

# Stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators: Basis for an Intervention Plan

Gina R. Viduya 

DepEd Central Office, Philippines

Renith S. Guanzon 

School of Graduate Studies, STI West Negros University, Philippines

Ma. Leni C. Francisco 

College of Education, STI West Negros University, Philippines

Antonio R. Pioquinto, Jr. 

Brightstar International School of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Mary Antonnette B. Guzon 

Sandy Miller Academy, Las Vegas, Nevada, United States of America

Alen J. Caldeo 

Robles Elementary School, Arizona, United States of America

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## Abstract

This study aimed to determine the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 as a basis for an intervention plan. Quantitative data for this study was gathered from 203 DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators using a researcher-made questionnaire that has passed the thorough tests of validity and reliability. The variables included in this study were age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment. To identify the stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators, the areas included were the nature of work, work relationships, organizational role, and career development. The succeeding analysis showed that Youth Formation Coordinators are

commonly young, female, married, with longer length of service, and holding Bachelor's Degrees. Corresponding results surfaced that across those five variable groupings, the level of stress of the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators was found moderate in the area of nature of work, work relationship, organizational role, and career development. Finally, there is no significant difference in DepEd Youth Formator Coordinators' level of stress during the First Semester of the School Year (SY) 2022-2023 in the area of nature of work, organizational role, and career development based on the same five variable groupings except in the area of work relationship especially in the variable age and sex.

**Keywords:** *Stress Level, Youth Formation Coordinators, DepEd Philippines, Workplace Factors, Intervention Plan*

## INTRODUCTION

### Nature of the Problem

Republic Act No. 9155 (RA 9155), or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, the DECS was renamed and known as the Department of Education (DepEd), which is why major changes were made. Offices were created, transferred, retained, consolidated, elevated, renamed, and merged through the issuance of DepEd Order No. 52, s. 2015, New Organizational Structures of the Central, Regional, and Schools Division Offices of the Department of Education.

In addition, to ensure the successful implementation of the K to 12 curricula, especially the Senior High School program, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued DepEd Order 19, series of 2016, entitled the "Guidelines on the Organizational Structures and Staffing Patterns of Stand-alone and Integrated Public Senior High Schools (SHS)" provides the organizational structures, staffing patterns, and procedures that will serve as a guide by the DepEd Central Office and Field Offices including the stakeholders to ensure the attainment for the quality delivery of enhanced basic education. The positions created under the policy were Nurses, Guidance Counselors, and Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs), which are considered shared services since their roles, functions, and services must be shared among schools within the division. The number of YFCs per division was strategically determined based on the size of the division: one (1) YFC for small, two (2) for medium, three (3) for large, and four (4) for very large divisions.

Moreover, based on the job description for the YFC or Project Development Officer I, the position is responsible for performing technical tasks in implementing and monitoring the youth formation programs at the division level. Also responsible for assessing, crafting, and delivering youth formation programs that are contextualized depending on the schools' needs, including providing technical assistance to schools and policy recommendations at the division level.

Hence, the COVID-19 virus affected the delivery of basic education from face-to-face interaction to blended learning due to the limited mobility of children. Children were confined within the four corners of their homes and dependent on online games and social media. Because of this, the YFCs, as one of the major implementers of programs, projects, and activities for the holistic development of children, were challenged to step up and create activities that are applicable to blended learning. Also, even though they have crucial roles and heavy workloads because of multiple Key Result Areas (KRA), they receive a salary equivalent to an entry-level salary, which is Salary Grade 11.

Further, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, through Board Resolution 001, s. 2021 issued by the Pambansang Samahan ng mga Tagapaghubog ng Pilipinas (PSTP), an organization advocating the moral, social, and economic well-being of the Project Development Officers I and Designated YFCs, claimed that most of the YFCs were challenged by major issues that cause them to feel stress, affect their interest toward work, and implementation of Youth Formation Programs. Some of these issues were task overload due to various programs they are handling outside of their KRA or job description, low salary grade, and the absence of a career path.

According to Karanika-Murray and Biron (2020), work stress is a multifaceted construct that involves a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors, and its impact on employee well-being can vary depending on a range of contextual and situational factors, including its effects on physical health, mental health, job satisfaction, and work performance. Also, the negative effects of work stress can be compounded by other factors, such as excessive workloads or responsibility, low social support, job insecurity, and organizational change.

For these reasons, the researcher is one of the employees handling the Youth Programs of the agency that received issues and disappointments directly from the YFCs. With this, it is interesting to

know the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators, which will be baseline data for the formulation of the intervention plan to help them cope and improve their working condition and performance.

