



STRESSORS AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS IN LAGUNA TAKING GRADUATE DEGREE

(Research article)

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Abstract

This study investigates the main stressors among the selected Senior High School Teachers in Laguna taking a Graduate Degree. Moreover, this research specifically determines the stress level of the selected senior high school teachers in Laguna in terms of several causes. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research. To measure Physical Stress, Interpersonal Stress, Graduate School Stress, Work Stress, and Environmental Stress, quantitative methods were used. The qualitative part of the study will determine the coping mechanisms and the reasons why such specific stressor is the main cause of their stress. The researchers analyzed the respondents' answers and came up with themes that were used for generalization. This research has 45 respondents and used stratified random sampling for data collection. Some of the respondents answered the survey questionnaires personally while others answered them online due to their unavailability and location. It was found that anxiety and sleeping problems are the two main effects of physical stress. Meeting people's expectations and socialization problems affect the respondents the most when it comes to interpersonal stress. Difficulties in written work and pressure from the deadline are common effects of graduate school-related stress. Time management between work and social activities are the main stressors in work and school stress. Inadequate campus facilities are the common cause of environmental stress. Financial and workload problems are the two emergent themes in terms of the respondents' perceived main stressors. As recommended by the researcher, public school teachers could also become the sample of the study since it is more stressful to handle the situation in public schools. It is also evident that work stress is one of the top stressors, so the Department of Education can make a study on how to deal with stressful situations at work. Also, an in-depth study on how to resolve stress among teachers taking graduate degrees could be undertaken. Students in UPLB College of Public Affairs and Development students should be involved in further study as well.

Keywords: Stressors; senior high school teachers; graduate degree; stress in graduate schools

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I. Introduction

Resilience is a positive, adaptive response in the face of significant adversity (Bunge, et al., 2015); it is also known as the ability to bounce back from adversity (Hurtang, 2010) resilience can also be viewed as the phenomenon of recovery from prolonged or severe adversity from an immediate danger or stress (Bantang, et al., 2013). The graduate students' resilience is frequently tested through their jobs and studies.

Director Eduardo C. Janairo of Department of Health – National Capital Region, said that stress can also be good when it helps us to perform better and it can also be bad when it causes disappointment and illness. According to the Official Gazette, the person may encounter different types of stress such as physical – fatigue, headache, frequent colds; mental – decrease in concentration and memory, confusion, loss of sense humor; emotional – depression, anger, frustration, worry, fear, irritability, impatience, short temperedness; and behavioral – increase in eating habits, smoking, drinking, yelling, swearing, and blaming others. Teachers are known to be resilient. However, in the current situation of the Philippines, resilience of the teachers might be normally challenged. In Philippines, teachers do not receive high salary if they are just a baccalaureate degree holder, so they are pushing themselves to have graduate degree for them to experience better life. That's why the researchers aim to identify the stressors of the SHS teachers taking graduate degree. Also, the researchers want to know how to bounce back from the adversities that they need to face.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the main stressors among Senior High School teachers in Laguna taking graduate degree. Moreover, this research specifically attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents?
 - 1.1. As teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1.1 Age
 - 1.1.2. Sex
 - 1.1.3. Marital status
 - 1.1.4. Number of Children
 - 1.1.5. Mode of Work
 - 1.1.6. Work Institution
 - 1.1.7. Subjects handled
 - 1.1.8. Length of year/s in teaching
 - 1.2. As students in terms of:
 - 1.2.1. Mode of Graduate status
 - 1.2.2. Work institution

- 1.2.3. Graduate degree program
 - 1.2.4. School
 - 1.2.5. Length of time in current graduate program
 - 1.2.6. Number of units enrolled/credited
2. What is the stress assessment of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1. Physical Stress
 - 2.2. Interpersonal Stress
 - 2.3. Graduate School related Stress
 - 2.4. Work Stress
 - 2.5. Environmental Stress
 - 2.6. Coping Mechanism Strategies
 3. What are the stressors that affect the respondents the most?

The researchers will conduct a survey in selected Senior High schools in Laguna to determine the stressors of the teachers taking graduate degree. The respondents are from Colegio de Los Banos, Don Bosco College- Canlubang, Union College of Laguna, University of Perpetual Help System, STI Sta. Rosa. The researchers chose to get respondents from the following schools due to convenience and easy access. The researchers limit its scope to the following variables: academic responsibilities or pressures, finances or debt, anxiety, poor work/school-life balance, and family issues.

