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Stressors of mother – administrators in higher education institutions

Abstract

This study assessed the stressors of mother-administrators of three public and ten private Higher Education Institutions in the province of Nueva Ecija. The samples were 100 mother-administrators who perform administrative functions like that of the President, Vice President, Dean, Director and Department Heads. The descriptive method of research was used. Data from Administrative Stress Index (ASI) survey questionnaire were tallied and analyzed using frequency, weighted mean, percentage, cross-tabulation and analysis of variance. As to personal profile, majority of the mother-administrators were at the age group of 41-50, their length of service ranged from 1-8 years and majority of them were doctorate degree holders.

The stress level of mother-administrators was found "low" to "mild" using the Administrative Stress Index (ADI) which was categorized such as administrative responsibility (X= 2.60) "mild", role expectations (x=2.39) "low", intrapersonal conflicts (x=2.37) "low", interpersonal relations (x=2.35) "low" and administrative constraints (x=2.33) "low". Most of the mother-administrators from private HEIs were stressed in preparation and allocating budgets resources (2.84) "mild", being involved in the collective bargaining process (2.84) "mild", attempting to meet social expectations (housing, friends, etc.) (2.84) "mild" and administering the negotiated contract (grievance, interpretations) (2.67) "mild" while, mother-administrators from public HEIs were stressed in trying to complete reports and other paperwork (2.62) described as "mild". Analysis of variance showed that there was no significant difference in the stress level and age with F-value (0.145806) and F-critical value (3.109311), furthermore, length of service has F-value (1.302064) and F-critical value (2.467493) and finally, educational attainment has F-value (0.027632) and F-critical value (3.090187) and the null hypothesis is accepted.

The level of coping preference scale and coping factor of mother-administrators of higher education institutions revealed that the Coping Preference Scale (CPS) utilized were (35.71%) described as "often" with ranked 1, followed by (35.57%) described as "occasionally" with ranked 2, followed by (12.57%) described as "frequently" with ranked 3, next is (12.29%) described as "rarely" with ranked 4 and lastly, only (3.86%) described as "never" with ranked 5. This means that the mother-administrators of higher education institutions which uniformly reflected a rating of "often".

1 Introduction

Stress as a concept has become a word not only used in medicine, psychology, and management sciences but also in educational administration. Yamauchi (1986) expressed the view that stress is a very natural and important part of life and that without it, there would be no life at all. Selye (1981) opines that stress invades people from different walks of life. He said:

"complete freedom from stress is death and that we all need stress but definitely not too much stress for too long for stress knows no barriers. The poor and the rich, women and men, the old and the young, the employed and the unemployed, paid and unpaid and every job has moments of stress."

The specific stress experienced by people, often depends on the nature and demands of the setting in which people live. Thus, teachers, engineers, doctors, managers and people in other professions experience different types of stress of different degrees. The professionals' role is extremely demanding because they serve people of different walks of life. School administrators are one of these professional workers who are exposed to stress considering the magnitude of work they face. They carry out their day to day activities which may affect them physically, psychologically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Mother-administrators have also other functions and responsibilities to attend to. They have families to care and to serve. Mother administrators are very much capable of developing a great deal of stress causing either physical or psychological responses in terms of accomplishing the jobs in the school settings, as well as in meeting their responsibilities in their respective homes.

Given this scenario, there are mother-administrators who agree that the dual role of being a school administrator and a mother at the same time is challenging. A work balance of being a school administrator and a mother has to be accomplished without sacrificing any of both roles. With these situations, mother-administrators are believed to have had experience stress than those who are not. These premises prompted the researcher to study on the stressors and coping mechanisms of mother-administrators in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

2 Methodology

This study used the descriptive method of research to answer the problems presented. It attempts to describe, explain and interpret conditions at present. Its purpose is to examine a phenomenon that occurs at specific place and time. It is concerned with conditions, practices, structures, differences or relationships that exist, opinions held, processes that are going on or trends that are evident. This method ultimately determined the type of approach necessary to complete an accurate assessment of the topic at hand. It is a great value to understand the nature, characteristics, components and aspects of the phenomena (Costales 2003).

3 Research locale

Nueva Ecija is a landlocked province in the Philippines located in Central Luzon region. The province is divided into 4 congressional districts which consist of 27 municipalities and 5 cities.

