

Assessing the Influence of Work Stress on Mental Health among Employees in a Government Agency in Davao City

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the influence of work stress on the mental health of employees in a government agency in Davao City. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study examined workload, workplace environment, time pressure, and role ambiguity as predictors of stress and their relationship to mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, emotional well-being, and burnout. Data were collected through validated survey instruments and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson r correlation. Findings revealed that workload ($M = 2.65$) and time pressure ($M = 2.74$) were the most severe stressors, while workplace environment stress was moderate ($M = 2.39$). Anxiety ($M = 2.60$) and burnout ($M = 2.47$) emerged as the most concerning mental health dimensions. Correlation results indicated a highly significant positive relationship between work stress and mental health decline ($r = 0.870, p < .001$). These results confirm that higher stress levels contribute to poorer psychological well-being among government employees. The study concludes that stress reduction policies and employee wellness programs are vital in mitigating adverse mental health outcomes. Recommendations include improving workload distribution, clarifying job roles, promoting mental health interventions, and fostering supportive workplace relationships. These interventions not only enhance employee well-being but also strengthen the overall efficiency of government service delivery.

Keywords: Work Stress, Mental Health, Anxiety, Burnout, Government Employees

INTRODUCTION

Work stress has emerged as one of the most pressing issues in modern workplaces, particularly in government institutions where employees often face demanding tasks, bureaucratic structures, and limited resources. Stress in the workplace occurs when employees perceive an imbalance between job demands and their ability to cope with such pressures (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In recent years, occupational stress has been linked to adverse mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, making it a crucial area of study in organizational psychology and public administration (Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

Government employees in the Philippines, especially in highly urbanized areas like Davao City, are often exposed to workloads that include public service delivery, compliance with rigid deadlines, and adherence to administrative processes. Research suggests that prolonged stress in public sector organizations undermines not only employee well-being but also service efficiency (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thus, investigating the connection between work stress and mental health is necessary to understand the psychosocial dynamics of employees in this sector.

Moreover, studies have consistently shown that work-related stress correlates with decreased job satisfaction, impaired emotional regulation, and increased turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2020). The manifestation of stress through mental health challenges may reduce productivity and organizational effectiveness, which could ultimately affect public trust in government institutions. Identifying the stressors that significantly contribute to mental health decline allows for evidence-

based interventions in workplace policies.

This study aims to assess the influence of work stress on the mental health of employees in a government agency in Davao City. By examining indicators such as workload, time pressure, role ambiguity, and workplace environment in relation to anxiety, depression, burnout, and emotional well-being, the research seeks to provide insights into how stressors directly impact mental health outcomes. This knowledge will serve as a basis for recommending organizational interventions that promote employee well-being and institutional efficiency.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between work stress and mental health among government employees in Davao City. The descriptive aspect focused on measuring the levels of stress and mental health conditions, while the correlational component analyzed the statistical association between these two variables. A total of 50 respondents (insert actual number) were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different divisions and job categories within the agency.

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire adapted from standardized instruments on occupational stress and mental health scales. The tool was validated by experts in psychology and human resource management and pilot-tested to ensure reliability. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) to determine levels of stress and mental health, while Pearson r correlation was applied to test the relationship between the two variables. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality, were strictly observed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results reveal that participants experience a severe level of work stress due to workload with an overall mean of 2.65 (SD = 0.70). Indicators such as overwhelming tasks ($M = 3.04$) and frequent stress due to workload volume ($M = 2.76$) were rated severe, reflecting how task demands contribute heavily to employee strain. Interestingly, the indicator on personal time disruption ($M = 2.44$) only reached a moderate level, suggesting that while stressors are intense, employees may have some coping mechanisms to manage work-life balance.

