

# Work Stress Management In The Preview Of Covid-19 Pandemic

Angelo B. Dalaguit\*, Azucena L. Cabanero

Cebu Technological University San Francisco Campus, San Francisco, Cebu, Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

In everyday undertakings especially at this time of Covid-19 Pandemic, it could be possible to experience pressure. The body's response to pressure is called stress. A survey was conducted to 31 office workers comprising of 11 male and 20 female, and 21 teachers composing of 9 male and 12 female to assess the amount of stress experienced in the workplace brought about by the pandemic and the ways employed in order to mitigate. A closed ended questionnaire was distributed to those who are willing to participate in the survey. Result showed a mean of 3.78: SD 0.858 on the pressure of job obligations such as the increase of workload, meeting deadlines for office workers and teachers with the changes of the curriculum and the modalities in teaching and learning process although the freedom to do at their best is encouraged a mean of 4.49: SD 0.7485 describe as often experienced. Effects on their physical health revealed a mean of 1.92: SD 1.026 describes as occasionally this a result of diversion activities employed getting a mean of 2.75: SD 1.318 describe as sometimes done. It is also revealed that eating good food, enough exercise, relaxing activities, sleeping, making time for hobbies, and talking out problems can help relieve stress while drinking alcohol and smoking won't help at all. It is concluded that in this hard time everyone need to relieve from stress by having enough sleep, exercise and adequate diet and taking vitamins to boost the immune system and prevent virus infection.

**Keywords:** Stress at work, Administration and Supervision, Descriptive study, Cebu Technological University San Francisco, Cebu, Philippines

## Introduction

People reactions to the pandemic vary differently. There are those who will just take it easy and there are also people who take it seriously that resulted to stress and anxieties. Many got automatically unemployed because of the closure of their companies. Their living standards fall to the ground thus, stress and anxieties level up.

Post in Face Book pages can be read about being stress like saying that they cannot sleep well of fear about Covid-19 especially when they hear the siren of the ambulance passing by. There are times that they can wake up at midnight and cannot sleep again until morning. Although vaccinated still fearful of the situations that led to anxieties.

According to Lazarus, the effects that stress has on a person are based more on that persons feeling of threat, vulnerability and ability to cope than on the stressful event itself (<https://blackswanstress.weebly.com/lazarus-theory.html>).

In the world full of qualms, people need to be open for possibilities and be supple and strong. Educational systems around the world are facing with comparable challenges in very diverse contexts. Netolicky (2020) indicated that COVID-19 global pandemic has led to education reform at a rapid rate but reform out of necessity rather than deliberate and thoughtful planning. The crisis caused by this Covid-19 pandemic has far-reaching effects in all areas including the field of education. During its outbreak, schools are being shutdown to ensure the health (UNESCO, 2020), safety and well-being of the learners, teachers and other stakeholders. Learning and development of the learners have interrupted and disrupted due to this crisis. Education becomes a great challenge since it is a key to the development of countries.

Thus, the Department of Education finds ways for the education to continue amidst the crisis. The Department of Education (DepEd) is addressing the challenges in the basic education for the school year 2020-2021 through its Basic Education Continuity Plan. (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020) This is aligned with the mandate of Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution for the state to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. DepEd has mandated schools to decide on the use of learning method depending on the situation in areas where schools are located.

In this current condition, where teaching and learning process doesn't occur in the four walls of the classroom, teaching and learning became more crucial so that it is important for school administrators to recognize work-related stress as an important health and safety issue in a school environment. It is important to recognize and evaluate the level of stress, and its effect to the physical and mental health. Find out the most possible ways to mitigate and control the level of stress and anxieties.

This resulted to online/modular studies that contributed more stress to teachers, parents and learners because they are not prepared for the teaching and learning modalities. Yes, there are various trainings provided about new teaching and learning modalities through webinars but still teachers and learners feel more and more stress because of the so many requirements, reports to be done for online submission where internet signal is very slow especially in rural areas.

It is for this reason that the researchers conducted this study to evaluate the amount of stress teachers are experiencing, the effects to the physical health and find out the most possible ways to mitigate and control the level of stress.

