that the respondents expressed agreement concerning supervisor demand, client demand, organizational culture and behavior, and on salary and compensation. Conversely, there is disagreement concerning pressure from colleagues, and work-life balance. The respondents also exhibit disagreement on their perception of employee engagement and commitment. There is a positive high relationship between stress indicators of government employee and employee engagement and commitment.

KEYWORDS: *stress indicators, employee engagement and commitment, supervisor demand, client demand, organizational culture and behavior, pressure from colleagues, salary and compensation, work-life balance.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is the body's natural response to external demands, often referred to as stressors, that disrupt its normal equilibrium (American Psychological Association, 2020). Demanding duties, tight deadlines, and complicated responsibilities are common in today's modern workplace and causes stress. Government employees who are entrusted with a variety of critical responsibilities, are not immune to this. Government agencies needs to recognize these challenges and identify the indicators of stress among government employees because it will aid in the creation of a positive work environment that benefits both employees and the efficient operation of government agencies. A positive work environment improves employee commitment and achievement-striving ability, which in turn enhances employee performance (Zhenjing, G., Chupradit, S., Ku, K., Nassani, A., & Haffar, M., 2022).

Employee engagement and commitment are integral components of organizational success because they influence employee's performance and overall well-being (Saks, 2018). Employees that are engaged are deeply involved in their work and are dedicated and enthusiastic in contributing to the organization's goals. (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). This engagement leads to high level of commitment and ultimately increases the level of job satisfaction (Rahman, U., Rehman, C., Imran, M., & Aslam, U. (2017). Committed employees are deeply devoted, exhibiting a strong sense of loyalty and attachment to their roles in the organization. This dedication often translates into longer tenures, as committed employees are more likely to remain in their jobs over an extended period of time (Ahmed, N. 2017).

To foster employee engagement and commitment, organizations need to determine and assess stressors experienced by government employees. By identifying and assessing these, organizations can lessen its effect and can develop targeted strategies that creates a more supportive and conducive working environment. The purpose of this study is to look into specific stressors in the workplace. Specifically, the study aims to address the following inquiries:

1. How are stress indicators among government employees be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Supervisor Demand;
 - 1.2 Client Demand;
 - 1.3 Organizational Culture and Behavior;
 - 1.4 Pressure from Colleagues;
 - 1.5 Salary and Compensation; and
 - 1.6 Work Life Balance?
2. How do respondents perceive employee engagement and commitment?
3. Is there a significant relationship between stress indicators among government employees and employee engagement and commitment?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Global workers are significantly affected by stress, with Gallup's State of the Global Workplace 2021 Report revealing that 57% experience high job-related stress, and about 70% contend with overall life challenges or distress. The impact of stress was a concern even before, but the COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified the situation, as indicated by 45% of individuals who report being greatly affected by the pandemic's repercussions (Gallup, 2021).

Research conducted by Simon, Nishanthini and Amarakoon, Upamali Asanka, (2015) states that excessive levels of occupational stress causes fatigue, anxiety, depression and social withdrawal and disengages employees from work. Employee engagement is the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work. Engagement occurs when individuals are emotionally connected to others and cognitively vigilant. An engaged employee is found to be committed to her/his organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to its success and are able to enhance their own sense of well-being (Simon, N., Amarakoon, U., 2015)

Stress has significant psychological, physiological and performance effects on human resources of an organization. Based on the study of Prasad, Vaidya, & Kumar (2015), occupational stress is having moderate impact on the employees' performance of the institute, the job-related stress in general and the stress factor job security in particular. The employees' reaction to the stress – physiological factors also have moderate effect on the performance of an employee.

Participants of a study reported adverse working conditions and management practices as common causes of work stress. Stress-inducing management practices included unrealistic demands, lack of support, unfair treatment, low decision latitude, lack of appreciation, effort–reward imbalance, conflicting roles, lack of transparency and poor communication. (Bhui et. al. 2016)

Samuel, O., & Dean, F. (2015) in their study found that there is a significant relationship between workplace stress, and employee commitment, and suggests that changes are needed to improve employee commitment by reducing stress levels and changing the culture orientation. Taborsky, et al. (2021) found that environmental predictability and physiological constraints are key factors shaping stress response evolution while Beer, et al. (2021) had observed that cognitive appraisals played a role not only how practitioners experience stress, but also the behavioral responses that follow. The results of the study of Majid A. (2015) indicate a positive correlation within all factors that have been evaluated including interpersonal, relationship, workload and physical factors toward job stress among government employees.