### **Current State of Knowledge**

The International Labour Organization (2016) emphasized that the quantitative workload (the amount of work to be done) and the qualitative workload (the difficulty of work) have been directly associated with stress.

Griffin and colleagues (2012) discussed that stress is a common response to challenging situations, such as experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment in the workplace. They defined psychological distress as a state of emotional suffering that can result from various stressors, including discrimination. It can manifest as feelings of sadness, anxiety, irritability, or hopelessness. For instance, workers who perceived age discrimination reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress than those who did not. Secondly, anxiety is another common mental health outcome associated with stress. It involves feelings of worry, apprehension, or fear about future events or situations. Lastly, depression is a mood disorder that can result from chronic stress or other factors. It can manifest as feelings of sadness, worthlessness, or hopelessness.

Lee and colleagues (2018) also elaborated that the level of education of an individual directly affects job demands, including workload, time pressure, and role ambiguity they have within the workplace. They also suggested that this is due to the expectations and pressures placed on highly educated workers to perform at a higher level or because they are often given more complex tasks that require more time and effort.

According to Yepes and Duarte (2012), stress is a natural part of life wherein it is a condition of the individual rather than a condition of the external environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, stress became the most pressing issue associated with depression and anxiety. This is because stress significantly influences mood, our sense of comfort, behavior, and health. Workloads contributed to the suicidal tendency due to stress considering your inability to handle several problems related to unreasonable workloads, unhealthy work environments, unfamiliarity with the workplace, culture shock, and imbalanced schedule (Dominado and Valdez, 2021). Employees' decision to stay was affected by various factors like achievement, advancement, recognition, responsibility, nature of work, salary, job security, and work-life balance (Mallory, 2015).

Moreover, various incidents of work-related stress were reported that have been affecting Filipino Workers and based on the survey conducted by CNN Philippines last May 2015 entitled Filipino Top Causes of Stress revealed that 23 percent of Filipinos were experiencing work-related stress such as management, deadlines, workloads, and sometimes co-worker (Ansis, 2017). It was exposed that the top 5 causes of the stress of employees revolve around low salary, inadequate staffing, company culture, lack of work-life balance, and lack of support from the organization (Watson, 2015).

Occupational stress has been considered a worldwide epidemic because of its diverse documentation (Yepes and Duarte, 2012). When people feel they are in the wrong job or when efforts to meet job demands are out of proportion to job fulfillment and other rewards, it can result in stress. More often, employees who feel overwhelmed or believe that their skills are recognized minimally or do not have clear goals tend to exhibit high stress and low productivity.

Numerous factors trigger stress among Youth Formation Coordinators. Among these reasons are the working conditions, limited employment opportunities, and low salaries. Even if they are dedicated to doing their job well, pressures to contribute to the household income and meet their day-to-day needs push them to settle into new and different careers within or outside the organization. According to Condes and Lachica (2022), employees who choose to change careers encounter difficulties like the high demand for technical skills, the new work environment, and the change in their routine.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

This study is anchored on the theory of Hans Selye (1956), which viewed stress as a “response” to a given situation. According to him, stress is a “physiological response pattern,” and he captured it using his General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model. This model described how stressors or events threaten an organism’s well-being leading to a three-stage bodily response.

Selye's response model of stress incorporated the idea that coping is inherent to the GAS model in both the alarm and resistance stages. Alarm response initiates the sympathetic nervous system to combat or avoid the stressor. For instance, when you are confronted with a negative stimulus, the individual might experience some of these symptoms: rapid increase in heart rate, temperature, adrenaline, and glucose levels.

While the resistance response will initiate the physiological systems with a “fight” or “flight” reaction to the stressor, returning the system to homeostasis, reducing harm, or more generally accommodating the stressor, which can lead to adaptive diseases such as sleep deprivation, mental illness, hypertension, or heart disease.

The theory mentioned above is suitable for this study, especially in determining the sources of stress that the YFCs experience and how it affects the aforementioned areas perceived by the researcher. These theories serve as a basis for the researcher to measure and describe the stress of DepEd YFCs in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023. The findings of the study will strongly help develop the interventions that need to be taken to address the effects of stress on YFCs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to determine the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 as basis for an intervention plan. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions: what is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment; what is the level of stress of the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in terms of the areas nature of work, work relationship, organizational role, and career development; is there a significant difference in the level of stress of the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators when grouped and compared according to aforementioned variables; and based from the results of the study, what intervention plan can be formulated?