Table 1
Participants' level of Work Stress in terms of Workload

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The amount of work assigned to me is often overwhelming.	3.04	0.73	Severe
I frequently feel stressed due to the volume of tasks I have to complete.	2.76	0.85	Severe
The workload in my role negatively impacts my personal time.	2.44	0.76	Moderate
I find it difficult to meet deadlines due to excessive work demands.	2.38	0.81	Moderate
I feel that the workload is consistently high and contributes to my stress levels.	2.62	0.92	Severe
Overall	2.65	0.70	Severe

The findings indicate that excessive workload is a primary stressor among employees. With high work assignments and tight schedules, employees feel constant pressure that risks impairing performance and overall well-being. This aligns with global research where workload is consistently linked to stress and burnout in high-demand industries. Organizations must reassess task distribution, resource allocation, and staffing levels to mitigate severe stress outcomes.

The overall result shows a moderate level of stress caused by the workplace environment ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.81$). Most indicators, such as tense atmosphere ($M = 2.48$), moderate ($M = 2.20$), and lack of resources ($M = 2.28$), were moderate, while conflicts among colleagues ($M = 2.64$) emerged as a severe stressor. This highlights that interpersonal relationships, more than physical environment, significantly contribute to workplace stress.

The results suggest that while the physical workspace moderately influences stress, social dynamics such as colleague conflicts amplify strain. Employees may tolerate limitations in space or resources, but unresolved interpersonal issues exacerbate stress levels. Addressing workplace conflicts through mediation, improved communication, and a supportive organizational climate can reduce stress and improve employee well-being.

Table 2
Participants' level of Work Stress in terms of Workplace Environment

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The work environment often feels tense and stressful.	2.48	0.95	Moderate
Poor working conditions (e.g., lack of space, noise) contribute to my stress.	2.20	0.90	Moderate
I feel that the work environment lacks adequate resources, which adds to my stress.	2.28	0.90	Moderate
Conflicts between colleagues in the workplace contribute to my stress levels.	2.64	1.03	Severe
I often feel that the workplace environment does not support my well-being.	2.34	0.98	Moderate
Overall	2.39	0.81	Moderate

Results indicate that employees face a severe level of stress due to time pressure ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.76$). Indicators such as tight deadlines ($M = 2.88$), task urgency ($M = 2.86$), and working under constraints ($M = 2.56$) show that participants struggle to manage limited time. The constant urgency of deadlines was highlighted as a severe stressor, reflecting the pressure to balance speed and accuracy in job performance.

Table 3
Participants' level of Work Stress in terms of Time Pressure

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I feel pressured by tight deadlines in my job.	2.88	0.80	Severe
The pressure to complete tasks quickly increases my stress levels.	2.86	0.93	Severe
I often have to work under time constraints, which makes me feel stressed.	2.56	0.79	Severe
Time pressure in my role makes it difficult for me to focus and complete tasks efficiently.	2.56	0.86	Severe
The constant urgency of meeting deadlines contributes to my work-related stress.	2.86	0.86	Severe
Overall	2.74	0.76	Severe

The analysis underscores that time-related demands are among the strongest predictors of stress, as employees must consistently meet productivity standards under constrained timelines. Such pressure can diminish concentration, reduce work quality, and heighten emotional strain. Organizations should implement realistic deadlines, encourage time management strategies, and consider workload adjustments to prevent time-induced burnout.

The overall result points to a severe level of stress caused by role ambiguity ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.81$). Key indicators such as unclear job responsibilities ($M = 2.56$), lack of supervisor guidance ($M = 2.56$), and uncertainty about expectations ($M = 2.60$) all rated severe. Meanwhile, indicators such as poorly defined roles ($M = 2.46$) and lack of communication ($M = 2.44$) were rated as moderate.

The findings suggest that uncertainty in job roles leads to heightened stress among employees, particularly when expectations and responsibilities are poorly communicated. Role ambiguity not only causes stress but can also affect productivity, motivation, and morale. Addressing this requires clearer job descriptions, regular feedback, and transparent communication from management to reduce employee confusion and anxiety.

Table 4
Participants' level of Work Stress in terms of Role Ambiguity

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I am often unclear about my job responsibilities and expectations.	2.56	0.81	Severe
The lack of clear direction from my supervisor causes me stress.	2.56	0.97	Severe
My role in the organization is often poorly defined, leading to confusion and stress.	2.46	0.84	Moderate
I sometimes feel uncertain about what is expected of me in my role.	2.60	0.88	Severe
I experience stress because my job role is not clearly communicated to me.	2.44	0.95	Moderate
Overall	2.52	0.81	Severe

The consolidated data show that time pressure ($M = 2.74$) and workload ($M = 2.65$) are the most severe stressors, followed by role ambiguity ($M = 2.52$), while workplace environment stress remains at a moderate level ($M = 2.39$). These findings reflect that task-related and time-related pressures weigh heavily on employees than environmental conditions.