In a local study during the pandemic, the level of stress among government employees is high. Addressing workplace stress and anxiety will necessitate creative methods to mental/emotional health assistance and a completely different standard of care than present anxiety and depression prescription alternatives. (Lantajo, 2022)

In the local government unit of Batac City, Ilocos Norte, government employees 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. (Yapo, 2023)

In the local government agencies in the province of Bulacan, the common stressors of the respondents are peer group relations, under-participation, powerlessness, and intrinsic impoverishment. The study recommends having a comprehensive and integrative Employee Wellness Management institutionalized in the selected local government and national government agencies in the Province of Bulacan to address the stressors faced by their employees. (Pagtalunan E., Valcos E., 2022)

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between stress indicators among government employees and employee engagement and commitment.

According to Bhatti et. al. (2016) employees face great stress due to many stress antecedents like lack of support from supervisors, great pressure of work, problematic co-workers relationship and family and work life conflicts. All these stressors lead to low organizational commitment and absenteeism. Results of their research shows that stress is a major cause that decreases the employee's commitment towards the organization. Jiang et al. (2020), on the other hand, points out that challenge stressors positively influence work engagement, which has a significant positive effect on affective commitment. Similarly, Sidhu et al.(2020) revealed that five parameters, namely workload, working environment, concentration, positivity and future perspective are the factors that are responsible to create stress in employees.

According to Simon et. al. (2015) the relationship between occupational stress and employee engagement is not a negative linear, but an inverted 'U' relationship. This clearly indicates the impact of job stress on health of employees that leads to lower engagement and commitment. Accordingly, it suggests that maintaining an optimal level of occupational stress can result in a higher level of employee engagement. On the other hand, based on the study of Breaugh (2021), stress and engagement are negatively related, whereas Basic needs satisfaction and engagement are positively related. Moderation analyses revealed that the detrimental relationship between stress and engagement is lessened for individuals who have strong interpersonal relations at work. This suggests that social relationships play an important role in managing stressful work environments. Similarly, The result of Rahmi et. al. (2020) shows a direct negative association between perceived stress and work engagement. Henceforward, the structural equation model reveals that meaningful work partially mediated a negative association between perceived stress and work engagement. The study has proved that the empirical evidence of how perceived stress can contribute to work engagement.

On the effects of stress on organizational commitment, Saadeh et. al. (2019), found a significant negative effect of job stress on organizational commitment. The results also indicated full negative mediating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between job stress and organizational commitment. This is similar to the result of Cicei (2012) where a negative significant correlation have been identified between occupational stress and affective and continuance commitment, enhancing the need for designing tailored interventions in view of reducing stress and enhancing commitment. The results is also true to the study of Odor (2020) that reveals that work stress is negatively related to all the three types of commitment, namely, affective, normative and continuance. On the other hand, The findings of Ahmad (2016) gave an implication that worker with low job stress will have a high organizational commitment. Therefore, employers and organizations should strive to take appropriate steps in reducing job stress and providing adequate and good facilities at work place, thus ensuring that worker has a high level of organizational commitment. High organizational commitment will contribute to worker's high productivity that will not only benefit the worker himself but also the employer and organization.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the stress indicators among government employees and its relationship to employee engagement and commitment. The respondents consisted of one hundred twenty (120) government employees from Zambales, Philippines who were selected using quota sampling. A questionnaire was used as a primary tool in gathering data, utilizing a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The study used various statistical tools and quantitative methods to analyze the data effectively. To ensure meaningful interpretation, the following statistical techniques were utilized: Frequency and Percentage, Weighted Mean, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following tables and discussions present the gathered, analyzed and interpreted data.

1. Perception of the respondents towards stress indicators of government employee

1.1. Supervisor Demand

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Supervisor Demand.

TABLE1 : Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Supervisor Demand

N=120

	SUPERVISOR DEMAND	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	My supervisor is too uptight with policies and	2.80	Agree	2

	regulations.			
2	My supervisor always gives too much workload.	2.43	Disagree	4
3	My supervisor requires a lot of things to do in limited time.	2.40	Disagree	5
4	My supervisor demands that work should be done the way they prefer.	2.62	Agree	3
5	My supervisor always expects an excellent performance.	2.93	Agree	1
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.63	Agree	

The government employee respondents were agreed on the supervisor always expects an excellent performance manifested on the high mean value of 2.93 and ranked 1st while the supervisor requires a lot of things to do in limited time with mean of 2.40 interpreted as disagree and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Supervisor Demand** was **2.63** with qualitative interpretation of “**Agreed**”.

The data simply demonstrate on the high expectation from the respondents to perform in their respective duties with excellence.

1.2. Client Demand

Table 2 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Client Demand.

