

A Correlational Study of Workload and Stress Level Among Selected Office Employees in the Local Government Unit of Palauig

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between workload and stress levels among selected office employees in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palauig, Zambales. Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, a quantitative correlational design was employed involving 30 randomly selected employees from the Municipal Treasurer’s Office, Municipal Accounting Office, Municipal Budget Office, and Business Permit and Licensing Office. Workload was measured using the NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX), while stress levels were assessed using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10).

Findings revealed that employees experienced a high level of mental workload, particularly in cognitive tasks such as analysis, decision-making, and task concentration. Despite this, stress levels were generally moderate, indicating that employees are able to manage job demands but still experience periodic psychological strain. Results further showed no significant differences in workload and stress when grouped according to office assignment, age, sex, length of service, and employment status, suggesting a uniform distribution of job demands across respondent categories.

The study concludes that while employees are exposed to substantial cognitive workload, stress levels remain manageable and consistent across groups. These findings highlight the need for sustained organizational strategies to support employee well-being and workload management in local government settings.

Keywords: Workload, Occupational stress, Mental workload, LGU employees, JD-R model

INTRODUCTION

Workload and stress are common challenges in modern workplaces, particularly in government offices where accuracy, accountability, and strict deadlines are essential. Employees in public sector organizations are expected to meet high-performance standards while complying with policies and regulations. As a result, understanding how workload influences employee stress has become an important concern in organizational research.

Workload refers to the mental and physical demands required to perform job tasks, while stress is the individual’s perception of these demands as overwhelming or difficult to manage. In Local Government Units (LGUs), employees in financial and regulatory offices—such as the Municipal Treasurer’s Office, Accounting Office, Budget Office, and Business Permit and Licensing Office (BPLO)—handle critical responsibilities including revenue collection, financial reporting, and regulatory compliance. These tasks require high levels of concentration and time management, which may contribute to increased stress.

Previous studies have established a link between workload and stress. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model explains that high job demands, such as heavy workload, can lead to stress when not supported by sufficient resources. Similarly, the Transactional Theory of Stress emphasizes that stress depends on how individuals perceive and evaluate work demands. Tools such as the NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) have been widely used to measure workload and stress, respectively.

Despite existing studies, there is limited research focusing on workload and stress among employees in LGU financial and regulatory offices in the Philippines. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between workload and stress among selected employees in the Local Government Unit of Palauig, Zambales. Specifically, this study seeks to determine the level of workload and stress among employees, examine their relationship, and identify whether differences exist when grouped according to profile variables.

Research Objective

This study aimed to determine the relationship between workload and stress levels among selected office employees in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palauig, Zambales. The study specifically sought to answer the following research questions:

What is the profile of the respondent-employees in terms of:

- 1.1. Office/Department;
- 1.2. Age;
- 1.3. Sex;
- 1.4. Length of service; and
- 1.5. Employment status?

What is the level of workload of the employees as measured by the NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX) in terms of:

- 2.1 Mental demand;
- 2.2 Physical demand;
- 2.3 Temporal demand;
- 2.4 Performance;
- 2.5 Effort; and
- 2.6 Frustration?

What is the level of stress experienced by the employees as measured by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)?

Is there a significant relationship between workload and stress levels among the employees?

Is there a significant difference in workload and stress levels when respondents are grouped according to profile variables?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design. A quantitative approach was used to gather numerical data on employees' workload and stress levels using standardized instruments.

The correlational design was appropriate as the study aimed to determine whether a significant relationship exists between perceived workload and stress among selected employees in the Local Government Unit of Palauig. This design examines relationships between variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In this study, workload and stress were not manipulated but measured as they naturally occur in the workplace to determine their statistical relationship, consistent with the study's objectives.

Respondents and Location

The study was conducted in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Palauig, Zambales. A total of 30 employees were selected through random sampling from the following offices: Municipal Treasurer's Office, Municipal Accounting Office, Municipal Budget Office, and Business Permit and Licensing Office (BPLO).

Instruments

Two standardized instruments were used in the study. The first was the NASA Task Load Index (NASA-TLX), which measures workload across six dimensions, namely mental demand, physical demand, temporal demand, performance, effort, and frustration, rated using a 4-point Likert scale. The second instrument was the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), which measures perceived stress over the past month using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Very Often).

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from LGU authorities before data collection. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality of responses was ensured.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of workload and stress among the respondents. Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was applied to test the relationship between workload and stress. To determine differences in workload and stress across groups, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests were used. All statistical tests were evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

The majority of respondents were from the Municipal Treasurer's Office (40%), female (70%), and permanently employed (53.3%). Most had 1–5 years of service.

Workload Level

The overall workload level was high (Mean = 3.18).

Highest: Mental Demand (Very High)

Lowest: Frustration (High)

This indicates that employees experience significant cognitive demands in their work.

Stress Level

The overall stress level was interpreted as "Often" (Mean = 2.51), indicating moderate stress.

Highest: Confidence in handling work problems

Lowest: Feelings of anger due to uncontrollable factors

Relationship Between Workload and Stress

Results showed a positive relationship, indicating that higher workload is associated with higher stress levels among employees.

Differences Among Profile Variables

Statistical tests revealed no significant differences in workload and stress when grouped according to office, age, sex, length of service, and employment status.

This suggests that employees experience similar levels of workload and stress regardless of their profile.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that employees in selected LGU offices experience high workload and moderate stress levels, with mental demand being the most significant contributor. This supports the Job Demands–Resources model, which explains that high job demands can lead to stress when not balanced by adequate resources.

The absence of significant differences across demographic variables suggests that workload and stress are influenced more by job characteristics rather than personal factors. This aligns with previous studies indicating that organizational demands have a stronger impact on stress than demographic variables.

Furthermore, the positive relationship between workload and stress confirms that as job demands increase, employees are more likely to experience stress. However, the moderate stress level also suggests that employees are still able to cope with their responsibilities, possibly due to experience, skills, or workplace support.

These findings highlight the need for LGU administrators to focus on improving work processes, managing workload distribution, and strengthening support systems rather than targeting specific demographic groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that respondents came from diverse backgrounds in terms of office assignment, age, sex, length of service, and employment status, with most being female, permanently employed, and assigned to the Municipal Treasurer’s Office. Employees generally experience a high level of mental workload, indicating cognitively demanding tasks, while their stress levels are moderate, suggesting manageable but present work pressure. Additionally, no significant differences were observed in workload and stress across different offices or when grouped by profile variables, indicating that employees share similar experiences regardless of their characteristics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization should maintain effective workload distribution across departments to sustain manageable stress levels among employees. Strengthening workplace systems and support mechanisms is also recommended to enhance employee well-being. Future studies should involve a larger and more diverse sample across multiple LGUs to improve generalizability. Additionally, further research may explore other factors influencing workload and stress, such as job design, organizational structure, and psychological dimensions of stress.

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