

Understanding Stress, Coping Strategies and Work Engagement among Faculty Administrators in a Philippine State University

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the levels of occupational stress, work engagement, and coping strategies among faculty administrators and examined the relationships among these variables during Academic Year 2023–2024. Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework and related perspectives on engagement and coping, the research employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational design in a Philippine State University. The respondents included 85 faculty administrators selected through total enumeration sampling. Data were gathered using validated standardized questionnaires that measured occupational stress, work engagement and coping strategies. The data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). Findings showed that faculty administrators experienced a moderate level of occupational stress, particularly related to workload demands and role expectations. Despite these pressures, respondents still demonstrated high levels of work engagement and frequently relied on adaptive coping strategies such as religious practices, active problem-solving, and seeking emotional support. Statistical results indicated no significant relationship between occupational stress and work engagement and between occupational stress and coping strategies. However, work engagement showed a weak but significant positive relationship with coping strategies. The study recommends implementing a Comprehensive Counseling and Wellness Development Plan to further strengthen coping resources and support the well-being of faculty administrators.

Keywords: Coping Strategies, Guidance and Counseling; Occupational Stress, Work Engagement,

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions' work environments have grown more demanding in recent years as teachers are required to carry out tasks outside of the classroom. Faculty members who take on administrative responsibilities aside from being an educator are subject to an even more complicated set of obligations. Faculty administrators sometimes oversee professors and staff, participate in institutional committees, plan academic programs, and make sure that institutional regulations and quality assurance standards are followed in addition to providing instruction. These demands implied increasing responsibilities.

According to Dewe, O'Driscoll, and Cooper (2020), occupational stress is frequently linked to circumstances in which people believe that the demands of their jobs outweigh the resources available to properly handle those expectations. Over time, these demands may have an impact on workers' productivity, involvement in their jobs, and general well-being.

The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) paradigm offers a helpful framework for comprehending how workplace circumstances affect employee motivation and well-being. This paradigm holds that workplaces provide resources and demands that influence how people view their professional jobs. When workers do not have enough organizational support or resources to handle job demands such a heavy workload, time constraints, and role conflict, it can lead to stress. On the other hand, even in stressful work conditions, the availability of professional autonomy, institutional support, and development opportunities can boost motivation and promote work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). This paradigm emphasizes the significance of evaluating how faculty administrators in higher education institutions handle the demands of their roles while remaining

dedicated to teaching and institutional service.

In the Philippine context, faculty members who took on administrative duties at state universities and colleges may have similar experiences. Faculty administrators frequently carried out tasks that go beyond their teaching responsibilities, such as directing institutional committees, organizing academic programs, taking part in accreditation procedures, and creating documents needed by regulatory bodies. As a result, faculty administrators sometimes oversee several tasks at once while making sure that administrative and academic activities continue to run smoothly.

However, people react differently to difficult work environments. One crucial element that affects handling job demands is the application of coping mechanisms. The term coping describes the behavioral and cognitive strategies people use to manage stressful circumstances and control their emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2020). It has been demonstrated that coping mechanisms like asking for help from coworkers, efficiently planned activities, and controlling emotional reactions can help educators deal with work-related stress in a more positive way (Cheng et al., 2022). People are frequently better able to preserve their well-being and continue to be productive in the face of stress at work when they employ adaptive coping mechanisms.

Work engagement has emerged as a key idea in comprehending employee motivation and performance, alongside coping strategies. A good work-related state marked by vigor, commitment, and intense involvement in professional tasks is frequently linked to job engagement (Schaufeli, 2021). Workers with greater levels of involvement typically exhibit zeal, perseverance, and dedication to their duties. However, exhaustion and a decline in participation may occur when job expectations become too great and coping mechanisms are scarce. In order to comprehend how professionals maintain effectiveness in difficult work contexts, it is crucial to look at the relationship between occupational stress, coping mechanisms, and work engagement.

