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Workload Stress and Results Based Performance of Multigrade Teachers

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Abstract

Teaching is a multifaceted task. Teachers are inevitably exposed to superfluous teaching workloads and predicaments causing them stress. This research aimed to determine the relationship between workload stress and results based performance of multigrade teachers. It employed correlation research design involving thirty (30) purposively selected multigrade teachers in the Schools Division of General Santos City (GSC) during the school year 2015-2016. Following the survey method, a tailored questionnaire was used to gather the needed information. Secondary data were also collected. The statistical tools employed in the analysis were frequency distribution, percentage rate, weighted mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed that the multigrade teachers experience moderate level of workload stress and high level of results based performance. It was further found out that there is no significant relationship between workload stress and results based performance, providing evidence that stress may not necessarily influence performance. This result offers unique implications in theory, practice, and research which are discussed in the study.

Keywords: workload stress, results based performance, multigrade education

1. Introduction

Teaching, in its broadest sense, is the process of transferring chunks of knowledge, skills and values. It is considerably one of the toughest professions which requires multi-tasking skills to cope with the challenges. Some of these multifarious tasks are curriculum and lesson planning, classroom management, employment of varied teaching strategies, management of pupils' behavior and preparation of instructional materials. Teaching profession also poses heavy workloads which is quite a stressful task.

Morgan and Craith (2015) supports such assumption that teachers as facilitators of learning are inevitably exposed to superfluous teaching loads causing them stress. Workload stress is often the result of classroom experiences particularly the increasing challenge of disruptive behavior of pupils. It can be further noted that workload stress brings influence on many aspects of the teaching condition such as academic performance (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2007), and academic motivation (Morgan & Craith, 2015).

Theoretically, affective events such as emotions, mental states and their reactions to incidents that occur in work environment cause psychological impact, which in turn, leads to poor performance standing (Weiss & Copranzano, 1996). Unfortunately, it indicates that teachers who are usually under workload stress are incapable to achieve the expected high levels of performance resulting to ineffective education and delays in national and global development (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004).

Based on the synthesis of related studies in teaching setting, a large body of literature concluded that there is a significant relationship between stress and performance (Hanif, Tariq & Nadeem, 2011; Khan, Shah, Khan & Gul, 2012; Anandasayanan & Subramaniam, 2014; Ogundipe & Ajayi, 2014; Yusuf, Yinusa & Metu, 2015; Wangui, Ombui & Iravo, 2015; Laily & Wahyuni, 2017; Ipek, Akcay, Atay, Berber, Karalik & Yilmaz, 2018). Even considering studies involving the same variables in industry setting showed similar findings that stress influences the performance of employees (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Kazi & Haslam, 2013; Bemana, Moradi, Ghasemi, Taghavi & Ghayoor, 2013; Ali, Raheem, Nawaz & Imamuddin, 2014; Jalagat, 2017; Vijayan, 2018). The trend of the results shows that stress and performance are clearly related variables with moderate to strong correlations. The previous studies on stress and performance of teachers, though substantial, have notable gaps.

Most studies focused on the stress of regular elementary teachers (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004; Roxas, 2009; Eres & Atanasoska, 2011; Harish & Prabha, 2019); no studies as far as this paper is concerned attempted to probe on the workload stress specifically of teachers in the multigrade setting. Multigrade schools can be defined as schools where group of students of different grades are taught in a single classroom and are usually located in remote or sparsely populated areas (Enayati, Movahedian & Zameni, 2016). In such schools, there may be only one, two or three teachers, but they offer a complete cycle of primary education. In most cases, pupils of two or more grades are taught by one teacher variously referred to as "multilevel", "composite class" or "family classes". According to Enayati, et al., (2016), these schools are brought about by several conditions. Firstly, there is low population density and schools in these areas are widely scattered and inaccessible. Secondly, population

declines in areas where there was formerly monograde teaching, and now only a small number of teachers are employed. Thirdly, the official number of teachers deployed justifies monograde teaching but the actual number of deployed is less resulting to lack of teachers. Fourthly, the number of students admitted to a class include more than one class group, requiring a combination of some of the students with those in a class group of different grade. Fifthly, teacher absenteeism is high and organizations of a supplementary teacher are ineffectual or non-existent. Lastly, teachers have decided to organize multigrade rather than monograde groups due to pedagogic reasons. As a result, multigrade schools are organized and implemented requiring teachers to do multigrade teaching.