The study is conducted in three (3) public and ten (10) private Higher Education Institutions in the province of Nueva Ecija. Public HEIs include: Central Luzon State University (CLSU), Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) and Eduardo L. Joson Memorial College (ELJMC). The private universities and Colleges include Wesleyan University-Philippines (WU-P), College of Immaculate Conception (CIC), Araullo University (AU-Phinma), Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation College, (Dr. GDLFC), General De Jesus College (GDJC), Manuel V. Gallego Foundation College (MVGFC), World Citi Colleges-Guimba, formerly EULOGIO R. DIZON COLLEGE OF. N.E. (WCC/ERDC-NE), Holy Cross College, Sta. Rosa, INC. (HCC), Divina Pastora College (DPC) and Core Gateway College (CGC).

4 Respondents

The respondents of the study were mother-administrators occupying key administrative positions in the 13 public and private HEIs. Purposive sampling was used in getting the respondents.

5 Literature Review

Administrative work according to Gambles (2003) is dealing with competing values from both inside and beyond the educational setting. Administrative Work and life boundaries have had much focus in recent years. School based educational administrators in the 21st century are experiencing stress at high levels.

Waumsley (2005) wrote that balance in administrative work is about being able to achieve a balance between working life and life away from work that is acceptable to the individual; a balance which allows the successful fulfillment of potential in both domains with minimal stress. The relationship of work and non-work domains is either integrated or separated. Integration recognizes that an interaction does take place, while separation implies there is no interaction between the two spheres. People tend to take charge of their actions rather than react to what is happening within their work and life domains (Clark, 2000). Flexibility and permeability are two components that help determine the strength at which the domains are separated or integrated.

Mother-administrator are dealing with competing values from both inside and beyond the educational setting (Snyder,2008). Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose (Killoran, 2009).

Coping is defined as the cognitive and problem-solving behaviors people employ to tolerate, minimize, or eliminate stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). It is a complex interplay of thoughts and behaviors. Coping allows individuals

TABLE 1 Distribution of respondents by institution and position

Higher Education Institutions	Presidents	Vice Presidents	Deans	Directors	Department Heads	Total
1. Central Luzon State University			4	7	2	13
2. Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology		3	3	12	3	21
3. Eduardo L. Joson Memorial College			1	1	3	5
4. Wesleyan University-Philippines		1	3	1	4	9
5. College of Immaculate Conception		1	2	5	5	13
6. Araullo University			1		2	3
7. Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation College, Inc.			1		3	4
8. General De Jesus College	1	1	1		9	12
9. Manuel V. Gallego Foundation College		1	3		4	8
10. World Citi Colleges			1	1	2	4
11. Holy Cross College		1		1	1	3
12. Divina Pastora College			1		1	2
13. Core Gateway College	1	1	1			3
					Grand Total	100

to control and reduce the negative consequences of a stressful situation. Coping resources can be derived from both the personal and environmental. They refer to those reserves a person has that they draw upon to manage stressful encounters. When coping resources, no matter the type, are adequately matched to the stressor, outcomes are successfully controlled (Millikan et al., 2007). If, however, stressors exceed available resources, the aforementioned manifestations of stress can be observed. Coping strategies, on the other hand, refer to the behaviors/efforts that are put forth to combat the stress (Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). As an example, consider religion/spirituality which is a common coping resource.

Coping strategies according to Lazarus (1991) are physical and mental efforts used by people to manage internal and/or external stressors that exceed the resources of the person. It is not the environment or the individual alone that creates stress but the interaction between the two "Stress is not a property of the person, or of the environment, but arises when there is a conjunction between a particular kind of environment and a particular kind of person that leads to a threat appraisal". This type of appraisal is termed 'cognitive appraisal' - the ability to regulate emotions through coping strategies (Lazarus, 1993). Active coping involves exerting effort of some kind to eliminate or minimize the stressful event. In active coping, individuals acknowledge the stressor and take measurable steps to resolve the issue. In contrast, avoidant coping relies on disengagement or denial. This type of coping results in dismissal of or an attempt to suppress the problem. Research suggests that problem-focused coping and active coping are most often associated with positive outcomes (Carver et al., 1989; Cohen, 1984; Holahan and

Moos, 1987; Pina et al., 2008). These general coping styles (problem and emotion-focused vs. active and avoidant) have specific strategies that overlap one another. Ultimately, the chosen coping mechanism depends on the individual, his/her resources and the type of stressor.