According to Brenda Lai-kuen (2014) in her article Stress, burnout and resilience of teachers of students with emotional behavioral challenges, that the number of stress and burn out among teachers has been increasing at alarming rate for the past years. Teachers who are stressed and burn out are more likely to want to leave their profession. It is also stated here that studies conducted have also reflected the changing educational system, inclusive education policy, increasing work load and high expectations from stake holders all put stresses on teachers. If not resolved, this will have negative effects on teachers' physical and mental health and this will increase the number of stressed and burn out teachers and will cause them to leave the profession and the whole educational system will be impaired and inefficiency will follow.

Christopher Day on 2006 in his study of Teacher's Resilience as a Necessary tool for effectiveness states that the concept of resilience is located in the discourse of teaching as emotional practice and is found to be a multidimensional, socially constructed concept that is relative, dynamic and developmental in nature. The paper draws upon findings from a four-year research project which explored career long variations in teachers' commitment and effectiveness. Portraits of three resilient teachers in their early, mid and late careers are used to explore the interaction between teachers' sense of efficacy, professional and personal

identities, and their management of the interaction between these and the professional, situated and personal Scenarios which they experience in each professional life phase. Teachers' capacity to manage such interactions is a sophisticated process which contributes strongly to the relative strength of their resilience. Understandings of the role of resilience in teachers' management of the interactions between work and life over the course of a career and in different contexts adds to existing knowledge of variations in teachers' work, lives, and effectiveness and contributes to the debate on standards, quality and retention.

In addition, according to Day, C. and Gu, Q. (2010) in their article entitled the new lives of teachers, resilience is defined as the capacity to continue to bounce back to recover strengths or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity.

According to Aguirre et al (2010) page 106-108., explained that emotion is an expression and display of distinctive responses, emotion consists of three elements, these are: body, mind, and culture. The body when it comes to emotion was divided into two, first is the primary emotion, and the other one is the secondary emotion. In primary emotion, emotions are generally consisting of fear, anger, sadness, and joy, surprise, disgust, and contempt. The second element of the emotion is the mind, it is said that thoughts may create emotions. When an individual think of one thing to happen, the emotion is involved here. The last element is the culture. Culture determines what people feel angry, sad, lonely, happy, and ashamed or disgusted. Other cultures have words for specific emotions unknown to some cultures. Some cultures don't have words for emotions that seem universal to others. Differences in secondary emotions appear to be reflected in differences in the so-called language.

According to Aguirre et al (2010), the word stress seems difficult to define because it could be subjective. People do not have the same response to the same circumstances. Instead, stress depends on how the people appraise or evaluate environmental events. Thus, it could be sum up that stress is a physical and mental response to an unacceptable disparity between real or imagined personal experience and expectations. There are types of stressors. Stressors are psychologically or physically demanding events or circumstances. The three types of stressors based on the book are catastrophic events, major life changes, and daily hassles. The catastrophic events, a catastrophe is a sudden, often life threatening calamity or disaster that pushes people to the outer limits their coping capability. Next is the major life changes, it is the most stressful events for adults involve major life changes, such as death of a spouse or family member, divorce, imprisonment, losing one's job, and major personal disability or illness. The last type of stressor is the daily hassles. Much of the stress in our lives involves our daily hassles pertaining to our jobs, personal relationships, and everyday living circumstances. In short, the stress is based on what people's experiences.

According to Doney, P.A. (2013), in his study *Fostering resilience: A necessary skill for teacher retention*, the study investigated how four novice secondary science teachers developed their resilience through reaction to stressors. Data collected from multiple sources, such as interviews, a response to a written prompt on a resilience, classroom observations,

relational maps of stressors and protective factors, and work shadowing for one full day for each participant showed the teachers had to face stressors from personal factors (personality characteristics, school, family and friends), professional factors (students, adults and teaching schedules; extra-curricular activities), and contextual factors (school culture, turnovers in personnel and administration). To counteract these stressors, several coping strategies were employed, including problem solving, maintaining a sense of purpose, having a sense of humour, and maintaining self-efficacy.