### **Research Methodology:**

This section presents the research design, data gathering procedure, other instrumentation, and statistical tools. It also discusses the parameters, especially the statistical tools, the respondents, and the study's locality.

## **Research Design**

Considering the nature of the data involved, the descriptive research design was used in this study. According to Bryman and Bell (2019), descriptive research design consists of collecting and analyzing data through various methods, such as surveys, interviews, observations, and secondary data analysis. The data collected is then organized, summarized, and presented comprehensively and systematically. The research findings can be used to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data and to generate hypotheses for further research.

## **Study Respondents**

The 203 DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators, out of a total of 427, were the study's respondents. Given the size of the sample and the number of respondents, voluntary sampling procedures were employed to determine the sample size (Cochran, 1977). The respondents from each district were divided by the total respondents, and then the sample size was multiplied to obtain the percentage. The researcher chose the responses at random from each strand office. Further, the sample size was a combination of different age groups, sexes, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment to be able to validate the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators.

## **Instrument**

The researchers employed a self-created questionnaire through a survey form checklist to collect the information required for the study to establish the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators' degree of stress as the foundation for an intervention strategy. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, Part I focused on the respondent's profile in terms of sex, age, civil status, length of service, and the highest level of education. Part II of the survey asked 32 questions about the stress experienced by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators, with eight (8) questions covering each of the following topics: nature of the task, relationships at work, organizational roles, and career development. The survey questionnaire was drafted by the researcher based on the related literature, journals, and published materials reviewed by her. The researcher sees that there were enough items to collect the data to cover all aspects of the problem and to answer all the specific questions under the statement of the problem. Each item was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, using a 5-point Likert scale rating with 5 as always, 4 as often, 3 as sometimes, 2 as rarely, and 1 as rarely.

## **Data Gathering and Procedure**

After administering the validity and reliability, upon approval of the school's division superintendent, the questionnaires were administered to target respondents. The questionnaires were gathered, recorded, and analyzed. The data gathered from the responses of the respondents were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The encoded data was computer processed using the SPSS.

## **Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment**

Objectives 1 and employed a descriptive analytical scheme, using the frequency count and percentage as a statistical tool to assess the profile of respondents, mean to assess the level of stress of the

DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators across the four areas. Objective 3 utilized a comparative analytical scheme, applying the Mann-Whitney U test to determine significant differences in the level of stress of the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

### **Ethical Consideration**

By guaranteeing the confidentiality of the respondents' answers and upholding their anonymity during the whole research process, the study made a concerted effort to reduce the possibility of harm to its target respondents in accordance with Republic Act 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researchers also requested their free and informed consent up front.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to carry out the predetermined objectives of this study.

### ***Profile of Respondents***

**Table 1**

*Profile of the Respondents*

| Variables                      | Categories                           | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age                            | Younger (below 36 years old)         | 119       | 58.60      |
|                                | Older (36 years and above)           | 84        | 41.40      |
| Sex                            | Male                                 | 72        | 35.50      |
|                                | Female                               | 131       | 64.50      |
| Civil Status                   | Single                               | 85        | 41.9       |
|                                | Married                              | 118       | 58.1       |
| Length of Service              | Shorter (less than 6 years)          | 96        | 47.3       |
|                                | Longer (6 years and more)            | 107       | 52.7       |
|                                | Lower (Bachelor's Degree)            | 121       | 59.60      |
| Highest Educational Attainment | Higher (Master and Doctorate Degree) | 82        | 40.40      |
|                                | Total                                | 203       | 100        |

Table 1 summarizes the analysis that aimed to determine the profile of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFC) in terms of age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment.

In terms of the age of the YFC respondents, younger and older were the identified categories. Of the 203 respondents, 119, or 58.60%, are younger or below 36 years old, while 84, or 41.40%, belong to 36 years old and above. Sex was categorized as either male or female. Male respondents comprised a total of 72 or 35.50%, while 131 or 64.50% are female. For civil status, single or married were the categories. The table shows 85, or 41.90%, are single, while 118, or 58.10%, are married. In terms of the length of service, shorter and longer were the categories. 96 or 47.30% are shorter or less than 6 years while 107 or 52.70%

are longer or 6 years and above in the organization. For the highest educational attainment, lower and higher were the categories. Of the 203 respondents, 121, or 59.60%, are lower or handling Bachelor's Degree, while 82, or 40.40% are higher or currently have Master or Doctorate Degree.