To gain more insight into the multigrade education condition, in multigrade classrooms, a single teacher has to teach the learners of more than one grade in the same classroom all at the same time as a result of inadequate resources and lack of classrooms (Little, Pridmore, Bajracharya & Vithanaphathivana, 2007). It requires high level of preparation to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum, especially innovations and experimentations among different levels involved in the class to carefully assess their needs and eventually adapt developmentally appropriate teaching strategies (Vicente, 2012). Complicating this picture is the fact that, in a multigrade class, the curriculum and lesson planning can be very challenging and time consuming if alternative and creative strategies are not done (Msimanga, 2019). Given these predicaments, multigrade teachers are expected to display good classroom management strategies in the conduct of multi-level activities and in the utilization of learning centers and work stations twice as much as compared to regular teachers (Jordaan, 2006). Hence, in these contexts, multigrade teachers experience distinctive stressful events and are much expected to perform high levels of performance as regular elementary teachers in the pursuit of educational success.

Amidst predictable results in the studies about workload stress and performance, the present study intends to provide knowledge by testing the association between the two variables specifically in multigrade teaching setting. If this aim will be achieved, this inquiry will significantly contribute to theory, practice and research concerning the relationship between stress and performance. Quality teaching-learning process is the key foundation of every educational success. Significantly, this study endeavored to provide basis for school administrators and policymakers in designing effective school policy and programs and in making adjustments in the curriculum to assist teachers in accomplishing multifarious tasks. Moreover, this study may enlighten stakeholders to prioritize situations in multigrade schools in terms of providing instructional devices and materials, technology-driven systems and conducive physical environment.

Along these realities, issues and complexities encountered in multigrade settings, a scientific probing highlighting the influence of workload stress to the results based performance of multigrade teachers motivated the researcher to undertake the study. In particular, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the level of workload stress of multigrade teachers relative to:

1.1. social regard for learning;

1.2. learning environment;

1.3. diversity of learners;

1.4. curriculum;

1.5. planning, assessing and reporting;

1.6. community linkages; and

1.7. personal growth and professional development?

2. What is the level of results based performance of multigrade teachers?

3. Is there a significant relationship between workload stress and results based performance of multigrade teachers?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on Affective Events Theory (AET) by Weiss and Copranzano (1996) which states that affective events, emotions and mental states in the workplace cause psychological impact, thus affecting the performance of an individual. In addition, an individual may exhibit internal and external affective behaviors in his or her performance. The theory also proposes that individual's reactions to incidents happening at work directly influences job performance. If the work is stressful, the individual develops negative attitude due to stressful events at work. If this occurs consistently, it may result to accumulation of perceived work-related stress over time and eventually yields poor performance standing. Karasek's (1979) job demand control model which explains high work demands and Edward's (1998) P-E fit theory that talks about the lack of fit between demands and resources create psychological stresses. The notion of these theories are being proven in several work-related stress studies conducted revealing that high levels of psychological distress lead to decreased job performance in their respective organizations (Cincotta, 2005; Kazi & Haslam, 2013).

Based on the above theory, it is assumed that the independent variable which is workload stress of multigrade teachers is significantly related to the dependent variable which is results based performance. This research operationalizes that the higher the workload stress, the lower the results based performance of teachers. The theoretical framework was developed in conjunction with the problems stated in the study that seeks to answer the significant relationship between workload stress of multigrade teachers and their results based performance.

Anent to the influence of workload stress to teacher's performance, Kaal (1998) as cited by Ogundipe and Ajayi (2014) found out that most teachers described their jobs as very stressful. This in turn, reduces their effectiveness and efficiency by impairing concentration, causes sleeplessness, increases the risk for illness, back problems, accidents, and lots time. In line with this, found out that there is a significant relationship between the teacher's level of stress and the teaching performance (Khan, et al., 2012; Hanif, et al., 2011; Yusuf, et al., 2015).

3. Methodology

This study employed correlational research design. Correlational study is a quantitative

method of research in which you have two or more quantitative variables from the same group of aspects trying to determine if there is a relationship between two variables (Lomax & Li, 2013).

This study involved thirty (30) multigrade teachers in selected schools of GSC during school year 2015-2016. These teachers were identified by the Schools Division of GSC to be handling two or more grades (DepEd Region XII Survey Aggregated Data, 2015). These teachers were experienced in managing multigrade classrooms through trainings they attended. Majority of the teachers belong to majority tribes (Panuncillo, 2016). They were selected regardless of gender, tribe, age, experience, rank and educational attainment.