In the researcher's actual work setting, faculty administrators faced a variety of professional obligations that must be handled concurrently. These could include involvement in institutional projects, teaching, and administrative coordination. High performance expectations, time limits, and resource limitations can all exacerbate stress. In order to fulfill institutional deadlines and finish administrative duties, academic administrators occasionally extend working hours beyond regular schedules. Long-term exposure to these pressures can cause exhaustion and make it difficult to maintain a balance between work and personal obligations, even if some people manage these expectations by working with co-workers or using personal coping mechanisms. With these observations in the researcher's institution, the necessity to conduct the study is empirical.

Consequently, even with the existing literature on occupational stress, coping strategies and work engagement, there seemed to have limited studies that examined simultaneously these three variables among faculty administrators in the Philippine state universities. Most existing studies focus on either by regular faculty or employees without much attention to educators with dual or multiple responsibilities such as being an educator and an administrator.

Additionally, this study supported national and international programs that support mental health and wellbeing in educational settings. The Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004, also known as Republic Act 9258, acknowledges the need of qualified guidance counselors in promoting students' psychological health in school environments. Given that the researcher works as both a guidance counselor and a faculty administrator, it is clear how important it is to comprehend the stress that academic staff members face at work. Furthermore, the Philippine Mental Health Act, Republic Act 11036, highlights the necessity to create programs that support psychosocial assistance and mental health that guarantee healthy lifestyles and fostering well-being in workplaces, including institutions of higher learning.

In light of these factors, this study looked at Palompon Institute of Technology faculty administrators' levels and the connections of work engagement, coping mechanisms, and occupational stress during the academic year 2023–2024. This would then provide an empirical foundation in creating a Comprehensive Counseling and Wellness Development Plan in fostering stress management, bolstering coping skills, and improving the well-being and engagement of faculty administrators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding occupational stress among faculty administrators in higher education has become increasingly significant as the higher education landscape continues to evolve. The landscape of higher education has changed dramatically in recent years, placing increasing demand on academic administrators that often leads to extreme occupational stress. Understanding how occupational stress, work engagement, and coping mechanisms interact within academic leadership roles is crucial to promoting the well-being of these faculty members and enhancing institutional performance.

Due to the demands of administrative positions, faculty members regularly have to manage several responsibilities concurrently. Faculty administrators frequently balance their personal commitments, instructional responsibilities, research demands, and administrative duties. According to research, juggling these multiple responsibilities may result in role conflict, which dramatically raises stress levels. The pressure to perform well in every aspect may eventually lead to fatigue and a decline in job satisfaction (Gmelch and Burns, 2021). Filipino educators who carry out several institutional responsibilities have also reported similar experiences, suggesting that role overload is a major factor in work-related stress in academic settings. (Oducado and Estoque, 2022). Role overload was a major contributor to work-related stress in academic contexts, as evidenced by similar experiences reported by Filipino educators who held various institutional roles (Oducado and Estoque, 2022).

As workloads and institutional expectations continue to increase, faculty administrators may experience declining levels of engagement, leading to feelings of detachment or reduced commitment to their obligations. This circumstance emphasizes how crucial it is to establish work cultures that encourage employee engagement by offering sufficient resources, support networks, and chances for career advancement. Faculty administrators who stay involved in their work are better able to deal with institutional issues and make valuable contributions to their organizations.

Coping mechanisms were essential for academic leaders to retain their effectiveness and manage occupational stress due to the demanding nature of faculty administration jobs. Developing interventions and institutional support structures that support faculty well-being requires an understanding of these coping mechanisms.

Reducing the detrimental consequences of professional stress requires the use of effective coping mechanisms. Faculty administrators can deal with workload concerns and handle the demands of their positions by using problem-focused coping strategies such time management and task prioritization (Ma et al., 2020). Another helpful coping mechanism for handling the difficulties of administrative responsibilities is to look for social support from mentors and coworkers (Ross, Locke, et al., 2023). To deal with work-related stress, educators in the Philippines have also been seen to rely on spiritual coping, collegial support, and adaptive problem-solving techniques (Alipio, 2021; Oducado and Estoque, 2022).