The data indicated that the majority of the YFCs are below 36 years old or younger, and most of the respondents are female and married. It was shown that most of the YFC are 6 years and more in the service, and most of them are Bachelor's Degree or have a lower highest educational attainment. The data further revealed that the respondents are mostly young and possess creativity, idealism, eagerness, and enthusiasm to work for the learners. Thus, young Filipinos' decision to enter government service is personal and can be influenced by various factors. However, for many young Filipinos, the opportunity to serve their country and positively impact society is a key motivator.

### *Level of Stress of the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators*

**Table 2**

*Level of Stress Encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Area of Nature of Work*

| Items                                                                       | Mean        | Interpretation        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when...               |             |                       |
| 1. I receive a low monthly salary that is not self-sufficient.              | 4.03        | High Level            |
| 2. I perform heavy or excessive workloads in a day or week.                 | 4.14        | High Level            |
| 3. I have no occasional rest breaks during working hours.                   | 3.43        | Moderate Level        |
| 4. I need to work long hours to accomplish a certain task.                  | 3.63        | High Level            |
| 5. I have hectic and routine tasks that have little inherent meaning to me. | 3.53        | High Level            |
| 6. I am not able to utilize my work skills.                                 | 2.84        | Moderate Level        |
| 7. I accomplish work that is not engaging or challenging to me.             | 2.96        | Moderate Level        |
| 8. I experience poor physical working conditions.                           | 2.77        | Moderate Level        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>                                                         | <b>3.42</b> | <b>Moderate Level</b> |

Table 2 shows the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year (SY) 2022-2023 in the area of the nature of work with an overall mean of 3.42, interpreted as a moderate level. Item number 2, "I perform heavy or excessive workloads in a day or week," obtained the highest mean of 4.14, interpreted as a high level. In contrast, item number 8, "I experience poor physical working conditions," registered the lowest mean of 2.77, interpreted as a moderate level.

This implies that the YFCs experience stress when they perform excessive tasks with occasional breaks or long hours at the office but receive a low salary in return. An inappropriate work schedule provides YFCs with the necessary flexibility to meet diverse work requirements, but sometimes it compromises their well-being and job performance. In addition, some of the YFCs perform excessive tasks in a poor physical working environment. The excessive workload in a poor physical working environment (e.g., poor ventilation, inadequate lighting) can lead to a range of health problems for employees, such as musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory problems, and skin irritations. Overworked employees who work in a poor physical environment are less likely to produce high-quality work. They are more prone to mistakes or overlook important details due to fatigue, stress, or distractions.

Congruent to the study of Chowdhury and colleagues (2020), workers who were exposed to poor working conditions, including excessive workload, had lower productivity and performance. Specifically, the study found that workers who reported high levels of workload had lower levels of productivity and performance than those who reported lower levels of workload. Additionally, workers who reported poor physical working conditions, such as inadequate ventilation, lighting, and space, had lower productivity and performance than those who reported better physical working conditions.

As discussed in the study of Houdmont and Sinclair (2017), work stress is a psychological and physiological response that occurs when there is a perceived imbalance between the demands of a job and an individual's ability to cope with those demands. In other words, work stress arises when an employee feels overwhelmed or unable to manage the demands of their job.

**Table 3**

*Level of Stress Encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Area of Work Relationship*

| Items                                                                                      | Mean        | Interpretation        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when...                              |             |                       |
| 1. There is a lack of support or help from my coworkers, especially accomplishing a task.  | 3.03        | Moderate Level        |
| 2. There is a lack of support from my supervisors in the work I do.                        | 2.73        | Moderate Level        |
| 3. I am in a poor social environment.                                                      | 2.51        | Moderate Level        |
| 4. I experience poor communication in the organization.                                    | 2.78        | Moderate Level        |
| 5. The organization lacks family-friendly policies that cater to my personal needs.        | 2.80        | Moderate Level        |
| 6. There is no recognition for my good work performance.                                   | 2.98        | Moderate Level        |
| 7. Management actions are always inconsistent with organizational values.                  | 2.99        | Moderate Level        |
| 8. I receive the limited provision of resources for my position like work-related gadgets. | 3.03        | Moderate Level        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>                                                                        | <b>2.86</b> | <b>Moderate Level</b> |

As shown in Table 3, the level of stress of DepEd YFCs in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year (SY) 2022-2023 in the area of work relationship reveals that the overall mean was 2.86 and interpreted as a moderate level. Item number 1 and 8, "There is a lack of support or help from my coworkers, especially accomplishing a task" and "I receive the limited provision of resources for my position like work-related gadgets," registered the highest mean of 3.03 interpreted as moderate level; while item number 3, "I am in a poor social environment," obtained the lowest mean of 2.51 interpreted as moderate level.

