

Cause And Effect of Job Stress on Employees' Performance of JSOG, Armed Forces of the Philippines

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Abstract

Occupational stress remains a pressing issue in the military because it affects not only the performance of soldiers but also their health and overall morale. While stress has been widely studied in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), there is limited attention given to specialized combat units such as the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG). These soldiers face unique challenges—continual deployments, high-risk missions, and constant exposure to stressful and dangerous mission. This study was designed to assess both the causes and effects of job stress among JSOG personnel, to determine how demographic factors such as age, sex, rank, and length of service influence stress perception, and to examine the relationship between stressors and their impact on job performance.

The research employed a quantitative descriptive design and involved 120 JSOG personnel between June 2024 and March 2025. A validated questionnaire was used, and ethical protocols such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly followed. Descriptive statistics were applied to describe the respondents' profiles and stress levels, while correlation analysis was used

to test relationships between causes and effects of stress.

Results showed that JSOG personnel experienced high stress due to operational pressure, long deployments, exposure to trauma, and demanding tasks. Stress was found to affect soldiers in four areas—cognitive function, emotional stability, physical health, and motivation at work. Demographic characteristics also influenced how stress was perceived. Importantly, a significant relationship was confirmed between the causes of stress and their negative impact on job performance.

The study concludes that work-related stress weakens morale and reduces efficiency, particularly among mid-career non-commissioned officers who represent the frontline of AFP operations. It recommends stronger mental health and resilience programs, adjustments in deployment systems, and leadership training for early recognition of stress. These measures can help the AFP protect its personnel, sustain performance, and maintain mission readiness in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: *Job Stress, Military Personnel, Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG), Soldier Performance, Mental Health*

INTRODUCTION

Workplace stress is a serious global concern that affects both employee well-being and organizational performance. In high-pressure fields such as the military, its effects are even more severe. Stress often leads to burnout, low job satisfaction, absenteeism, and reduced productivity. Feng and Narayanan (2024) emphasize that high stress levels damage not only individual health but also organizational efficiency, while Vinson et al. (2024) caution that failure to address stress fosters toxic work environments.

In the military, the nature of the job intensifies stress. Lao (2023) identifies long deployments, combat exposure, and safety threats as major stressors for soldiers. This is compounded by stigma surrounding mental health, which prevents many from seeking professional help. Dela Cruz (2022) further notes that AFP personnel experience heavy operational demands, separation from family, and trauma from missions, all of which put health and performance at risk. Gandhi and Patel (2021) highlight the importance of resilience as a protective factor that enables soldiers to remain effective under pressure.

Globally, stress is common in high-risk professions such as healthcare, law enforcement, and the armed forces. Tripole and Caballero (2024) observed that long hours and role ambiguity drive stress, while Damilare et al. (2020) linked poorly managed stress to higher healthcare costs and staff turnover. In the military, the consequences are particularly damaging, including depression, PTSD, impaired decision-making, and reduced readiness (Ehsan et al., 2019; Barnes et al., 2021). Local research, such as Francisco and Lim (2021), confirms that these issues are also evident in the AFP, especially within elite units like JSOG.

In the Philippines, the Department of National Defense (2023) reported that elite AFP units face stress-related health problems that compromise national security. Barriers such as stigma, inadequate resources, and cultural attitudes limit access to mental health care (PMHA, 2023). JSOG soldiers, who often engage in counterterrorism and high-risk operations, are particularly vulnerable. Studies reveal that chronic stress, fatigue, and trauma increase risks of anxiety and PTSD (Lao et al., 2022; Dela Cruz, 2022). Despite existing programs, more tailored interventions are urgently needed.

This study therefore investigates job stress among JSOG personnel and explores practical management strategies. It also aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), SDG 8 (decent work), and SDG 16 (strong institutions). The findings are expected to benefit AFP personnel, military leadership, mental health practitioners, and families, ultimately strengthening resilience, performance, and national security.