In addition, according to Meniano (2018), in his article *Deped Raises Concern Over Leyte Teacher's Suicide*, the suicide incident happened in Leyte province is a wake-up call for teachers to manage work pressures. It is said that the very reason why the person took her own life because she thought that was the easiest way out of all the gazillion paperwork.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research. The quantitative design was used to measure Physical Stress, Interpersonal Stress, Graduate School Stress, Work Stress, Environmental Stress, while the qualitative part of the study will answer the coping mechanisms and their reasons why a specific stressor is their main cause of stress. The researchers analyzed their answers and came up with patterns of answers that is useful for the generalization.

2.2. Data to be used

The researchers used primary and secondary sources of data to come up with a generalization and to achieve the objectives of the study. The researchers used data online on common stressors to come up with a survey questionnaire that can measure the stressors of The Selected Senior High School Teachers in Laguna. Survey questionnaires (primary data) is composed of demographic profile, Likert scale of their stressors, coping mechanisms and reasons for the specific stressors to be their main cause of stress.

2.3. Data Collection

The researchers used stratified random sampling for data collection. Some of the respondents answered the survey questionnaires personally while the others answered the survey questionnaires online due to their availability and far location. Another problem faced by the researchers was the pandemic (COVID-19) spread in the community that considered a hindrance to facilitate a face to face interaction between the researchers and the respondents. The researchers used the google forms to continue the study using the internet to contact the available respondents.

2.4. Method of Analysis

The study used the descriptive method of research. It involves survey questionnaire, description, analysis and interpretation of stressors among the selected Senior High School in Laguna.

The result of the survey used to determine and analyze the stressors and how the respondents cope with their stress. The survey involves different stress measurements for Physical Stress, Interpersonal Stress, Graduate School Stress, Work Stress, Environmental Stress, and Coping Mechanism Strategies.

The descriptive type of survey was employed to meet the objective of study. As descriptive research, this study involved the relationship between the variables and the development of generalizations.

2.5. Sampling Size

The researchers used Slovin formula to come up with the sampling size. The total population of the respondents and the Slovin formula calculation is shown below:

Table 1: Total Population of the Respondents.

Schools	Respondents (Senior High School Teachers taking graduate degree)
COLEGIO DE LOS BAÑOS	14
DON BOSCO- CANLUBANG	9
STI- SANTA ROSA	7
UNIVERSITY OF PERPETUAL HELP SYSTEM	11
UNION COLLEGE OF LAGUNA	9
TOTAL POPULATION:	50

The Slovin formula is showed below:

$$N = \frac{n}{1 + n(e)^2}$$

Where:

- N = Sampling Size
- N = Total Population
- e = Margin of Error (5%)

The Slovin formula computation is showed below:

$$N = \frac{50}{1 + 50(.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{50}{1.125}$$

N = 44.55 or 45

The researcher used stratified method to distribute the survey questionnaires:

Table 2: Total number of survey questionnaires distribution.

Schools	Respondents (Senior High School Teachers taking graduate degree)	Percentage (%)	Total Respondents
COLEGIO DE LOS BAÑOS	14	28%	13
DON BOSCO- CANLUBANG	9	18%	8
STI- SANTA ROSA	7	14%	6
UNIVERSITY OF PERPETUAL HELP SYSTEM	11	22%	10
UNION COLLEGE OF LAGUNA	9	18%	8
TOTAL:	50	100%	45

3. Results

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. From the gathered data from the selected Senior High School Teachers in Laguna, the following findings were obtained:

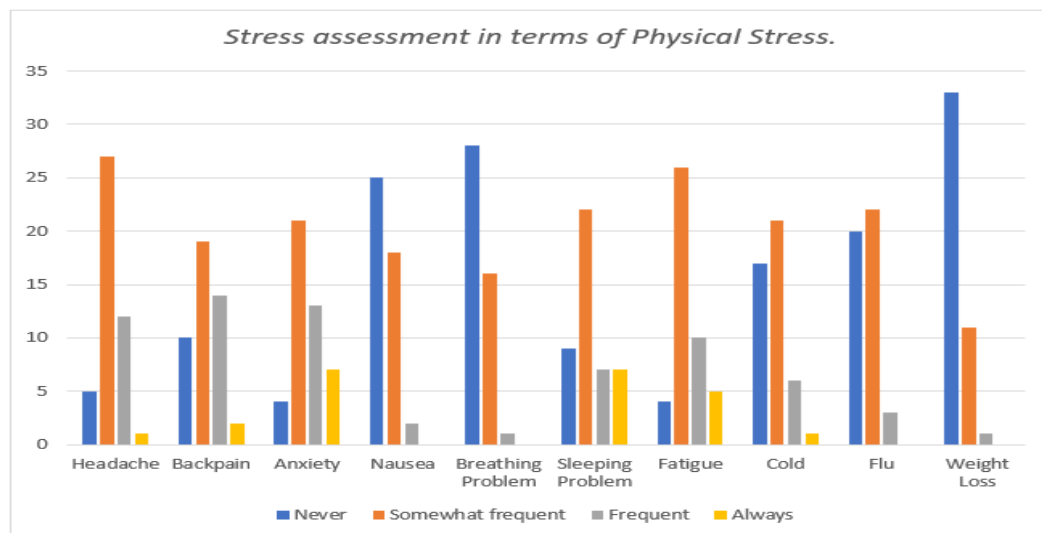


Fig 1. Stress assessment in terms of Physical Stress.

Figure 1 above shows that anxiety and sleeping problems are the two main effects of the respondent’s physical stress, while drastic weight loss is the least effective of their physical stress. It supports the research of the (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2018)

which states that anxiety and sleeping problem can be the greatest effect of physical stress because due to the stress experienced by the brain, the human body cannot focus in a way that it can trigger to insomnia or sleeping problem.

Aside from that, the workload and paperwork of the selected Senior High School Teachers may contribute to the sleeping problem. Nowadays, the teachers tend to bring home paper work due to the overloading of the teachers that leads to extended work at home that can contribute to the sleeping pattern of the teachers.

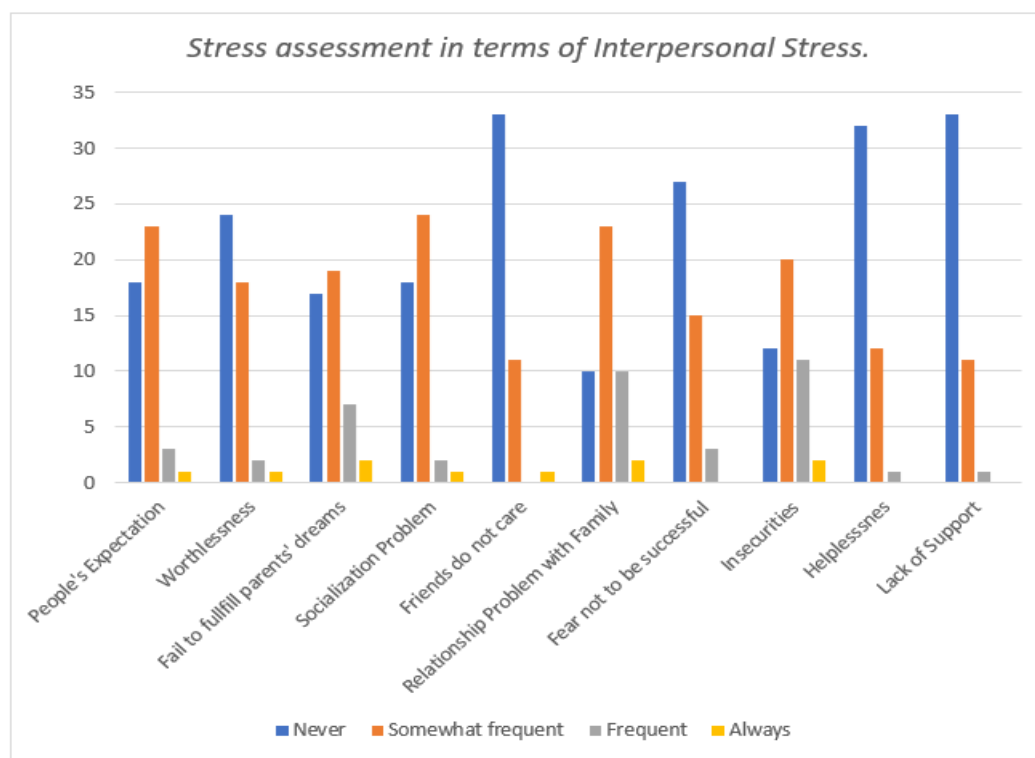


Fig 2. Stress assessment in terms of Interpersonal Stress.

Figure 2 above shows that meeting people’s expectations and socialization problems are the most common effects of the respondents’ interpersonal stress. The researchers suspected that since the respondents are in the academe, there is a big possibility that the people around them expect too much from them that can lead to their socialization problem.