This denotes that YFCs often feel unsupported by coworkers and the organization in terms of the limited provision of equipment needed to accomplish their tasks, which causes them stress in the workplace. Experiencing a lack of support from co-workers or equipment, YFCs are required to take on more tasks or work longer hours to compensate, which leads to a heavier workload that is overwhelming and stressful. Also, with the right equipment or support, YFCs can complete tasks effectively and efficiently, which leads to feelings of frustration and inadequacy. Further, YFCs need to see the environment within the organization as good even though they are experiencing hard times in performing their tasks because of their strong support group, their supervisors.

The study is also congruent with the study conducted by Cooper and Kann (2013), the lack of support from colleagues has a significant impact on employee's well-being and job performance. Employees feeling isolated and unsupported at work are more likely to experience stress and job dissatisfaction, which can negatively affect their overall mental and physical health. He also discussed that feeling unsupported leads to a range of negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and anxiety. As a result, they become disengaged from their work and lose motivation to perform at their best.

**Table 4**

*Level of Stress Encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Area of Organizational Role*

| Items                                                                                 | Mean        | Interpretation        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when...                         |             |                       |
| 1. There is an unclear job description for the position I applied for.                | 3.39        | Moderate Level        |
| 2. I am not consulted for job-related decisions.                                      | 3.00        | Moderate Level        |
| 3. Conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations are prevalent.             | 3.39        | Moderate Level        |
| 4. I have too much responsibility.                                                    | 3.91        | High Level            |
| 5. I have too many "hats to wear" during an event.                                    | 3.69        | High Level            |
| 6. Lack or minimal participation in decisions and actions affecting my job.           | 3.08        | Moderate Level        |
| 7. Work schedules are incompatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job. | 3.22        | Moderate Level        |
| 8. Conflicts within the office are predominant.                                       | 2.76        | Moderate Level        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>                                                                   | <b>3.31</b> | <b>Moderate Level</b> |

Statistics in Table 4 reflect the data on the stress level of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the area of organizational role, revealing that the overall mean was 3.31, interpreted as a moderate level. Item number 4, "I have too much responsibility," obtained the highest mean of 3.91, interpreted as a high level. In contrast, item 8, "Conflicts within the office are predominant," obtained the lowest mean of 2.76, interpreted as a moderate level.

This inferred that YFCs, being the lowest/ entry level in the School Governance and Operation Division (SGOD), given most of the clerical work outside their Key Result Area (KRA) or job descriptions. Mostly the tasks they performed were given by their direct supervisors, which compromised the implementation of youth formation programs like serving as procurement staff, information technology officer, administrative staff, and the like, which sometimes they considered as an abuse of power or power tripping.

The study's findings agree with Kim and colleagues (2019) that work overload, characterized by excessive responsibility and demands, was positively associated with job stress. In other words, workers who reported higher levels of work overload also reported higher levels of job stress which are also negatively associated with employee well-being, including physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The results presented in Table 5 also show that the relationship within the organization is still strong considering that not all YFCs experience workplace conflicts even though they are performing various roles. Workplace conflicts, if prevalent, have negative impacts on various aspects of an employee's life, including their well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Leung et al., 2019).

**Table 5**

*Level of Stress Encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Area of Career Development*

| Items                                                                                        | Mean        | Interpretation        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when...                                |             |                       |
| 1. I felt job insecurity.                                                                    | 3.13        | Moderate Level        |
| 2. There was a lack of opportunity for advancement within the organization.                  | 3.74        | High Level            |
| 3. I am not qualified to receive training.                                                   | 2.50        | Moderate Level        |
| 4. I am not able to pursue advanced studies.                                                 | 2.78        | Moderate Level        |
| 5. There is a rapid change within the organization you are unprepared.                       | 2.88        | Moderate Level        |
| 6. I start to realize that my job is not a stepping stone to reaching my ambition or desire. | 3.15        | Moderate Level        |
| 7. The organization offers a limited provision of upskilling or capacity building.           | 3.14        | Moderate Level        |
| 8. Unclear or unfair performance evaluation systems happen.                                  | 3.04        | Moderate Level        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b>                                                                          | <b>3.05</b> | <b>Moderate Level</b> |

Table 5 shows the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of career development with an overall mean of 3.05, interpreted as a moderate level. Item number 2, "As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when there was a lack of opportunity for advancement within the organization," obtained the highest mean of 3.74, interpreted as a high level. In contrast, item number 3, "As a DepEd Youth Formation Coordinator, I am stressed when I am not qualified to receive training," registered the lowest mean of 2.50, interpreted as a moderate level.