This study was conducted in the selected schools of GSC. These schools that implement multigrade education were located mostly at the far flung areas of the city. These were organized as a matter of necessity for remote barangays. Aside from the limited enrolment, the distance of the barangay to a school, teacher shortage, lack of fund for school buildings and other facilities also led to the organization of multigrade schools in the different parts of the city.

Workload Stress Scale (35 items) was used to collect the primary data for this study. The items in the questionnaire were formulated based on the readings of researcher of the literature. This was checked by the expert validators to ensure content validity. It obtained a weighted mean of 4.84 descriptively rated as very highly valid. A pilot testing was also conducted to establish reliability. The questionnaire has excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.99. In the case of results based performance as the secondary data, the researcher went to the district offices to collect the records of Results Based Performance Management System of teachers.

The researcher utilized frequency count, percentage rate, weighted mean, and standard deviation to interpret the gathered data. Five (5) point Likert scale was used to measure and describe the variables. Lastly, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation was used to measure the strength of a linear association between the variables (Laerd Statistics, 2013). All tests were done at 0.05 level of significance (Creative Research Systems, 2014).

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Workload Stress of Multigrade Teachers

Subvariables	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Social Regard for Learning	3.14	Moderate
Learning Environment	3.39	Moderate
Diversity of Learners	3.17	Moderate
Curriculum	3.21	Moderate
Planning, Assessing and Reporting	3.33	Moderate
Community Linkages	3.21	Moderate
Personal Growth and Professional Development	3.11	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.22**	**Moderate**

N=30

Table 1 presents the workload stress of the multigrade teachers.

The data show that, in terms of social regard for learning, the teachers experience stress in maintaining appropriate appearance at school *(M= 3.27)*; and being careful about the effect of their behavior on pupils *(M= 3.23)*. As a whole, the stress of teachers in terms of social regard for learning obtained a mean of 3.14 described as moderate level. A fact to recognize, multigrade teachers have to face the difficulties before going into the workplace. This includes going through the muddy and sticky land terrains due to heavy rain, and tall mountains and cliffs. Given these predicaments, teachers can still manage to dress properly and consistently maintain professional image and ethics. This is pursuant to Resolution No. 435 Series of 1997 or the Code of Ethics of Teachers that every teacher shall possess dignity and reputation with high moral values as well as technical and professional competence. In the practice of their noble profession, they should strictly adhere to, observe, and practice set of ethical and moral principles.

When it comes to learning environment, the teachers report stress in handling behavior problems quickly and with due respect to children's rights and giving timely feedback to reinforce appropriate to learners' behavior *(M= 3.67)*; creating an environment that promotes fairness *(M= 3.37)*; and communicating higher learning expectations to each learner *(M= 3.37)*. This subvariable generally obtained a mean of 3.39 described as moderate level of stress. It can be inferred that teachers can manage to provide a social and psychological environment for all students, regardless of their individual differences in learning. Little (2006) explained that most teachers in a multigrade setting face difficulties in providing a conducive classroom environment. Also, the teachers surveyed in San Jose, General Santos City comprising the majority of the respondents are also non-indigenous who were officially teaching indigenous pupils (Panuncillo, 2016). This means that these pupils have different learning styles and individual differences but, teachers still find it manageable in managing these peculiarities.

As regards diversity of learners, teachers feel stress in initiating other learning approaches for

learners whose needs have not been met by usual approaches and showing sensitivity to multi-cultural background of the learners *(M= 3.27)*; pacing lessons appropriate to needs and/or abilities of learners; and providing differentiated activities for learners *(M= 3.17)*; and employing integrative and interactive strategies for meaningful and holistic development of learners *(M= 3.17)*. This subvariable entirely obtained a mean of 3.17 described as moderate level of stress. This means that teachers can manage recognizing and respecting individual differences of diverse learners despite various complexities elaborated by Banks and Banks (2009) that many educators are challenged to manage diversity issues on top of other difficulties they are expected to handle every day. These differences, however, are not limited to race or linguistics but also additional subgroups with even more distinct traits and backgrounds.