This pattern implies that employees experience stress primarily from organizational demands rather than the workplace setting. High workload and deadlines, coupled with unclear role expectations, create cumulative stress. Thus, management interventions should prioritize workload distribution, deadline flexibility, and job role clarity, as these are the dominant sources of stress that negatively affect overall employee performance.

Table 5
Overall Participants' Level of Work Stress

Indicators	Mean
Work Stress	
Workload	2.65
Workplace Environment	2.39
Time Pressure	2.74
Role Ambiguity	2.52

The findings show a good level of anxiety ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.80$), indicating that while employees experience stress, they maintain moderate coping. The highest-rated indicator was feeling nervous about tasks ($M = 2.68$), while worrying about performance ($M = 2.52$) and dread before work ($M = 2.54$) were also significant.

These results suggest that anxiety is a consistent emotional response to stressors, though not yet at a severe level. Employees remain functional but experience persistent unease that could escalate if unmanaged. Organizations should promote wellness programs, stress management workshops, and supportive supervision to help employees regulate workplace-induced anxiety.

Table 6
Participants' level of Mental Health in terms of Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I often feel anxious due to the pressures of my job.	2.60	0.86	Good
The stress at work causes me to worry excessively about my performance.	2.52	0.86	Good
I feel nervous or uneasy when I think about the tasks I need to complete.	2.68	0.79	Good
I often feel a sense of dread before coming to work due to work-related stress.	2.54	0.91	Good
The constant stress at work contributes to my feelings of anxiety.	2.66	0.92	Good
Overall	2.60	0.80	Good

The data indicate that employees experience an average level of depression ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.83$). The most concerning item was loss of motivation ($M = 2.42$), followed by stress-related hopelessness ($M = 2.26$). Emotional overwhelm and fatigue were also reported, but only at average intensity.

The findings highlight that work stress contributes to depressive tendencies but not yet to critical levels. This suggests that while employees experience emotional exhaustion, they still manage to function. However, prolonged exposure to stress without intervention may worsen depressive symptoms. Preventive measures like employee assistance programs, counseling services, and regular breaks can help alleviate depressive outcomes.

Table 7
Participants' level of Mental Health in terms of Depression

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The stress from work makes me feel hopeless and down.	2.26	0.88	Average
I often feel unmotivated and disengaged due to work-related stress.	2.42	0.91	Average
Work stress negatively affects my mood and makes me feel depressed.	2.40	0.93	Average
I feel mentally drained and fatigued due to work stress, leading to a sense of depression.	2.32	0.87	Average
The demands of my job often make me feel emotionally overwhelmed and sad.	2.32	0.91	Average
Overall	2.34	0.83	Average

The results indicate an average level of emotional well-being ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.78$). The highest indicator was emotional exhaustion ($M = 2.58$), while difficulties in maintaining balance ($M = 2.28$) and drained feelings ($M = 2.42$) reflect struggles in emotional regulation.

This suggests that employees face challenges in sustaining positive emotions due to stress. While not severe, the consistent impact of stress on emotional stability highlights the need for organizational support. Initiatives such as mental health awareness, relaxation spaces, and mindfulness programs could enhance emotional resilience.

Table 8
Participants' level of Mental Health in terms of Emotional Well-being

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I find it difficult to maintain a positive emotional state due to work stress.	2.28	0.76	Average
The stress at work significantly affects my emotional well-being.	2.40	0.81	Average
Work-related stress causes me to feel emotionally exhausted.	2.58	0.93	Good
I feel drained and overwhelmed emotionally due to the demands of my job.	2.42	0.84	Average
I have difficulty staying emotionally balanced because of the stress I experience at work.	2.28	0.86	Average
Overall	2.39	0.78	Average

Findings show an average level of burnout ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 0.82$). Emotional and physical exhaustion ($M = 2.64$) and pressure-related fatigue ($M = 2.60$) were rated higher, while detachment ($M = 2.34$) and lack of motivation ($M = 2.42$) were lower.