According to (Caroline James, 2016), professionals with family members or friends with high expectations towards them may lead to social anxiety or socialization problem. People may tend to think that the more people they will meet, the more expectations they will carry in their shoulders. These professionals may find it hard to mingle with other people and sometimes have a problem in public speaking.

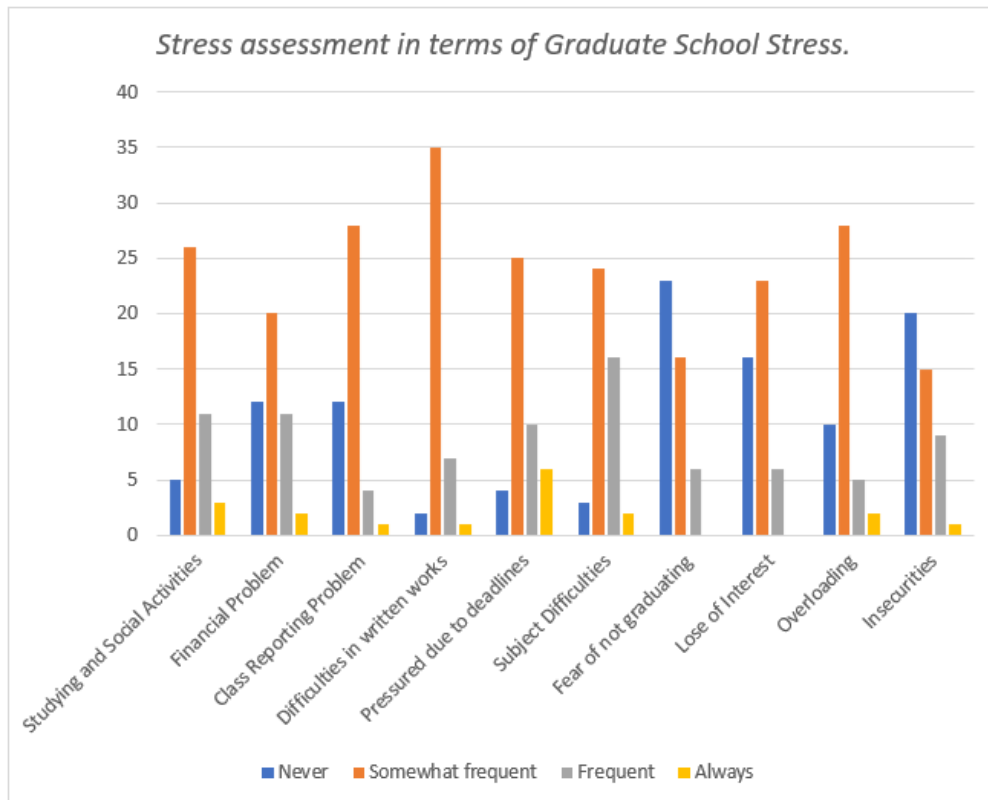


Fig 3. Stress assessment in terms of Graduate School Stress.

Figure 3 above shows that difficulties in written works and pressured from the deadline are the common effects of graduate school-related stress. The researchers suspected that since 90% of the respondents are working full-time based on their demographic profile, the respondents may have difficulties to juggle their time between work and graduate studies. Since they are in the academe and they have paper works to do, it can be the reason why they are having problems in graduate school in terms of deadline.

This may contribute to their difficulties in answering written works like quizzes or exams since they have limited time to study focus on graduate school lessons.

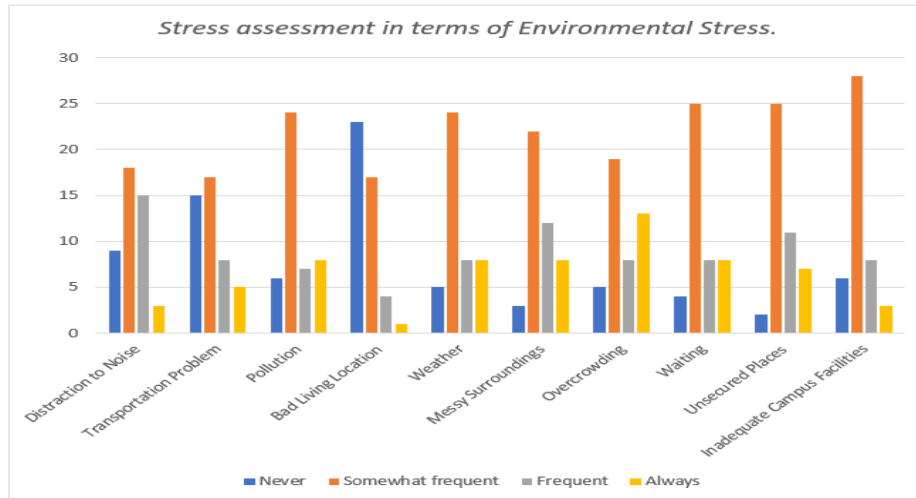


Fig 4. Stress assessment in terms of Work School Stress.