The coping strategies faculty administrators adopt can have a significant impact on their work engagement and occupational stress levels. Problem-focused coping strategies – such as rearranging tasks or seeking assistance from colleagues – were essential for managing stresses and building resilience (Hart & Thompson, 2020). Emotionally focused coping tactics, such as self-care, relaxation techniques, and social support, can lower stress and enhance job satisfaction. Maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as avoidance or escapism, can, however, increase stress and lower motivation at work. Research indicates that faculty administrators who utilize problem-focused coping strategies and actively seek out social support report feeling less stressed and more content with their work (Li et al., 2025). In contrast, ineffective coping may result to burnout, role overload, and a decreased commitment to administrative tasks.

In this regard, research suggests that work engagement, occupational stress, and coping mechanisms are interrelated elements that influence faculty administrators' professional experiences in higher education. Because lengthy job demands can drain psychological energy and drive, research indicates that excessive occupational stress may lower employees' work engagement. (Hakanen et al., 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Effective coping techniques, in the other hand, can lessen the detrimental effects of stress and maintain workers' involvement in their professional positions. These techniques include problem-focused coping,

emotional, regulations, and seeking out social support (Ma et al., 2020). Additionally, research from educational environments shows that teachers who employ adaptive coping strategies are more likely to maintain their resilience and dedication to their work in the face of challenging professional responsibilities. (Li et al., 2025). In the Philippine context, studies among Filipino educators similarly report that increasing workload and institutional expectations contribute to occupational stress, yet those who utilize constructive coping strategies are better at maintaining professional commitment and engagement (Alipio, 2021; Oducado and Estoque, 2022).

Although these factors have been studied in a variety of educational and organizational contexts, more research is still needed to understand how occupational stress, work engagement, and coping mechanisms interact in particular institutional settings, especially among faculty administrators who carry out leadership and academic duties concurrently. In light of these viewpoints, the current study examines the relationship between these variables among faculty administrators, offering information that could guide institutional initiatives meant to improve coping skills, maintain work engagement, and strengthen administrator well-being in higher education institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing descriptive and correlational design. The descriptive method was used to determine the levels of occupational stress, work engagement, and coping strategies among faculty administrators in a Philippine State University while the correlational method was utilized to determine the relationships among these variables.

Participants and Sampling

All 85 faculty administrators of a Philippine State University were involved representing the different academic and administrative units. Complete enumeration sampling was employed wherein all faculty administrators were included as respondents.

Research Instruments

A structured survey questionnaire used as primary instrument of the study covering the demographic profile, occupational stress, coping strategies and work engagement.

Occupational Stress. Occupational stress was measured using the 60-item Occupational Stress Inventory–Revised (OSI-R) by Osipow (1998) assessing six dimensions: physical environment, role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role boundary, and responsibility. The Occupational Stress Inventory–Revised (OSI-R) has demonstrated high reliability, with test–retest coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.93 (Osipow, 1998), and has been widely validated for assessing occupational stress in diverse professional settings.

Coping Strategies. Coping strategies were assessed using the 16-item instrument Culture Mix Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations developed by Quansah et al. (2022) in terms of religious coping, behavioral disengagement, active coping, and emotional support. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as Not Utilized to 5 as Highly Utilized. Reliability coefficients for the subscales range from 0.812 to 0.869, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and construct validity (Quansah et al., 2022).

Work Engagement. Work engagement was determined using the 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The instrument measures vigor, dedication and absorption. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent). Previous studies have reported good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 (Yusof et al., 2013).

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to the data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Office of the President.

After obtaining the necessary approval, informed consent was sought from the respondents and the questionnaires were administered with clear instructions. Completed surveys were quickly retrieved then tabulated and analyzed using statistical tools.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data gathered were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The demographic profile of the respondents was described using frequency counts and percentages. The levels of occupational stress, coping strategies, and work engagement, as well as the diversity of responses, were assessed and interpreted using weighted mean and standard deviation. The important connections between occupational stress, coping strategies, and work engagement were investigated using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The data were interpreted and the study's objectives were addressed based on the outcomes of these statistical analyses.