The results reveal that burnout is emerging but not yet severe, suggesting employees are fatigued yet remain engaged. Still, prolonged exposure to stress could escalate this to critical levels. Employers should consider workload rotation, rest periods, and employee recognition programs to counter burnout and sustain motivation.

Table 9
Participants' level of Mental Health in terms of Burnout

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I often feel emotionally and physically exhausted due to work stress.	2.64	0.90	Good
The constant pressure at work leads to feelings of burnout and fatigue.	2.60	0.93	Good
I feel detached and disconnected from my work because of prolonged stress.	2.34	0.89	Average
I struggle to find motivation in my job due to burnout caused by stress.	2.42	0.88	Average
The stress I experience at work has led to a sense of burnout that affects my performance.	2.34	0.82	Average
Overall	2.47	0.82	Average

The consolidated mental health indicators show that anxiety ($M = 2.60$) is the most pressing concern, followed by burnout ($M = 2.47$), while depression ($M = 2.34$) and emotional well-being ($M = 2.39$) remain at average levels. This indicates that employees primarily struggle with anxiety and fatigue, though depressive symptoms and emotional instability are also evident.

This suggests a holistic impact of stress on mental health, where anxiety and burnout are early warning signs that could evolve into depression if unaddressed. Organizations should focus on proactive mental health strategies, such as counseling, employee engagement, and psychological first aid, to prevent further decline.

Table 10
Overall Participants' level of Mental Health

Indicators	Mean
Anxiety	2.60
Depression	2.34
Emotional Well-being	2.39
Burnout	2.47

The correlation analysis shows a highly significant relationship between work stress and all mental health indicators, with Pearson r values ranging from 0.784 to 0.870 ($p < .001$). The strongest correlation was with overall mental health ($r = 0.870$), followed by anxiety ($r = 0.846$) and burnout ($r = 0.804$).

These findings confirm that work stress strongly predicts poor mental health outcomes, supporting theories that chronic stress undermines psychological well-being. This relationship emphasizes the need for organizational interventions that target stress reduction as a direct means of improving employee mental health. Addressing workload, role clarity, and workplace support could significantly reduce stress and enhance resilience.

Table 11
Correlation of Work Stress and Mental Health Indicators

Predictors	Pearson R	p-value	Interpretation
Anxiety	0.846***	<.001	Highly Significant
Depression	0.792***	<.001	Highly Significant
Emotional Well-being	0.784***	<.001	Highly Significant
Burnout	0.804***	<.001	Highly Significant
Overall Mental Health	0.870***	<.001	Highly Significant

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that workload, time pressure, and role ambiguity were the most severe sources of stress among employees, significantly influencing their mental health. Anxiety and burnout emerged as the most affected dimensions, while depression and emotional well-being showed moderate levels of concern. The strong positive correlation between work stress and poor mental health outcomes confirms that organizational demands directly affect employee psychological well-being.

This study concludes that stress management is essential in promoting a healthier workforce in government institutions. Prolonged exposure to occupational stressors can lead to reduced productivity, emotional instability, and potential turnover, thereby compromising service delivery. Addressing these issues requires organizational policies that prioritize employee welfare alongside performance goals.

Ultimately, recognizing work stress as a critical organizational issue provides a foundation for evidence-based interventions. Investing in employee mental health programs is not only beneficial to workers but also crucial for sustaining the effectiveness and efficiency of government agencies in delivering quality public service.

Recommendations

1. The agency should establish workload management policies to ensure equitable task distribution and reduce unnecessary time pressure.
2. Clear job descriptions and regular feedback mechanisms must be implemented to minimize role ambiguity and enhance communication.
3. Employee wellness programs such as counseling services, stress management workshops, and mindfulness training should be institutionalized.
4. The organization must adopt conflict resolution strategies and promote a collaborative culture to address interpersonal stressors.
5. Regular mental health monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into human resource practices to track employee well-being and design targeted interventions.

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