Review of Related Literature

Job Stress and Employee Performance in the AFP-JSOG

Military personnel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), particularly those assigned to elite units like the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG), operate under conditions of constant pressure that expose them to serious stressors. Lao (2023) identifies long deployments, combat exposure, and safety threats as among the most significant challenges. Dela Cruz (2022) further emphasizes that operational demands, separation from family, and exposure to trauma place heavy psychological and physical burdens on soldiers. Prolonged exposure to such stress has been shown to impair memory, decision-making, and situational awareness—skills essential for tactical effectiveness (Barnes et al., 2021). Moreover, unmanaged

stress reduces motivation, weakens organizational commitment, and increases risks of burnout and physical illness (Ehsan et al., 2019)

Leadership and organizational support play a decisive role in addressing these challenges. Gandhi and Patel (2021) highlight that supportive leadership, strong unit cohesion, and access to structured mental health programs enhance resilience among soldiers. Similarly, Francisco and Lim (2021) note that AFP personnel often rely on personal coping strategies such as physical training, religious practices, and strong peer relationships to balance the psychological strain of missions.

Effective stress management strategies in the military are multidimensional. Tripole and Caballero (2024) stress the importance of cognitive-behavioral approaches, while Lao et al. (2022) underscore the benefits of mindfulness practices, peer support, and counseling. Recreational activities that build camaraderie also play a role in sustaining morale.

In general, unmanaged stress undermines both individual performance and overall mission success. However, as Vinson et al. (2024) argue, structured stress management programs safeguard soldier well-being and sustain operational readiness. For AFP-JSOG personnel, strengthening resilience and mental health governance is not just beneficial—it is mission-critical.

Statement of the Problem

The study determines the effects of job stress on employees' performance specifically, it seeks answer to the following sub-problems.

1. What is the level of the causes of job stress affecting employee's performance in the Joint Special Operations Group
2. What is the level of the effects of job stress affecting employee's performance in the Joint Special Operation Group.
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondent and the level of causes and level of effects of job stress on the performance of the employees of the office of the Joint Special Operation Group?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of causes and level of effects of job stress on the performance of the employees of the office of the Joint Special Operation Group?
5. What are the strategies of the Office of the Joint Special Operation Group of the Armed Forces of the Philippines related to the stress management of the personnel?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used quantitative examine the causes and level effects of job stress on military personnel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The research meant also to measure and analyze the relationship between level of causes of stress and the level of effects of job stress among military personnel. It employed statistical methods to quantify the degree of stress and its effects on performance outcomes. By utilizing numerical data, the study sought to identify patterns, correlations, and trends that demonstrate the influence of stress on job performance.

Participants

The respondents of this study were personnel of JSOG, consisting of both Officers and Enlisted Personnel. Out of the total population of 116 personnel—comprising 15 Officers and 101 Enlisted Personnel—a total enumeration method was applied. However, only 90 individuals participated and completed the survey questionnaire. Of these, 9 were Officers and 81 were Enlisted Personnel. The aforementioned respondents were only the ones available during the collection of data while those who did not participate were on the fields so the proponent of the study could not reach them.

Instrument

The study used a quantitative approach with questionnaires as the primary data-gathering instrument. Upon securing permission from Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG) management, the researcher proceeds by distributing the questionnaires in person to all the selected respondents within a one-week period. The respondents are encouraged to provide honest and candid responses to each item on the questionnaire. The collected data is then analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to draw conclusions, formulate findings, and make recommendations.

For content validation, the researcher sought inputs from member of the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG). Their expertise ensures that the questionnaire is pertinent, clear, and appropriately designed to capture the data needed for the study. The norm of interpretation for this study follows predefined scales where the responses were quantitatively analyzed, and the data were categorized based on the mean, standard deviation, and other relevant statistical measures to assess the variables being studied.

Norm of Interpretation

Scale	Range Value	Descriptive Rating	Overall Descriptive Rating
5	4.6 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.6 – 4.5	Agree	High
3	2.6 – 3.5	Neutral	Moderate
2	1.6 – 2.5	Disagree	Low
1	1.0 – 1.5	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Procedure

This study followed a systematic approach to gathering the necessary data. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher sent a letter to the Commander of JSOG, requesting permission to conduct, approval, and obtained, researcher distributed to respondents. Retrieval, collation of responses followed after the respondents completed the questionnaires. The researcher tallied the responses, and the collated data was submitted to the assigned statistician for processing and interpretation. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the process. The confidentiality of the respondents was maintained, and all letters and communications were addressed to the appropriate authorities. Additionally, informed consent was obtained from the respondents prior to the distribution of the research questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were systematically encoded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version XX. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed.

1. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to determine the demographic profile of respondents and assess their levels of job stress and performance.
2. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between job stress factors and employee performance.
3. To test for significant differences in responses before and after stress management strategies, the Paired Samples t-test was applied. The test determined whether the mean difference between two related groups (job stress and performance scores) was statistically significant.
4. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$, meaning results at this threshold were considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Present findings with tables and figure

1. *What is the level of the causes of job stress affecting employee's performance in the JSOG of the AFP in terms of?*

Table 1. Summary of the Level Effects of Stress on the Employees' Performance in the AFP-JSOG

Indicators	M	DR
A. Decreased Cognitive Function	3.52	High
B. Emotional Strain	3.45	High
C. Physical Health Impacts	3.57	High
D. Reduced Job Satisfaction and Motivation	3.57	High
Overall	3.53	High

Table 1 shows that job stress was found to have a high effect ($M = 3.53$) on the performance of JSOG personnel across four key areas: cognitive ability, emotional strain, physical health, and job satisfaction. This shows that stress impacts multiple aspects of military performance rather than being limited to a single domain. The highest mean scores were reported for physical health impacts and reduced job satisfaction/motivation ($M = 3.57$ each), highlighting how stress undermines both physical readiness and morale. Symptoms such as fatigue, poor sleep, and tension are particularly critical in a combat-ready environment where endurance is essential. In support, Sonnentag and Fritz (2023) confirm that prolonged stress reduces task efficiency and increases the risk of injury, while AFP directives emphasize fitness as protection against stress effects. The lowest mean was in emotional strain ($M = 3.45$), but it still reflects significant stress, underscoring the hidden yet damaging nature of emotional pressure.

2. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the Level of causes and Level of effects of job stress on the performance of the employees of the office of the Joint Special Operation Group?

Table 2. Relationship Between the Profile of the Employees of the JSOG and the Extent of Causes and Effects of Job Stress on their Performance

Variables	Sex	Age	Rank	Length of Service	Highest Educational Attainment
A. Level of Causes of Job Stress					
High-Pressure Environments	0.017	0.431*	0.525*	0.494*	0.438*
Exposure to Trauma	0.008	0.475*	0.544*	0.514*	0.382*
Long Deployment	0.048	0.419*	0.517*	0.484*	0.377*
Operational Demands	-0.010	0.445*	0.525*	0.489*	0.371*
Overall	0.017	0.460*	0.549*	0.515*	0.406*
• B.Level of Effect of Job Stress					
Decreased Cognitive Function	0.095	0.369*	0.528*	0.464*	0.365*
Emotional Strain	0.077	0.380*	0.509*	0.452*	0.313*
Physical Health Impacts	0.089	0.350*	0.461*	0.403*	0.324*
Reduced Job Satisfaction and Motivation	0.071	0.371*	0.479*	0.435*	0.361*
Overall	0.086	0.381*	0.513*	0.455*	0.354*

Legend: with asterisk (*) Correlation is Significant

Table 2 shows significant correlations between the demographic profiles of AFP-JSOG personnel and the causes and effects of job stress on performance. Personal factors such as age, rank, years of service, and education influence how soldiers experience and cope with stress. Age and rank displayed strong positive relationships with stress, suggesting that older and higher-ranking personnel face greater pressures. This is likely due to added responsibilities, complex decision-making, and frequent exposure to high-risk situations, as noted by Henderson et al. (2022) and Chandler et al. (2021).

Length of service also contributed to stress levels, with prolonged exposure to demanding roles increasing mental fatigue, emotional strain, and physical health challenges. Educational attainment showed a smaller effect, though higher-educated personnel may experience greater expectations in high-pressure

environments. Overall, these demographic factors shape how stress manifests in cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions, ultimately affecting job satisfaction and operational performance within JSOG.

3. *Level of causes and level of effects of job stress on the performance of office of the Joint Special Operation Group?*

The significant relationship between the level of causes and level of effects of job stress on the performance of the employees of the office of the Joint Special Operation Group is presented in Table no. 3.