Ethical Considerations

In order to safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of the respondents, the study adhered with recognized ethical norms. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was secured after being made aware of the goal, parameters, and methods of the study. Respondents were coded and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by removing identifying information and coding the responses. The data were utilized exclusively for academic purposes and presented in aggregate form. Measures were taken to reduce any potential psychological injury, and participants were guaranteed the freedom to withdraw at any moment without penalty. All research activities were governed by the concepts of beneficence, justice, and respect for people throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents $N=85$

Demographic	Category	f	%
Sex by Birth	Female	50	58.82
	Male	35	41.18
Age	Above 60	1	1.18
	51-60	20	23.53
	41-50	25	29.41
	31-40	28	32.94
	30 and below	11	12.94
Highest Educational Degree	Doctorate Degree	22	25.88
	With Doctorate Units	29	34.12
	Master's Degree	20	23.53
	With Master's Units	11	12.94
	College Graduate	30	35.3

Administrative Designation	College	12	14.12
	Department	19	22.35
	Institutional	32	37.65
	Program	14	16.47
	Unit	8	9.41
Number of Designation	3 and above	14	16.47
	2	24	28.24
	1	47	55.29
Number of Years	Above 10	3	3.53
	6 – 10	11	12.94
	1 – 5	67	78.82
	Less than one year	4	4.71

Age, gender, educational attainment, administrative designation, number of designations, and years of administrative experience were all included while analyzing the respondents' demographic profile. The majority of respondents were female (58.82%) and were between the ages of 31 and 40 (32.94%), suggesting that many were middle-aged and probably had significant work obligations. Most had completed doctoral units (34.12%), held institutional-level posts (37.65%) and more than half (55.29%) had one administrative designation indicating a high degree of professional preparation that could enhance administrative and leadership efficacy and more extensive organizational and academic duties. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, employees' perceptions and management of job demands may be influenced by their personal traits. Faculty administrators often occupy key leadership roles, however some take on additional administrative duties in response to the growing needs of universities. (Winefield et al., 2021; Oducado et al., 2021; Oducado & Estoque, 2022)

Table 2. Level of Occupational Stress

Components	WM	Verbal Description
Role Overload	3.24	Moderate
Role Insufficiency	2.61	Moderate
Role Ambiguity	2.67	Moderate
Role Boundary	2.54	Low
Role Responsibility	2.76	Moderate
Physical Environment	2.33	Low
Grand Mean	2.69	Moderate

Despite the demands of administrative responsibilities, the moderate level of occupational stress (WM = 2.69),

suggested that stress was largely controllable. With role overload as the highest dimension ($WM = 3.24$) indicates that faculty administrators had fairly high workloads and growing responsibilities. The moderate levels of role ambiguity, role boundary, and role insufficiency reflect occasional uncertainties related to role expectations, organizational relationships, and career development. Similarly, the moderate level of role responsibility highlights the demands associated with leadership, decision-making, and accountability for others, which contributed to occupational stress among faculty administrators. Rising administrative responsibilities and accountability for institutional success frequently result in moderate occupational stress among school administrators. (Elomaa et al., 2023; García-González et al., 2022; Oducado and Estoque, 2022; Pressley, 2021;)

Table 3. Level of Work Engagement

Components	WM	Verbal Description
Vigor	3.65	Good
Dedication	4.10	Good
Absorption	3.72	Good
Grand Mean	3.82	Good

A high degree of work engagement ($WM = 3.82$) points to positive work engagement in faculty administrators that is marked by zeal, commitment, and absorption. With dedication as the highest dimension demonstrated a strong sense of purpose, emotional attachment to work, and devotion to institutional obligations. Additionally, vigor and dedication indicate a good level capacity to stay attentive and fully engaged in their work. Work engagement in higher education, chances for professional growth, meaningful work, and organizational support may help maintain these positive levels of engagement. (Bakker and Demouti, 2023; Collie, 2021; Oducado and Estoque, 2022)

Table 4. Level of Coping Strategies

Components	WM	Verbal Description
Active Coping	4.04	Utilized
Religious Coping	4.31	Highly Utilized
Behavior Disengagement	2.61	Moderately Utilized
Emotional Support	3.82	Utilized
Grand Mean	3.70	Utilized