6 Discussion

The study was conducted to assess the stressors of mother-administrators, work-related stress and coping strategies they employed. Of the 100 mother-administrator respondents 39 are from public Higher Education Institutions and 61 from private Higher Education Institutions. There samples came from the two state universities and one local university in Nueva Ecija, and ten private higher education institutions. The study was conducted from January 2015 to March 2015.

7 Scope and Delimitations

The study focused on the work-related stressors and the coping mechanisms employed to these stressors by the mother-administrators from selected HEIs in the province of Nueva Ecija. The respondents are mothers occupying administrative positions such as Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors and Department Heads in different HEI's. The descriptive research design was used in the study. The domains in the mother-administrators' work stressors were administrative responsibility, administrative constraints, interpersonal relations, interpersonal conflict, and role expectation. The stress levels were compared were compared in terms of their age, educational attainment, and length of service as administrator. The coping mechanisms employed by the mother-

administrators were also identified.

The descriptive method of research was used. Data were personally collected and tallied by the researcher. Analysis of the findings is primarily descriptive in nature. Data from the survey questionnaire were tallied and analyzed using frequency, weighted mean, percentage and cross-tabulation. A three-part questionnaire was personally distributed and retrieved by the researcher to the 100 mother-administrators in the province of Nueva Ecija. Administrative Stress Index (ASI) and Coping Preference Scale (CPS) which was developed by Swent and Gmelch (1988) to specifically identify sources of occupational stress and coping strategy among mother-administrators were used. A factor analysis of the data obtained for this study indicates that the coping techniques identified in the CPS can be classified into seven coping factors.

The findings are as follows:
1) The level of work-related stress of mother-administrators categorized into:
  1.1) Administrative responsibility got an over-all stress index score of 2.60 with stress level described as low;
  1.2) Administrative constraints yielded an over-all stress index score of 2.33 described as low;
  1.3) Interpersonal relations got an over-all stress index score of 2.35 described as low;
  1.4) Intrapersonal conflicts obtained an over-all stress index score of 2.37 described as low;
  1.5) Role expectations got an over-all stress index score of 2.39 described as low;
2) Stress level of mother-administrators grouped according to:
  2.1) Age
    • Age group 31-40 acquired low stress level;
    • Age group 41-50 acquired mild stress level on administrative responsibility and low on other ASI category;
    • Age group 51-60 acquired mild stress level on administrative responsibility and role expectation and low on other ASI category;
    • Age group 61 – 70 acquired low stress level.
  2.2) Length of academic experience of Mother-administrators' length of service categorized into:
    • 1-8 years have low stress level;
    • 9-16 years have low stress level;
    • 17-24 years have mild stress level on administrative responsibility and role

expectations and low on other ASI category;
    • 25-32 years have low stress level; and
    • 33-40 years have low stress level.
  2.3) Educational attainment
    • Bachelor's degree have mild stress level on administrative responsibility and low stress level on other ASI category;
    • Master's degree have low stress level;
    • Doctorate degree has low stress level.
3) Stress level of mother-administrators compared in the different categories, when grouped according to:
  • Age and stress level of mother-administrators have no significant difference;
  • Length of service and stress level of mother-administrators have no significant difference;
  • Educational attainment and stress level of mother-administrators have no significant difference
4) Coping strategies that mother-administrators apply when they were stressed.
  4.1) $\overline{X}$ =3.56 (f=89) obtained from coping factor 1 (good physical health program) described as "often" utilized by mother-administrators;
  4.2) $\overline{X}$ =2.98 (f=70) obtained from coping factor 2 (withdrawal and recharging) described as "occasionally" utilized by mother-administrators;
  4.3) $\overline{X}$ =3.69 (f=94) obtained from coping factor 3 (intellectual, social and spiritual support)described as "often" utilized by mother-administrators;
  4.4) $\overline{X}$ =3.67 (f=89) obtained from coping factor 4 (positive attitude) described as "often" utilized by mother-administrators;
  4.5) $\overline{X}$ =3.46 (f=91) obtained from coping factor 5 (realistic perspective) described as "often" utilized by mother-administrators;
  4.6) $\overline{X}$ =3.28 (f=77) obtained from coping factor 6 (time management and organization described as "occasionally" utilized by mother-administrators
  4.7) $\overline{X}$ =3.14 (f=77) obtained on coping factor 7 (increased involvement) described as "occasionally" utilized by mother-administrators.