Pertaining to curriculum, teachers have stress in selecting teaching methods, learning activities and instructional materials or resources appropriate to learners *(M= 3.53)*; however, can manage delivering accurate and updated content knowledge using appropriate methodologies, approaches and strategies and integrating language, literacy and quantitative skill development and values in the subject areas *(M= 3.20)*; and establishing routines and procedures to maximize instructional time and planning lessons to fit within available instructional time *(M= 3.20)*. Generally, the subvariable obtained a composite mean of 3.21 described as moderate level of stress. It can be gleaned from the results that teachers find selecting instructional materials, teaching methods and learning activities as manageable tasks, despite the fact that multigrade teachers need to do differentiated instruction to cater pupils of multi-ages. They also can cope with the challenges pointed out by Ryder (2009) that teachers face the challenge of meeting the variety of needs they are confronted with classes made up of students with differing interests, abilities, skills and knowledge.

Relative to planning, assessing and reporting, teachers encounter stress in managing tasks such as preparing formative and summative tests and employing non-traditional assessment techniques *(M= 3.43)*; providing timely and accurate feedback to learners to encourage them to reflect on and monitor their own learning growth *(M= 3.37)*; and interpreting and using assessment results to improve teaching and learning *(M= 3.33)*. The subvariable obtained a composite mean of 3.33 described as moderate level of stress. It can be noted that multigrade teachers can still manage tasks involving test preparations and authentic assessment of students' performance though they are confused as to what assessment process, principles and standards they should employ due to several memoranda sent by the Department of Education. For instance, the department mandated that the assessment to be used must be based on Bloom's Taxonomy and later change it to either domains of KPUP or portfolio assessment. However, teachers can still adapt to the challenge of dealing with new modes of assessment presented by Dysthe (2006).

In terms of community linkages, teachers meet stress in tasks like using community human and materials resources to support learning *(M= 3.43);* using the community as a laboratory for learning *(M= 3.20)*; and using community networks to publicize school events and achievements *(M= 3.17)*. The subvariable obtained a composite mean of 3.21 described as moderate level of stress. This implies that teachers find building connections with the

community as manageable workloads though they are constantly challenged finding sustainable support from non-government organizations, foundations and aid agencies to cater the needs of the pupils and in maintaining these connections. Though the Department of Education (2011) recognizes the fact that multigrade teachers in sparsely populated areas are challenged to find NGOs and academe to assist the school in feeding programs, repair and maintenance of classrooms and facilities, provision of school supplies, and educational assistance to pupils; teachers are still able to deal with these tasks.

Concerning the personal growth and professional development, teachers face stress in reflecting on the extent of the attainment of students' learning goals *(M= 3.30)*; manifesting personal qualities such as enthusiasm, flexibility and caring *(M= 3.13)*; and allocating time for personal and professional development *(M= 3.07).* The subvariable obtained a mean of 3.11 described as moderate level of stress. This indicates that teachers find valuing high personal regard for the teaching profession, concern for professional development, and continuous improvement as teachers as manageable tasks. Though multigrade teachers need to participate in professional development to teach effectively in multi-age classrooms and to be willing to go through a long period of preparation and a continuing professional development according to Bilbao et al., (2012); teachers can still manage to respond to these challenges and strive for excellence, moral, ethical and religious values to dedicate themselves in the public service.

As a whole, the workload stress of multigrade teachers garnered a weighted mean of 3.22 described as moderate level. This means that multigrade teachers can still manage the workloads they are confronted, though challenged by different hindering circumstances. Most of the workload stressors were rated manageable by multigrade teachers, but it can be noted that stressors pertaining to handling behavior problems and selecting teaching methods, learning activities and instructional materials or resources appropriate to learners both gained high scores. This could be attributed to the reason that behaviors of pupils in two or more classes differ across ages remarkably in learning disposition, attention span, interest and individual attitudes. This complements the idea of Benbenishty (2005) and Greenway, et al., (2006) which stated that heightening challenge of pupil's discruptive behavior is a major factor in workload stress. Classroom management in a multigrade setting also raises the issue that most multigrade teachers find it difficult to manage the classroom with diverse learners, particularly in dealing with students with behavior problems (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2011).

Meanwhile, multigrade teachers also need to select different teaching methods and learning activities that are appropriate across ages in all different subject areas they handle. In a multigrade class, curriculum and lesson planning can be very complex and time consuming if alternative and creative strategies are not done. The total number of competencies for two or more grades in the class will not fit into the number of minutes per week if totalled separately (Multigrade Program in Philippine Education, 2008). Complicating this picture even is the fact that three types of subject combination and multi-class teaching such as same subjects and different subjects for two grades and mixed subjects for more than three class combinations should also be considered (Aryal & Neupane, 2003). This validates the result that selecting instructional materials and learning activities appropriate to learners are

stressful workloads.