TABLE 2 : Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Client Demand
N=120

	CLIENT DEMAND	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Clients have plenty of complaints about their transactions.	2.47	Disagree	4
2	Clients are impatient and want to be entertained first.	2.58	Agree	2
3	Clients are always in a hurry in making their transactions.	2.54	Agree	3
4	Clients always demand for a special treatment.	2.43	Disagree	5
5	Clients want to finish the transaction faster.	2.70	Agree	1
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.54	Agree	

The government employee respondents were agreed on the “clients want to finish their transaction faster” manifested on the high mean value of 2.70 and ranked 1st while the “clients always demand for a special treatment” with mean of 2.43 interpreted as disagree and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Client Demand** was **2.54** with qualitative interpretation of “**Agreed**”.

1.3. Organizational Culture and Behavior

Table 3 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Organizational Culture and Behavior.

TABLE 3 : Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Organizational Culture and Behavior
N=120

	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	My organization/institution has strict guidelines that ought to be followed.	3.01	Agree	4
2	My organization/institution has a high expectation on performance	3.10	Agree	1.5
3	My organization/institution pushes employees to do their best.	3.10	Agree	1.5
4	My organization/institution let me perform duties that are not stipulated in my job description.	2.83	Agree	5
5	My organization/institution is output oriented.	3.03	Agree	3

	Overall Weighted Mean	3.01	Agree	
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The government employee respondents were agreed that their organization / institution has a high expectation on performance and the organization/institution pushes employees to do their best manifested on equal high mean values of 3.10 and ranked 1.5th respectively while the organization/institution let them perform duties that are not stipulated in their job description with mean of 2.83 and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Organizational Culture and Behavior** was **3.01** with qualitative interpretation of “**Agreed**”.

1.4. Pressure from Colleagues

Table 4 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Pressure from Colleagues.

TABLE 4
Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Pressure from Colleagues
N=120

	PRESSURE FROM COLLEAGUES	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Most of the time, my colleagues are very bossy.	2.35	Disagree	4
2	Most of my colleagues take credit on jobs they didn't actually do.	2.40	Disagree	1
3	My colleagues usually criticize my manner of accomplishing things.	2.34	Disagree	5
4	Most of my colleagues are hyper competitive.	2.38	Disagree	2.5
5	My colleagues often ask me to do their job for them.	2.38	Disagree	2.5
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.37	Disagree	

The government employee respondents were disagreed that most of their colleagues take credit on jobs they didn't actually do manifested on high mean value of 2.40 and ranked 1st while the respondents colleagues usually criticize their manner of accomplishing things with mean of 2.34 and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Pressure from Colleagues** was **2.37** with qualitative interpretation of “**Disagreed**”.

1.5. Salary and Compensation

Table 5 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Salary and Compensation.

TABLE 5 : Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Salary and Compensation
N=120

	SALARY AND COMPENSATION	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	Incentives from my institution/agency is not enough.	2.58	Agree	4
2	Salary increase is not equal for employees with higher position and employees with lower position.	2.68	Agree	3
3	Medical and Dental insurance benefits is limited in coverage.	2.73	Agree	2
4	Retirement benefits are not promising.	2.48	Agree	5
5	Allowances such as travel, meal, housing, communication are not available to some employees.	2.90	Agree	1
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.67	Agree	

The government employee respondents were agreed that allowances such as travel, meal, housing, communication are not available to some employees manifested on high mean value of 2.90 and ranked 1st while retirement benefits are not promising with mean of 2.48 and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Salary and Compensation** was **2.67** with qualitative interpretation of “**Agreed**”.

1.6. Life Work Balance

Table 6 shows the perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Life Work Balance.

TABLE 6 : Perception of the respondents towards stress indicator of government employee as to Life Work Balance

N=120

	WORK LIFE BALANCE	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	My agency/institution's working hours is not flexible.	2.48	Disagree	3
2	I don't have enough time for family because of too much workloads.	2.36	Disagree	5
3	Overtime work is expected even on holidays and weekends.	2.40	Disagree	4
4	The organization lacks insurance and social programs for family members.	2.49	Disagree	2
5	The organization lacks child care facilities for working mothers and single parents.	2.53	Agree	1
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.45	Disagree	

The government employee respondents were agreed that the organization lacks child care facilities for working mothers and single parents manifested on high mean value of 2.53 and ranked 1st while on the statement in which they don't have enough time for family because of too much workloads with mean of 2.36 interpreted as disagreed and ranked 5th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards stress indicator of government employee as to **Life Work Balance** was **2.45** with qualitative interpretation of "**Disagreed**".