8 Conclusions and Future Study

As to work-related stressors of the mother-administrators from the thirteen higher education

institutions in Nueva Ecija, mother-administrators seemed to feel that stress is an important factor in their lives and ascribed a major portion of this stress to their works. The findings indicate that mother-administrators in higher education institutions in Nueva Ecija reports mild levels of stress on administrative responsibility. In relation to the emotional, behavioral and physical signs of stress cited in the literature, this study found that mother-administrators report mild stress in terms of administrative responsibility as such, preparing and allocating budget resources and trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs.

Meanwhile, mother-administrators coping mechanisms employs were maintaining regular sleep habits; seek solitude, slow down work pace, take time to reflect; Set realistic goals recognize job limitations; and Community involvement (e.g. coaching, service club membership, volunteering, etc.). From this it may be concluded that the majority of mother-administrators are able to deal satisfactorily with their work-related stress. This conclusion is consistent with that of Milstein and Farkas (2009) and Gmelch (1988) who state that educators are "hardier as a group than we tend to believe. The conditions under which they work today are replete with stressors and it is becoming increasingly clear that educators are quite resilient". However, some important questions remain unanswered. Two stress symptoms cited in the literature were identified by a substantial number of the mother-administrators surveyed. Approximately half of the respondents reported feeling alone and feeling dissatisfied with their work. These findings suggest that mother-administrators need increased emotional and social support from their colleagues. This conclusion is consistent with Thomson's (1999) report that social support groups have direct effects in alleviating stress for school administrators. She found that the greatest support came from supervisors and other people at work, while support from spouses, friends and relatives was also an important influence in alleviating administrative stress.

Since there is a discrepancy between the ASI, which focuses on individual stressors, gives an accurate reflection of mother-administrators' overall sense of stress, the fact remains that some mother-administrators are at risk and their profession is 'hazardous to their health" it is important to have good physical health program and stay to have positive attitude.

It is recommended that further research be undertaken to determine why mother-administrators consider such a large percentage of the stress in their lives to be job-related, why mother-administrators consider their jobs to be more stressful than others in their community.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Stress Indices and Levels of Work-Related Stressors of Mother-Administrators in Public and Private HEIs

| ASI Category | Higher Education Institutions | | | | Over-all Stress Level | |
| | Public | | Private | | | |
	Stress Index	Stress Level	Stress Index	Stress Level	Stress Index	Stress Level
Administrative Responsibility	2.25	Low	2.65	Mild	2.60	Mild
Role Expectations	2.26	Low	2.48	Low	2.39	Low
Intrapersonal Conflicts	2.14	Low	2.51	Low	2.37	Low
Interpersonal Relation	2.25	Low	2.41	Low	2.35	Low
Administrative Constraints	2.26	Low	2.37	Low	2.33	Low

Comparison of Stress Levels of Mother-Administrators Based on Age

Groups Age	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
30 – 40	8	18.5	2.3125	0.269821
41 – 50	40	92.9	2.3225	0.461788
51 – 60	36	86.3	2.397222	0.389421
61 – 70	16	37	2.3456	0.327654

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.120706	2	0.060353	0.145806	0.864552	3.109311
Within Groups	33.52822	81	0.413929			
Total	33.64893	83				

Coping strategies factors

| Coping Mechanism | Coping Preference Scale | | | | | $\bar{X}$ | Rank |
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Good physical health program	2	9	35	39	15	3.56	3
2. Withdrawal and recharging	6	24	39	25	6	2.98	7
3. Intellectual, social and Spiritual Support	1	5	30	46	18	3.69	1
4. Positive attitude	3	8	29	40	20	3.67	2
5. Realistic perspective	2	7	42	39	10	3.46	4
6. Time management and organization	8	15	32	34	11	3.28	5
7. Increased involvement	5	18	42	27	8	3.14	6