Figure 4 above shows that the two common effects of the respondents’ work stress are time management problems between work and social activities, and they are burdened with paper works. Aside from the teaching load of the Senior High School Teachers, they are required to submit different forms to DepEd for students’ verifications. This may hinder their ability to control or to balance their time between works and their social activities. This may be one of the reasons why some educational organizations would like to abolish the forms making of the teachers, and for the schools to hire someone to do the paper works for the teachers because work overloading may cause inefficiency.

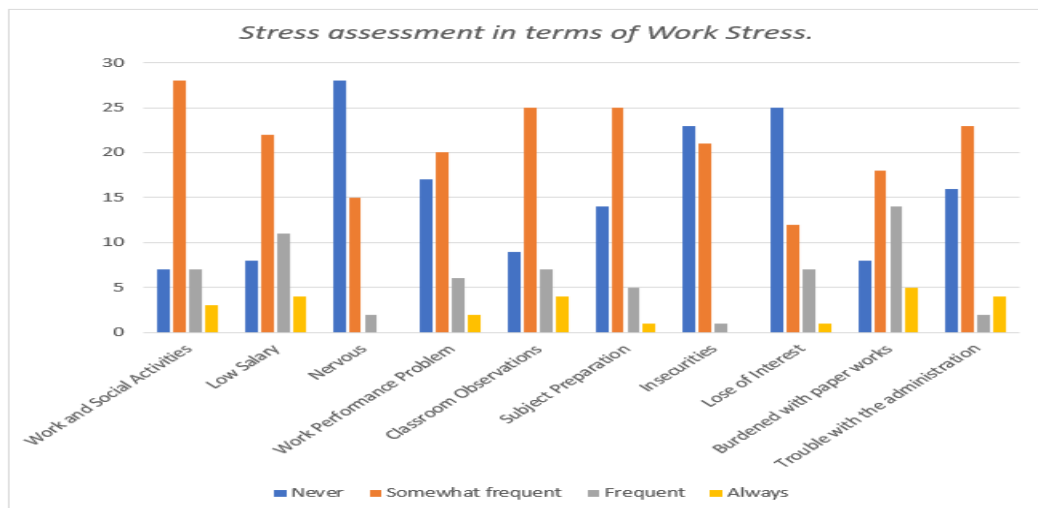


Fig 5. Stress assessment in terms of Environmental Stress.

Figure 5 above shows that Inadequate Campus facilities may contribute to the environmental stress of the respondents while bad living location contributes the least to their environmental stress.

According to (Tomacruz, 2019), in 2019, the education department some P501 billion, which will mostly be used for repair and construction of school buildings, the hiring of teaching and non-teaching personnel, as well as developing and providing learning materials to students. Until a more permanent solution is reached, teachers said students' learning will continue to be affected by conditions in schools where facilities are wanting.