## Materials and Methods

Descriptive survey method using open ended questionnaire was used and administered to the elementary teachers and to the faculty and staff of Cebu Technological University in gathering the needed information who responded and answered the questionnaire voluntarily.

The questionnaire includes age and years of experience of the respondents, job responsibilities and its effects to physical health, and activities employed to divert the feelings of stress. The survey was conducted to 31 office workers comprising of 11 male and 20 female, and 21 teachers composing of 9 male and 12 female to assess the amount of stress experienced in the workplace brought about by the pandemic and the ways employed in order to mitigate.

## Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the amount of stress as perceived by the respondents in order to find ways to reduce if not eliminate stress in the workplace especially in this time of pandemic.

The study also aims to:

1. to evaluate the amount of stress workers are experiencing,
2. the effects of stress to the physical health, and
3. Asses the activities employed that can reduce the amount of stress.

## Results and Discussion

The respondents are the elementary school teachers, teaching and non-teaching personnel of Cebu Technological University.

### Age and Years of Work Experience

In every walks of life, young and old alike faces situation that is difficult yet able to overcome complications. The table 1 shows, the mean age and years of experience of those who involve in this study.

**Table 1:** Respondents Age and Years of Experience

<b>Teacher's Respondents</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age	35	7.5
Years of Work Experience	7.2	5.7
<b>Office Workers</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age	34	10.774
Years of Work Experience	8.08	9.456
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Age	34.15	9.32
Years of Work Experience	7.56	8.04

The mean age of the two groups of respondents was 34.15: SD 9.32; while the years of experience got a mean of 7.56: SD 8.04. Both age and years of experience was widely dispersed.

### Job responsibilities and its effects to physical health

People can experience the destructive physical and emotional reactions that happen when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. The table reflects the perceived amount of job requirements, individuality of doing the job, perceived effects to the physical health.

Job Requirements as Perceived by the Respondents.

**Table 2:** Perceived Amount of Job Requirements

<b>Pressure of Job Requirement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Job Requires to work very fast	3.96	0.880	Fairly Often
Job requires to work very hard	4.04	0.781	Fairly Often
Job leave a little time to get things done	3.6	0.881	Fairly Often
Job requires a great deal to be done	3.92	0.922	Fairly Often
Marked increase in your workload	3.56	0.837	Fairly Often
Marked increase in the amount of concentration	3.54	0.862	Fairly Often
Marked increase on how fast you have to think	3.86	0.729	Fairly Often
Total	3.78	0.858	Fairly Often

The perceived amount of job requirements got an overall mean of 3.78: SD of 0.858 and is describing as fairly often which implies that the job calls to some degree or extent but not very or extremely tough. The individuality of doing the job got a total mean of 4.79: SD 0.7485 described as often which indicates that the teachers and office workers were given the needed academic freedom to efficiently accomplish the job. As to the perceived effects to the physical health it was found a mean of 1.92: SD 1.026 describe as occasionally. This implies that the respondents rarely felt physical stress.

### Individuality of Doing the Job

**Table 3:** Individuality of Doing the Job

<b>Individuality of Doing the Job</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Use your knowledge and skills learned in school	4.54	0.676	Often
Given a chance to do things you do best	4.38	0.878	Often
Use skills from your experience and trainings	4.54	0.676	Often

Total	4.79	0.7485	Often
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The individuality of doing the job got a total mean of 4.79: SD 0.7485 described as often which indicates that the teachers and office workers were given the needed academic freedom to efficiently accomplish the job.

### Perceived Effects to the Physical Health

**Table 4:** Perceived Effects to the Physical Health

Perceived Effects on Physical Health	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Face feels hot even not in a hot room or exercising	2.30	1.111	Occasionally
Sweat excessively even not in a hot room or exercising	2.16	1.143	Occasionally
Mouth became dry	1.94	1.049	Occasionally
Muscle felt tight and tense	1.96	0.912	Occasionally
Bothered by a head ache	2.29	1.118	Occasionally
Felt blood rushing to your head	1.69	1.045	Rarely
Hands is sweating	1.91	1.100	Occasionally
Hands is shaking or trembling	1.53	0.776	Rarely
Choking feeling	1.43	0.764	Rarely
Upset stomach or stomach ache	1.78	0.896	Rarely
Heart beat faster	2.02	0.978	Occasionally
Loss of appetite	1.69	0.949	Rarely
Trouble sleeping at night	2.26	1.031	Occasionally
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.92</b>	<b>1.026</b>	Occasionally

As to the perceived effects to the physical health it was found a mean of 1.92: SD 1.026 describe as occasionally. This implies that the respondents occasionally felt physical stress.