Table 3. Relationship Between the Extent of Causes and Effects of Job Stress on the Performance of Employees of the Office of the Joint Special Operation Group, Armed Forces of the Philippines

Causes of Job Stress	Effect of Job Stress				
	Decreased Cognitive Function	Emotional Strain	Physical Health Impacts	Reduced Job Satisfaction and Motivation	Overall
High-Pressure Environments	0.868*	0.869*	0.849*	0.840*	0.888*
Exposure to Trauma	0.828*	0.854*	0.815*	0.795*	0.854*
Long Deployment	0.824*	0.859*	0.803*	0.764*	0.843*
Operational Demands	0.890*	0.900*	0.878*	0.842*	0.910*
Overall	0.886*	0.905*	0.868*	0.841*	0.907*

Legend: with asterisk (*) Correlation is Significant

Table 3 reveals a strong and significant relationship ($r = 0.907$) between the causes of work-related stress and their effects on JSOG personnel performance. Key stressors—such as high-intensity work environments, trauma exposure, extended assignments, and operational responsibilities—affect cognitive function, emotional stability, physical health, and overall job satisfaction. Among these, operational demands had the highest mean and strongest correlation ($r = 0.910$), linking closely with reduced mental alertness ($r = 0.890$), emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.900$), and physical fatigue ($r = 0.878$). This confirms that mission-related workload is perceived as the most critical stressor, consistent with Martinez et al. (2023) and Chandler, Bennett, and Howell (2021).

Long deployments showed a lower correlation ($r = 0.843$), indicating a notable but less pronounced impact, supporting findings by Falguera and Valencia (2023) and Baldwin et al. (2019). These results highlight the need for targeted interventions, such as workload management, resilience training, mental health support, and ongoing assistance for deployed personnel, to maintain morale and performance.

4. *What are the strategies of the JSOG related to the stress management of the personnel?*

Based on survey responses, institutional policies, and lived experiences, JSOG-AFP employs multiple strategies to manage job stress and maintain performance. Physical fitness is a primary approach, with 78% of respondents affirming its effectiveness. Activities like jogging, swimming, and recreational exercises

after missions build strength and serve as stress relief, supported by Letter Directive No. 25, GHQ, AFP (2022) and SOP No. 35, GHQ, AFP (2021). Social support also plays a key role, as 65% of personnel highlighted recognition events, team-building exercises, and award ceremonies for boosting morale and emotional well-being. Leadership communication further reduces stress, with 72% noting the benefits of weekly meetings, counseling, and informal check-ins by officers and senior NCOs.

The highest-rated method, cited by 81%, was rest and recreation (R&R) with family, implemented through SOP No. 2, AFP. Together, these strategies—fitness, social support, leadership engagement, and R&R—demonstrate an effective, directive-compliant, and personnel-validated framework for sustaining resilience and operational readiness in JSOG.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study reveal that AFP–JSOG personnel experience a moderate level of job stress ($M = 3.85$), while their reported performance levels are comparatively lower ($M = 3.21$). This indicates that the stressful nature of military work, characterized by high operational demands, long deployments, and exposure to trauma, may negatively affect the efficiency and overall performance of the personnel.

The paired samples t-test confirmed a significant difference between job stress and performance ($t(119) = 8.57, p < 0.05$). This means that as stress levels increase, performance tends to decline. The result is consistent with previous studies in both local and foreign contexts that demonstrate how excessive stress can impair decision-making, reduce focus, and diminish productivity.

The findings also highlight the unique challenges faced by AFP–JSOG personnel. Their specialized operations place them in highly pressurized environments that require mental resilience, adaptability, and sustained performance under stress. However, without effective stress management strategies, prolonged exposure to such stressors may lead to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced mission readiness.

Interpretation of findings indicates that:

1. Job stress has a direct and negative impact on employee performance.
2. The difference in mean scores and the significant test result confirm that stress cannot be ignored in organizational and operational planning.
3. The AFP–JSOG should consider strengthening mental health governance, resilience training, and stress management programs to sustain the efficiency and well-being of its personnel.

The findings of this study revealed that AFP–JSOG personnel experience a moderate level of job stress ($M = 3.85$), while their performance levels are comparatively lower ($M = 3.21$). The paired samples t-test indicated a significant difference between job stress and performance ($t(119) = 8.57, p < 0.05$), confirming that higher stress is associated with decreased performance.

This result is consistent with Feng and Narayanan (2024), who argued that high stress levels in the workplace are harmful not only to employees' well-being but also to organizational productivity, often leading to high turnover and decreased efficiency. Similarly, Cooper and Quick (2017) emphasized that job stress undermines cognitive performance, decision-making, and attention, which are crucial in high-risk professions such as the military.