Coping strategies were generally utilized ($WM = 3.70$) to manage occupational stress. Religious coping as the dominant approach indicates commonly turning to spiritual solace and direction in trying times. Emotional support and active coping were also highly utilized in dealing with stress by seeking out support and encouragement from others and by engaging in problem-solving actions. Behavioral disengagement on the other hand, was only moderately utilized which may tell that escape or retreat from stressful situations is like not frequently utilized. Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model highlights the role of personal, social, and spiritual resources in reducing job stress, and Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping suggests that people use different coping strategies based on their assessment of stressors and available resources. Accordingly, educators and school administrators frequently rely on problem-focused coping, emotional support, and positive coping behaviors (Corrales & Lanuza-Quimson, 2020; Larson, 2021; Oducado & Estoque, 2022; Elomaa et al., 2023).

Table 5. Test of Relationship between the Occupational Stress and Work Engagement

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Occupational Stress and Work Engagement	0.074	Negligible Positive	0.499	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
<i>*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)</i>					

The association between occupational stress and job engagement is not statistically significant, according to the p-value of 0.499, which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. It can be inferred that occupational stress does not significantly influence the level of work engagement among the faculty administrators in the present study. Certain educators maintain a high level of engagement in their work even in the face of work-related strain, suggesting that professional dedication and motivation can last under trying circumstances. (Holmström et al., 2023)

Table 6. Test of Relationship between the Work Engagement and Coping Strategies

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Work Engagement and Coping Strategies	0.419*	Weak Positive	0.000	Reject H_0	Significant
<i>*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)</i>					

For work engagement and coping strategies, the p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, implying that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant. This indicates that coping mechanisms and work engagement are significantly correlated. Coping strategies are important factors in sustaining engagement in demanding work environments. Administrators were able to sustain productivity and engagement in spite of occupational stress by using adaptive coping mechanisms like time management, optimism, and professional commitment. (Corrales and Lanuza-Quimson, 2020; Larson, 2021)

Table 7. Test of Relationship between The Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies	0.167	Negligible Positive	0.127	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
<i>*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)</i>					

With the p-value of 0.127 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, posits that occupational stress and coping strategies is not statistically significant. This may suggest that faculty administrators regularly use coping strategies as part of their professional adjustment to workplace demands, demonstrating resilience, professional dedication, and the availability of helpful resources within the academic setting. Coping strategies are not oftentimes directly influenced by the level of occupational stress experienced by faculties. (Potane, 2024)

Limitations and Future Research

The study was limited to faculty administrators from one Philippine State University and utilized one a cross-sectional descriptive correlation design. Future studies may involve larger samples, multiple institutions and more advance .method to enhance external validity and provide a deeper understanding of the relationships among occupational stress, coping strategies and work engagement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Faculty administrators continued to exhibit high levels of work engagement despite experiencing moderate stress that was mostly caused by psycho-social and role-related expectations. Their dependence on adaptive coping strategies, especially those based on spirituality, problem-solving, and emotional support, which assist mitigate the effects of job demands, supports their capacity to stay engaged despite stress. It was discovered that neither job engagement nor coping techniques were significantly impacted by occupational stress, suggesting that engagement and coping were sustained through consistent personal resources rather than varying with stress levels. The strong correlation between coping methods and work engagement further suggests that engaged people actively employ coping mechanisms to maintain well-being and productivity. These confirmed the adaptability, resourcefulness, and culturally rooted in coping mechanisms of faculty administrators and support networks that sustain efficacy and well-being.

It is recommended that the institution implement the proposed Comprehensive Counseling and Wellness Development Plan to address the recognized concerns related to occupational stress, coping strategies, and work engagement among faculty administrators.

AI Use Disclosure

During the manuscript preparation, CHTGPT Z was used solely to improve language clarity, grammar and formatting. This tool did not contribute to the study's conceptual framework, analysis or interpretation. The author remains fully responsible for all content, analyses and conclusions.

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