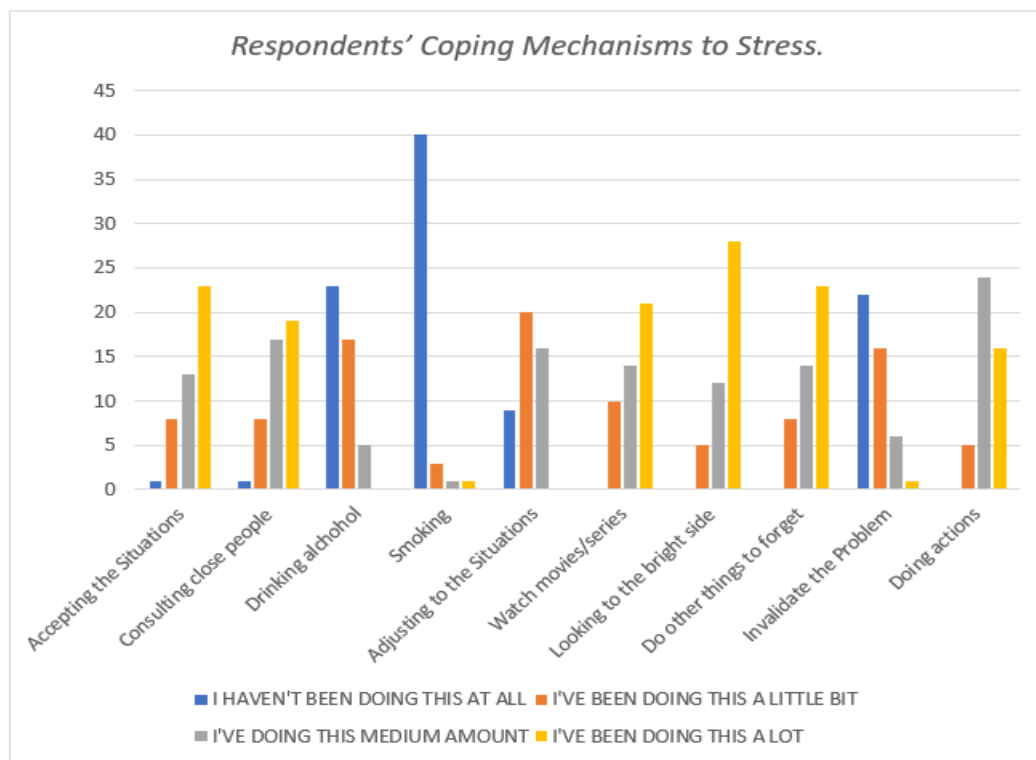


Fig 6. Respondents' Coping Mechanisms to Stress.

Figure 6 above shows that the common coping mechanism of the respondents is to look for the bright side of the situations that they are facing.

This only proves that Senior High School Teachers are optimistic in nature. According to (Mayo Clinic, 2020), personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management. And effective stress management is associated with many health benefits. This may also be one of the reasons why the teachers tend to stay long

in their working institutions because they are capable of adapting to stress and be optimistic amidst a stressful environment.