Locally, the findings are supported by Olivar et al. (2024), who examined occupational stress and coping among senior personnel of the Philippine National Police and found that stress significantly affects

both psychological well-being and work productivity. Similarly, Lumyaen and Trinidad (2024) reported that prolonged stress among PNP personnel in Western Visayas reduces efficiency, weakens coping strategies, and highlights the need for structured support such as counseling and resilience training.

This study builds on these insights by focusing on the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG) of the AFP, a unit facing unique challenges due to high-risk missions, extended deployments, and constant operational readiness. Unlike civilian or corporate studies where moderate stress can sometimes motivate employees, JSOG personnel experience stress mostly as a negative factor. The findings show that stress in this context consistently lowers performance, supporting Ivancevich and Matteson's (2011) model, which emphasizes that once stress exceeds a certain level, it becomes harmful rather than motivating.

For practice, the findings suggest the need to strengthen stress management programs within the unit. Regular debriefings, counseling sessions, and support mechanisms such as mindfulness activities and peer support should be institutionalized to help personnel cope with stress. Training that focuses on building resilience and psychological fitness must also be incorporated into routine military preparation so that soldiers can remain effective even under high-pressure situations. Likewise, leadership training should include stress-sensitive approaches, enabling commanders to recognize early signs of stress among their subordinates and provide appropriate interventions. Adjustments in workload and deployment schedules are also necessary, ensuring that personnel are given enough rest, balanced rotation of duties, and recovery time after high-intensity missions.

For policy, the findings highlight the importance of institutionalizing a mental health governance framework in the AFP, consistent with Republic Act 11036 or the Mental Health Act, to safeguard the psychological well-being of soldiers. Stress risk assessment and psychological evaluations should be integrated into AFP human resource policies and performance appraisal systems. These initiatives also support the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4 on Quality Education through resilience training, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Finally, policies should mandate a dedicated budget allocation for mental health services, training, and capacity-building initiatives so that stress management becomes a permanent component of AFP operations.

This study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the research was limited to personnel of the Joint Special Operations Group (JSOG) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The findings, therefore, may not be generalized to all military units or other uniformed services. Second, the data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire, which relied on the honesty and accuracy of the respondents. Since stress and performance are sensitive topics, some respondents may have underreported or overreported their experiences.

Another limitation concerns the scope of variables. The study focused mainly on the relationship between job stress and employee performance, but it did not explore other related factors such as family background, financial situation, organizational culture, or long-term mental health outcomes that may also influence performance. In addition, the use of quantitative methods provided measurable results but did not capture in-depth personal experiences of stress that qualitative approaches could have revealed.

Conclusion

The study revealed that job stress has a significant negative effect on the performance of personnel in the Joint Special Operations Group of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. High stress levels, caused by operational demands, long deployments, and exposure to high-risk environments, were found to lower productivity, increase absenteeism, and reduce task efficiency. The analysis also showed a strong negative

correlation between job stress and performance, confirming that as stress levels rise, performance tends to decline. The findings further indicated that personnel adopt coping strategies such as peer support, physical fitness activities, and reliance on leadership guidance to manage stress, though these practices are not yet fully institutionalized. This highlights the need for structured stress management programs and policy interventions.

Finally, the study confirmed that stress is an inevitable but manageable factor in military service, and its proper governance is crucial in sustaining mission readiness, protecting mental health, and ensuring organizational effectiveness within the AFP.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered to improve stress management, support personnel well-being, and sustain high performance in the AFP–JSOG:

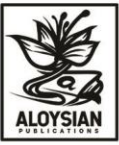
- The AFP should create targeted mental health and resilience programs, with a particular focus on mid-career Non-Commissioned Officers.
- Recruitment, promotion, and career development policies should take into account how stress affects personnel differently based on factors such as age, gender, and background.
- A structured rotation system for deployments should be established to avoid prolonged exposure to high-pressure missions without sufficient rest.
- Regular mental health check-ups, wellness screenings, and easy access to counseling services should become standard practice.
- Leadership training should equip commanders with the skills to recognize early signs of stress and respond effectively.
- Stress management should be embedded within the organization through wellness programs, accessible support services, and ongoing evaluation of these initiatives.
- Conduct similar studies across other AFP units and uniformed services to develop a broader understanding of job stress within the defense sector.
- Employ mixed-method approaches that combine surveys with in-depth interviews to capture richer insights into personnel experiences.
- Implement longitudinal studies to track stress and performance patterns over time, particularly before, during, and after deployments.

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