It reflects that the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators also consider the professional or career opportunities within the organization. As an entry-level position in the department, especially in the School Governance and Operation Division, YFC tends to look for other opportunities within or outside the organization considering the bulk of tasks they are performing but receiving a low salary in return. Section 1 Rule VIII of the Omnibus Rules Implementing Book V of Executive Order No. 292 clearly highlighted that every official and employee of the Philippine government is a resource to be treasured, developed, and utilized in the delivery of public services. But, as elaborated by Condes and Lachica (2022), employees who choose to change careers encounter difficulties like the high demand for technical skills, the new work environment, and the change in their routine due to the working conditions, limited employment opportunities, and low salaries.

*Comparative Analyses in the Level of Stress of the DepEd YFCs*

**Table 6**

*Difference in the Level of Stress Encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Area of Nature of Work When Grouped and Compared According to Variables*

| Variable                       | Category | N   | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation  |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Age                            | Younger  | 119 | 97.16     | 4421.500       | 0.161   |            | Not Significant |
|                                | Older    | 84  | 108.86    |                |         |            |                 |
| Sex                            | Male     | 72  | 104.84    | 4511.500       | 0.609   |            | Not Significant |
|                                | Female   | 131 | 100.44    |                |         |            |                 |
| Civil Status                   | Single   | 85  | 104.41    | 4810.500       | 0.619   | 0.05       | Not Significant |
|                                | Married  | 118 | 100.27    |                |         |            |                 |
| Length of Service              | Shorter  | 96  | 96.87     | 4643.500       | 0.237   |            | Not Significant |
|                                | Longer   | 107 | 106.60    |                |         |            |                 |
| Highest Educational Attainment | Lower    | 121 | 102.95    | 4845.500       | 0.778   |            | Not Significant |
|                                | Higher   | 82  | 100.59    |                |         |            |                 |

Results presented in Table 6 on the difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of nature of work when grouped according to variables age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment with the computed p-value of 0.161, 0.609, 0.619, 0.237, and 0.778 which are greater than the level of significance 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year (SY) 2022-2023 in the area of nature of work when grouped according to variables is not rejected.

This implies that regardless of all the variables, that work stress is influenced more by the nature of the job itself rather than YFCs characteristics such as age, sex, or education. A high-pressure job involving tight deadlines and long hours is stressful for YFCs regardless of their age, sex, or educational background. Different YFCs perceive and respond to stress differently based on their individual experiences, personality traits, and coping strategies. Like, some of the YFCs are able to thrive under pressure and feel energized by challenging tasks, while others feel overwhelmed and anxious. This means that even if the level of stress is similar across different demographic groups, YFCs within those groups may have different experiences of stress.

Another reason is that different groups of YFCs have different coping mechanisms or ways of managing stress. Younger YFCs are willing to take on higher levels of stress in exchange for career advancement opportunities, while the older groups are prioritizing work-life balance and are less willing to take on excessive stress. YFCs were able to cope with the different stressors related to the nature of their work that affected their well-being. Hence, DepEd is committed to promoting mental health and well-being among non-teaching personnel, as well as the broader education community through its various programs

and policies like the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) Program, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Health and Wellness Program, and Peer Support Program.

The results were supported by Sutin and colleagues (2013) that individuals who scored high on measures of neuroticism were more likely to experience work-related stress and perceive their job demands as more stressful than those who scored low on neuroticism. Additionally, the relationship between neuroticism and work-related stress was stronger for individuals who reported low levels of job control and social support at work. Individuals with high neuroticism are more susceptible to experiencing work-related stress, particularly when they have low levels of job control and social support. The study highlighted the importance of considering individual differences in personality traits when examining the experience of work-related stress and developing interventions that aimed at reducing work-related stress were more effective if they take into account individual differences in personality traits and provide support to individuals who are high in neuroticism.

**Table 7**

*Difference in the level of stress encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the area of Work Relationship, when grouped and compared according to variables*

| Variable                              | Category | N   | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation  |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age</b>                            | Younger  | 119 | 94.00     | 4046.000       | 0.021   |            | Significant     |
|                                       | Older    | 84  | 113.33    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Sex</b>                            | Male     | 72  | 85.61     | 3536.000       | 0.003   |            | Significant     |
|                                       | Female   | 131 | 111.01    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Civil Status</b>                   | Single   | 85  | 99.52     | 4804.500       | 0.610   | 0.05       | Not Significant |
|                                       | Married  | 118 | 103.78    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Length of Service</b>              | Shorter  | 96  | 98.45     | 4795.500       | 0.415   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Longer   | 107 | 105.18    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> | Lower    | 121 | 103.03    | 4836.500       | 0.762   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Higher   | 82  | 100.48    |                |         |            |                 |

The results presented in Table 7 on the difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of work

relationship when grouped according to variables age and sex with the computed p-value of 0.021 and 0.003 is less than the level of significance 0.05.

Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of work relationship when grouped according to age and sex is rejected. However, when DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators are grouped according to civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment, the computed p-value of 0.610, 0.415, and 0.762 is greater than the level of significance of 0.05, which pointed to a significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of work relationship. Hence, hypotheses stating that there is no significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of work relationship when grouped according to the variable's civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment are not rejected.

This indicates that older DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators tend to experience higher levels of stress due to work relationships than younger YFCs. This is because older YFCs experience stresses due to generational differences with younger colleagues, such as differences in communication styles or work values. Also, older employees feel isolated in the workplace if they are one of the few people in their age group or if they are not included in social activities with younger colleagues. Another reason is that older YFCs perceive that they are being discriminated against because of their age which includes being passed over for promotions or feeling that their opinions are not taken seriously.

Women employees are more likely than men to report experiencing stress in the workplace, and this is due in part to the fact that they often face more challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. Additionally, women also face discrimination and bias in the workplace, which can lead to increased stress levels. Thus, stress directly affects YFC job performance, especially when they experience high levels of stress. It affects their ability to concentrate, make decisions, and complete tasks efficiently. This led to decreased productivity, poor quality of work, and increased likelihood of errors and accidents. Furthermore, chronic stress leads to physical and mental health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, depression, and anxiety. This will result in increased absenteeism, presenteeism (where employees are physically present but not functioning at their full capacity), and employee turnover.

The findings were supported by Lu and colleagues (2014), wherein high levels of job stress were associated with decreased job performance, as measured by both task performance (the extent to which employees perform their job duties effectively) and contextual performance (the extent to which employees engage in behaviors that support the organization and its goals).

**Table 8**

*Difference in the level of stress encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the area of Organizational Role when grouped and compared according to variables*

| Variable | Category | N   | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation  |
|----------|----------|-----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Age      | Younger  | 119 | 100.88    | 4864.500       | 0.746   | 0.05       | Not Significant |
|          | Older    | 84  | 103.59    |                |         |            |                 |
| Sex      | Male     | 72  | 95.63     | 4257.000       | 0.251   |            | Not Significant |
|          | Female   | 131 | 105.50    |                |         |            |                 |

|                                       |         |     |        |          |       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|----------|-------|-----------------|
| <b>Civil Status</b>                   | Single  | 85  | 105.84 | 4689.000 | 0.429 | Not Significant |
|                                       | Married | 118 | 99.24  |          |       |                 |
| <b>Length of Service</b>              | Shorter | 96  | 97.60  | 4713.500 | 0.311 | Not Significant |
|                                       | Longer  | 107 | 105.95 |          |       |                 |
| <b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> | Lower   | 121 | 102.02 | 4959.000 | 0.996 | Not Significant |
|                                       | Higher  | 82  | 101.98 |          |       |                 |

Table 8 presented the difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of organizational role when grouped according to variables age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment with the computed p-value of 0.746, 0.215, 0.429, 0.311 and 0.996 which are greater than the level of significance 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of organizational role when grouped according to above-mentioned variables is not rejected. The findings are supported by the study discussed in the article by Cooper and Marshall (2018). Older workers face challenges related to ageism and age-related declines in physical and cognitive functioning, as well as concerns about retirement and financial security. On the other hand, younger workers experience stress related to job insecurity, financial instability, and the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Moreover, civil status plays a role in shaping employees' experiences of stress and burnout in the workplace. Organizations may need to consider the unique needs and challenges faced by employees who are going regardless of their marital status, and implement strategies to support their well-being and work-life balance (Wang et al., 2018). The study written by Li and colleagues (2017) also discussed the impact of gender on the stress being encountered by employees, that female employees reported higher levels of job stress related to work overload and role ambiguity compared to male employees. Additionally, employees with higher levels of education reported higher levels of job stress related to work-family conflict than those with lower education levels.

In addition, length of service also influences employees' experiences of stress in the workplace. Dhar and colleagues (2014) found that employees who experienced downsizing reported higher levels of job insecurity and stress than those who did not experience downsizing. They suggested that downsizing can create a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty, which can lead to negative psychological and health outcomes among employees.