The general result of this study is similar to the study of Roxas (2009) on regular teachers. He found out that the occupational stress level among public elementary school teachers is "normal". The results are comparable in which the respondents typically experience stress in the workplace but they generally able to withstand the pressure brought about by the stressful circumstances. Global study of Eres and Atanasoska (2011) also found out that Macedonian public elementary teachers experienced moderate stress levels.

Table 2. Results Based Performance of Multigrade Teachers

Range of Scores	Adjectival	f	%	Description
4.50 – 5.00	130 % and above	0	0	Outstanding
3.50 – 4.49	115% - 129%	30	100 %	Very Satisfactory
2.50 – 3.49	100% - 114%	0	0	Satisfactory
1.50 – 2.49	51% - 99%	0	0	Low
1.00 – 1.49	50% or below	0	0	Very Low
Overall	**4.02**	**30**		**Very Satisfactory**

N= 30

Table 2 presents the results based performance of multigrade teachers.

The data show that the 100% of the multigrade teachers have a very satisfactory level of results based performance. Overall, the results based performance of multigrade teachers obtained a weighted mean of *4.02* described as very satisfactory. This implies that multigrade teachers have high level of results based performance.

Based on the results, it can be gleaned that teachers' performance exceeded expectations. All goals, objectives and targets were achieved above the established standards. Performance exceeded targets by 15% to 29% of the planned targets; from the previous range of performance exceeded targets by 25% but falls short of what is considered an outstanding performance.

The study of Rotas (2012) complements the result since the elementary multigrade teachers of South Fatima District demonstrate high level of teaching performance based on Performance Appraisal System for Teachers (PAST). Another local study of Usop, Askandar, Kadtong and Usop (2013) also concluded that 200 public elementary teachers from twelve selected public elementary schools they surveyed in the Division of Cotabato City display a high level of performance. Foreign study of Miller (2009) revealed that elementary teachers obtained a general rating of satisfactory which is comparable to the results of this study.

Table 3. Relationship between Workload Stress and Results Based Performance

Variables Correlated	r value	p value	Extent of Relationship	Remarks
Workload Stress and Results Based Performance	-.331	.074	Low	Not Significant

N= 30

Table 3 presents the relationship between two correlated variables.

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between workload stress and results based performance of multigrade teachers. This is supported by the r value of -.331 and a p value of 0.074.

This implies that the workload stress of multigrade teachers does not influence their results based performance. Based on the results, it can be noted that multigrade teachers experience moderate level of stress but they have high level of performance. It can then be inferred that stress may not be a significant factor that could possibly affect the performance of teachers. There could be other factors that can influence the performance.

This study refutes a large number of studies proving that stress and performance are related (Hanif, Tariq & Nadeem, 2011; Khan et al., 2012; Anandasayanan & Subramaniam, 2014; Ogundipe & Ajayi, 2014; Yusuf, Yinusa & Metu, 2015; Wangui, Ombui & Iravo, 2015; Laily & Wahyuni, 2017; Ipek et al., 2018). Such researches concluded that the greater the level of workloads, the lower the performance interplayed by several facets. Moderate to strong correlations existed between these two variables.

The unique result of this study is corroborated in the study of Narciso (2017) who found out that there is no significant relationship existed between these two variables. Although the respondents were college teachers, it was revealed that teachers tend to perform better in teaching jobs under stress. It also affirms that teacher's level of stress did not affect the efficient productivity of teachers (Castil & Galleto, 2010 as cited by Narciso, 2017).

Considering the divergence of ideas about stress and performance in the literature, this current study provides a piece of evidence that stress may not necessarily influence performance or may even drive performance positively.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that multigrade teachers have moderate level of workload stress. This study gives baseline evidence for administrators to conduct teacher seminars related to handling behavior problems and selecting appropriate teaching methods, learning activities and instructional materials in teaching multigrade, which teachers find as highly stressful tasks.

Moreover, it has also been found out that the multigrade teachers have high level of results based performance and can even perform excellently or outstandingly. It should be stressed that teachers are expected to perform effectively, thus multigrade teachers should sustain exemplary performance in their teaching practices.

Lastly, the workload stress of multigrade teachers has no influence on their results based performance. This conclusion offers evidence that stress may not necessarily influence performance or may even drive performance positively. As such, studies may be conducted to further test and probe the theory about the relationship between the two variables in other settings. Considering further the limitation of this research focusing only on the association between stress and performance, it will be more comprehensive to explore other factors as performance is a composite result of many events that surround the workplace.

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