### Activities employed to divert the feelings of stress

The best medicine to relieve or prevent from feeling stress is to find activities that may be helpful. The table presents some of the activities employed by the teachers and office workers who get involved in this study.

**Table 5:** Activities Employed to Divert the Feelings of Stress

Diversion Activities Employed	Mean	SD	Interpretation
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Drink alcohol for relief	1.60	0.912	Rarely
Smoke too much for relief	1.19	0.471	Rarely
Eat even if it's not eating time to divert thinking	2.14	1.302	Occasionally
Went out to have a depth breath	2.65	1.211	Occasionally
Watch movie when in trouble	2.28	1.263	Occasionally
Exercise daily	2.50	1.072	Occasionally
Relaxing activities	3.00	1.167	Sometimes
Taking a break	3.24	1.164	Sometimes
Sleeping well	3.56	1.091	Fairly Often
Eating well	4.00	1.050	Fairly Often
Making time for hobbies	3.16	1.095	Sometimes
Talking out problems	2.88	1.081	Sometimes
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>1.318</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>

Activities employed to divert the feelings of stress got a mean of 2.75: SD 1.318 described as sometimes. This shows that the respondents at times do diversion activities other than sleeping well and eating well in which they do fairly often. Eating a healthy diet can reduce the negative effects of stress on your body," said Kuchan (2018).

Foods can help tame stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal, boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time (abbott.com/corpnewsroom/nutrition-health-and-wellness/healthy-diet-can-reduce-stress.html) Sleep is a powerful stress reducer. Following a regular sleep routine calms and restores the body, improves concentration, regulates mood, and sharpens judgment and decision-making.

### Perceived Results Related to the Diversion Activities

The result based on the respondents' perception on the efficacy of the diversion activities employed is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Perceived Results Related to the Diversion Activities

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Maybe (%)
Drink alcohol gives relief to problems	2.00	78.00	12.00
Smoke too much can help release stress	30.00	84.00	10.00
Eat even if it's not eating time can divert thinking	78.00	32.00	36.00
Went out to have a deep breath can help relieve stress	56.00	4.00	18.00
Watching movie when in trouble can help	76.00	22.00	20.00
Exercise daily improve feeling of discomfort	94.00	12.00	10.00

Relaxing activities can help	94.00	6.00	0.00
Taking a break can release stress	98.00	2.00	4.00
Sleeping well can do better	96.00	0.00	2.00
Eating well can feel better	88.00	2.00	2.00
Making time for hobbies is a good relief	84.00	4.00	8.00
Talking out problems can relieve stress	84.00	4.00	10.00

Based on the respondents' perception on the efficacy of the diversion activities point a 98 % of the respondents saying yes with only 2% saying no and 4% maybe to taking a break can release stress followed by sleeping well can do better, exercise daily improve feeling of discomfort, relaxing activities can help.

Hines (2010) said that the primary goal of a good personal life is to be happy and healthy. Be sure life outside of work includes plenty of sleep, exercise and healthy eating, as well as recreational and nurturing activities that you enjoy.

A better problem solver and a better able to cope with stress when well-rested ([sleepscore.com/how-to-rest-your-way-to-less-stress/](https://sleepscore.com/how-to-rest-your-way-to-less-stress/)).

### **Conclusion**

Eating a healthy diet can reduce the negative effects of stress on the body. Foods can help tame stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm oatmeal can boost the levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline.

Sleep is a powerful stress reducer. Following a regular sleep routine calms and restores the body, improves concentration, regulates mood, and sharpens judgment and decision-making.

Taking a break, exercise daily improves the feeling of discomfort as well as other relaxing activities. Stress is always present in people of all walks of life; the level is dependent on how people manage to overcome stress, eating adequate diet, enough sleep and enough exercise helps a lot.

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