Further, educational attainment is also a factor in shaping employees' experiences of stress in the workplace. For example, employees with higher levels of education reported higher levels of job stress related to work-family conflict compared to those with lower levels of education (Li and colleagues, 2017).

Lastly, the relationship between organizational role and stress in the workplace is a complex issue that can be influenced by a range of individual and organizational factors, including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service. These factors interact in complex ways to shape employees' experiences of stress in the workplace, and DepEd should be mindful of the unique needs and challenges faced by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators with different backgrounds and experiences in order to promote employee well-being and optimize productivity.

**Table 9**

*Difference in the level of stress encountered by DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the area of Career Development when grouped and compared according to variables*

| Variable                              | Category | N   | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation  |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age</b>                            | Younger  | 119 | 97.48     | 4460.000       | 0.191   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Older    | 84  | 108.40    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Sex</b>                            | Male     | 72  | 96.74     | 4337.500       | 0.344   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Female   | 131 | 104.89    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Civil Status</b>                   | Single   | 85  | 105.91    | 4683.000       | 0.421   | 0.05       | Not Significant |
|                                       | Married  | 118 | 99.19     |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Length of Service</b>              | Shorter  | 96  | 98.65     | 4814.500       | 0.441   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Longer   | 107 | 105.00    |                |         |            |                 |
| <b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> | Lower    | 121 | 102.98    | 4855.000       | 0.796   |            | Not Significant |
|                                       | Higher   | 82  | 100.71    |                |         |            |                 |

Results are shown in Table 9 on the difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of career development when grouped according to variables age, sex, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment with the computed p-value of 0.191, 0.344, 0.421, 0.441, and 0.796 which are greater than the level of significance 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the level of stress of DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators in the Philippines during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 in the area of career development when grouped according to variables is not rejected.

This indicates that all the DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs) longing for the career development offered by the department through various training, capacity building, rewards and recognition, and promotion. The DepEd recognizes the important role that non-teaching personnel plays in ensuring schools' smooth operation and delivering quality education. Various career paths are available for non-teaching personnel in the DepEd, including administrative, technical, and support positions. It provides training and development programs for its non-teaching personnel to enhance their skills and knowledge and to help them advance in their careers, which include seminars, workshops, on-the-job training, and other learning opportunities. But YFCs have limited access to these programs because of their current salary grade.

Since YFCs are also eligible for promotions and career advancement opportunities based on their performance and qualifications, they tend to apply for higher-level positions within the department or seek employment in other government agencies or private organizations, which sacrifices the sustainability of learner-formation programs being implemented. YFCs may feel that they have unfair career development opportunities within an organization due to a number of factors. One of the main factors is the presence of bias and discrimination within the workplace. For example, research has shown that biases based on race, gender, age, and other factors can lead to differences in career opportunities and advancement within organizations (Blau & DeVaro, 2017; Oh & Kim, 2020).

Another factor is a need for more transparency and communication regarding career development opportunities. YFCs may feel that the criteria for advancement are unclear or subjective, leading to a perception of unfairness (Ng & Feldman, 2015). Additionally, a lack of access to training and development programs can limit opportunities for career growth, leading to frustration and a sense of unfairness (Anderson et al., 2018).

Finally, YFCs may perceive a lack of fairness in career development opportunities if they feel that their contributions to the organization need to be recognized or rewarded appropriately (Riggio & Tan, 2019). This can lead to a sense of demotivation and disengagement from work.

## Conclusion

In general, DepEd Youth Formation Coordinators (YFCs), as an entry-level position and minimum qualifications, have proven that most YFCs are young professionals, female, married, have more than 6 years in service, and graduated with Bachelor's Degrees which are very willing to be part of the department. It is also proven that YFCs encountered stress within the organization during the First Semester of the School Year 2022-2023 by scoring moderately in all the areas: nature of work, work relationship, organizational role, and career development. Regardless of YFCs are young or older, female or male, single or married, tenured or untenured, and with higher or lower educational attainment, they display a moderate level of stress in the areas of nature of work, work relationship, organizational role, and career development. Finally, factors such as workload, job demands, organizational culture, and interpersonal relationships can all contribute to stress in the workplace. It is important for DepEd to recognize that stress is a common problem and to take steps to reduce stress and promote well-being among YFCs. This can include providing resources for stress management, promoting work-life balance, fostering a positive work environment, and providing training and development opportunities. By addressing the root causes of stress, DepEd can help create a healthier, more productive workplace for all employees.

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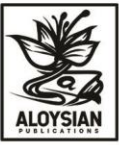
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