2. Perception of the respondents towards Employee Engagement and Commitment

TABLE 7 : Perception of the respondents towards Employee Engagement and Commitment

N=120

	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & COMMITMENT	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Rank
1	I get easily burnt out during my overtime due to unreasonable tasks given by our supervisor.	2.33	Disagree	2
2	My supervisor's lack of accountability for their conduct leads me to be exhausted at work.	2.33	Disagree	2
3	I get discouraged from working due to the abundance of unjustified consumer complaints over their transactions.	2.28	Disagree	5.5
4	Clients' negative attitudes reduced my motivation to serve others throughout the day.	2.33	Disagree	2
5	I am embarrassed to admit that I am a member of this organization since they require us to undertake responsibilities that are not in our job description.	2.23	Disagree	11.5
6	I lost interest in working because I was fed up with dealing culture of never-ending rumors and drama.	2.23	Disagree	11.5
7	My organization's poor communication at all level of employees demotivates me to do my duties.	2.30	Disagree	4
8	My employment is not intellectually challenging due to the lack of professional growth and development among coworkers.	2.27	Disagree	8
9	As a result of the unpromising nature of the company's benefits, I am hesitant to continue with the organization until retirement.	2.24	Disagree	10
10	I am unfulfilled in working for the company because I don't receive enough compensation and benefits	2.27	Disagree	8
11	Weekend work sometimes causes me to lose productivity at work and in my personal life.	2.28	Disagree	5.5
12	The lack of implementation of routine team-building activities which foster positive mental and emotional	2.27	Disagree	8

health lowers the level of my commitment.			
	Overall Weighted Mean	2.28	Disagree

Table 7 shows the perception of the respondents towards Employee Engagement and Commitment

The government employee respondents were disagreed that they get easily burnt out during my overtime due to unreasonable tasks given by our supervisor; that their supervisor's lack of accountability for their conduct leads them to be exhausted at work; and the clients' negative attitudes reduced my motivation to serve others throughout the day manifested on high equal mean values of 2.33 and ranked 2nd respectively while on the statement in which they are embarrassed to admit that they are member of this organization since they require us to undertake responsibilities that are not in our job description; and they lost interest in working because they are fed up with dealing culture of never-ending rumors and drama with equal mean of 2.23 interpreted as disagreed and ranked 11.5th respectively. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards **Employee Commitment and Commitment** was **2.28** with qualitative interpretation of “**Disagreed**”.

3. Test of Relationship between stress indicators of government employee and employee engagement and commitment

Table 8 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test relationship between stress indicators of government employee and employee engagement and commitment.

TABLE 8 : Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to test relationship between stress indicators of government employee and employee engagement and commitment

Sources of Correlations		Employee Engagement & Commitment	Stress Indicators	Decision
Employee Engagement and Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	0.764**	Positive High Relationship Reject Ho Significant
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	
	N	120	120	
Stress Indicators	Pearson Correlation	0.764**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	120	120	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is positive high relationship between stress indicators of government employee and employee engagement and commitment manifested on the computed Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation value of 0.764**. The computed Sig. (2-tailed test) value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 alpha level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, hence there is significant relationship.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the summarized findings of the conducted investigations, the researchers reached the subsequent conclusion:

1. The respondents expressed “Agreed” on Supervisor Demand, Client Demand, Organizational Culture and Behavior, and on Salary and Compensation while “Disagreed” on Pressure from Colleagues, and Life Work Balance.
2. The respondents were “Disagreed” on their perception towards Employee Engagement and Commitment.
3. There is a positive high relationship between stress indicators among government employee and employee engagement and commitment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the consistent expectation for exceptional performance from supervisors, it is encouraged that government employees’ well-being be prioritized through a comprehensive program like workshops and training sessions designed to improve stress management, time management, and coping abilities.
2. With clients seeking faster transactions, government agencies may integrate digital solutions and processes like mobile applications, automated forms and self-service kiosk that will allow clients to initiate and complete transactions at their convenience.

3. Consider introducing a continuous learning initiatives and mentorship programs to further nurture individual and organizational growth. Government employees can be motivated to engage and commit through an open communication and giving them clear paths for professional growth that will then contribute to agencies' long-term success.
4. Since the salary in the government is fixed and concern as national issue, employees are encouraged to engage in livelihood activities or business as intervention and additional source of income to augment the financial needs of the family.
5. Government agencies are encouraged to provide child care facilities for working mothers and single parents.
6. Extend the medical and dental privileges to all employee regardless of employment status as well as allowances such as travel, meal, housing, and communication.
7. To conduct a replication of the study with in-depth and wider scope so as to validate the salient findings obtained in the study.

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