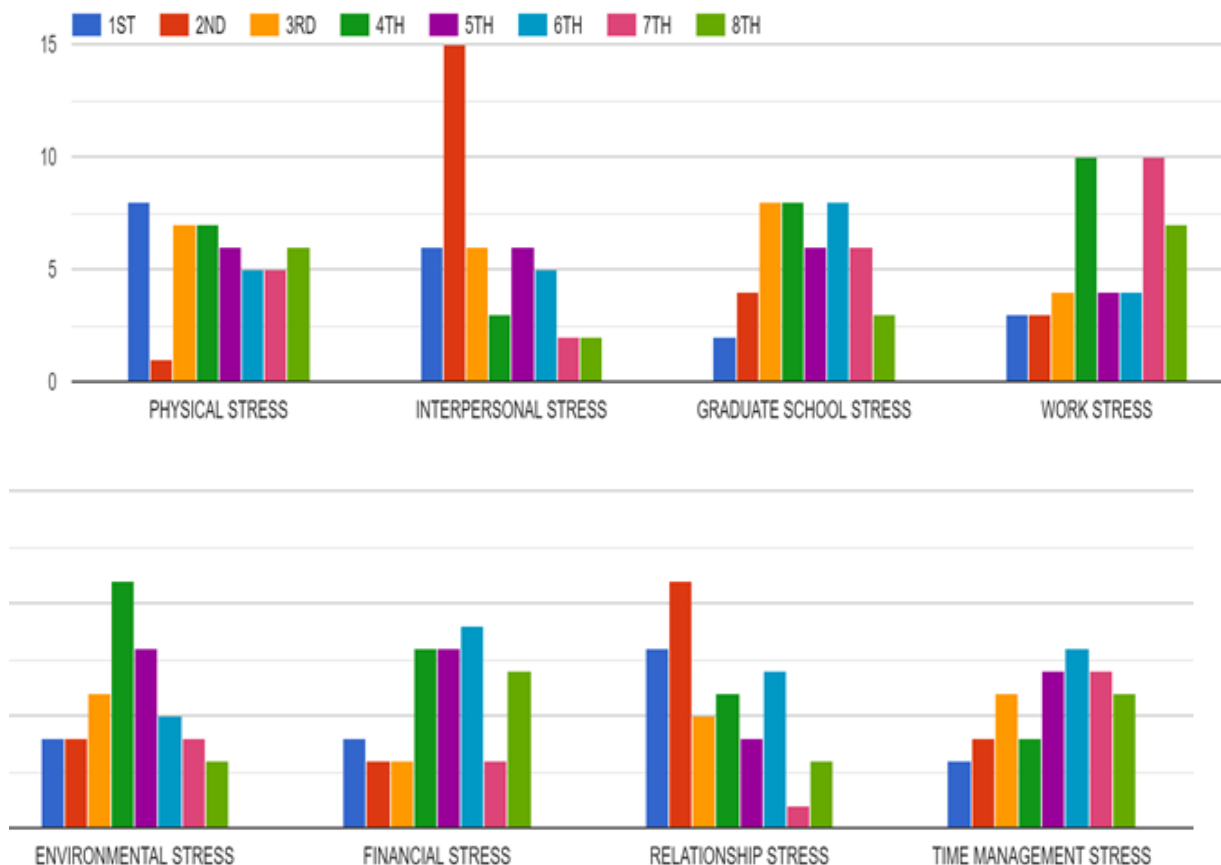


Fig 7. Stressors ranking based on Respondents' perception.

Figure 7 shows that workload and financial problems are the top stressors of the respondents.

They go by saying:

"...financial stress will be the highest since I am the breadwinner of the family and we are not well off..."

"...I often experience difficulty in budgeting my time between my professional responsibilities as a full-time teacher and my academic responsibilities as a graduate student, especially at times when paper works that need to be submitted coincide with my subject requirements deadlines..."

“...Work, environmental and financial. I chose the following because those are considered outside factor wherein it may affect the inside factors. We cannot control work, environmental and financial since those are already given; you just need to cope up with those stressors...”

These claims support the article of Franco Luna, 2019, in Philippine Star, he states that it is unfair for the government to demand quality education of teachers when its planned salary increase would not even afford teachers a quality life. He also articulates that The Teacher's Dignity Coalition, which participated in an October 8 technical working group session with the Senate Committee on Government Service and Reorganization, said on its Facebook page that it seemed the Department of Budget and Management showed little interest in across-the-board measures for salary increases.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Taking a graduate degree is one of the major priorities of the teachers in this society. It is considered as a key for the teachers to level themselves up. We all know that it is stressful to do the duties and responsibilities of the teachers, and it is more stressful when they will take a graduate degree.

Most of the teachers in Senior High Schools take graduate degrees for them to teach the high school students beyond the learning competencies. Senior High School Teachers taking graduate degrees are affected by the number of stressors, which affect their performance at work and in graduate school as well.

This study was undertaken to identify the top stressors among the selected Senior High School Teachers in Laguna taking graduate degrees. The study has been titled as ***“Stressors among Senior High School Teachers taking graduate degree”*** was undertaken with the following objectives: to assess the common causes of stress; to know the best coping mechanism; and to identify the top stressors.

Sample for this study was comprised of 50 Senior High School Teachers taking graduate degree selected from different schools in Laguna namely: Colegio De Los Baños, Don Bosco College – Canlubang, STI Santa Rosa, University of Perpetual Help System, and Union College of Laguna.

Causes of stress were assessed in terms of the following stressors; physical stress, interpersonal stress, graduate school stress, work school stress, financial stress, relationship stress, and time management stress. It found that the top stressors were financial and work stresses.

After analysis of the result, the following conclusions were drawn;

- Anxiety and sleeping problems are the two main effects of physical stress.

- Meeting people's expectation and socialization problems affect the respondents the most when it comes to interpersonal stress.
- Difficulties in written work and pressure from the deadline were found as the common effects of graduate school-related stress.
- Time management between work and social activities were found as the main stressors in work school stress.
- Inadequate campus facilities were considered as the common cause of environmental stress.
- Looking for the bright side technique was found effective for coping mechanism to stress.
- Workload and financial problems were the top stressors among the selected Senior High School Teachers in Laguna taking a graduate degree.

5. Recommendations

- Public school teachers could also become the sample of the study since it is more stressful to handle the situation in public schools.
- It is evident that work stress is one of the top stressors, so the Department of Education can make a study on how to deal with stressful situations at work.
- An in-depth study on how to resolve stress among teachers taking graduate degrees could be undertaken.
- Students in UPLB College of Public Affairs and Development students could be involved in further study as well.
- A comparison of stress between grade school with high school teachers can also be taken.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests and Ethics

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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