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RESEARCH ARTICLE

OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AND TEACHERS' BURNOUT.

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Key words:-

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine if there is a significant relationship between occupational stressors and burnout among teachers with the end goal of coming out with a wellness program that will somehow mitigate, if not eliminate, burnout. The descriptive-correlation type of research was employed in this investigation. The respondents were comprised of nine school heads and 393 teachers in public secondary schools in a certain district in the City Division of Calamba, Laguna Philippines selected through stratified random sampling technique. A standardized questionnaire with special permission from the authors served as research instrument in gathering the data needed for the study. Frequency count, percentage and the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis were utilized in analyzing the data collected. Majority of the teachers were Teacher 1 and classroom advisers. The results revealed that the teachers often experienced school stressors such as role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role boundary and role responsibility. School heads and teachers also experienced burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Findings point out that there is a significant relationship between stressors and burnout of teachers and school heads.

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Introduction:-

In a broadest knowledge, teaching is a process that facilitates learning. Teaching is the specialized application of knowledge, skills and attributes designed to provide unique service to meet the educational needs of the individual and of society. The choice of learning activities whereby the goals of education are realized in the school is the responsibility of the teaching profession. The environment of the school is frequently demanding, requiring teachers to be emotionally involved with students as well as being mentally and physically challenged.

Researchers Troman and Wonds (2011) as cited in Tatel (2012) noted that teachers who experience stress over long period of time may experience what is known as burnout. On the other hand, Mathew, Gfoerer and Harris (2000) as cited in Tatel (2012) noted that an earlier research into phenomenon known as burnout was described as a loss of idealism and enthusiasm for work. In addition, Mashlach and Jackson (2000), authors of Maslach Burnout Inventory recognized that burnout is a phenomenon found out in a wide range of work settings and populations. Today, work-related burnout remains the primary focus of most research, and reducing such burnout is the aim of most intervention.

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Teaching in school is a highly stressful occupation which may result to burnout, physical and emotional distress and worst, teachers choose to leave the profession. Research on teacher stress and burnout has largely focused on environmental and contextual factors while ignoring personality characteristics of teachers that may have an impact on relationship between job stress and corresponding consequences.

Many teachers would agree that teaching is not only a hard work. It can also be full of stress. Pressure due to school reform efforts, inadequate administrative support, poor weekly conditions, lack of participation in school decision making, the burden of paperwork and lack of resources have all been identified as factors that may cause stress in any school staff (Hammond and Onikawa, 2001 as cited in Clamor, 2013).

Elias, 2012 contends that “Burnout is most often an organizational problem and it is insidious because it can remove dedicated teachers from the field of education, sometimes before they physically leave their jobs. Its solution is found most often in creating a positive, supportive school culture and climate, where teachers are treated as professionals and given the opportunity to collaborate, problem solve, and get needed, reasonable supports in timely ways. When the conditions of teaching are bad, the conditions of learning tend to be worse, and children suffer in lasting ways.”

Methodology:-

Research Design

The study used the descriptive-correlational method of research to determine the relationship of occupational stressors which include role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role boundary, role responsibility and physical environment to school heads' and teachers' burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Sampling Technique.

The respondents of the study were the 393 teachers from a certain secondary school in Calamba, Laguna Philippines selected through stratified random sampling and eventually purposive sampling when those who experienced burnout were identified. Nine (9) school heads were also involved covering 9 secondary schools.

Research Instrument.

The study utilized a survey questionnaire which was divided into three parts. Part I is on profile information which consists of school affiliation, respondents' position and additional assignment. Part II is on school stressors employing a standardized questionnaire by Psychological Assessment Resources Inc. (PAR) from the Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised by Samuel H. Osipow with 60 questions. Part III is about teachers' burnout adapted and reproduced with special permission from the publishers of Mind Garden, Inc. from Mashlach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) by Christina Mashlach, Susan E. Jackson & Richard L. Schwab, copyright 1986 with 22 questions.

Research Procedure.

The researcher sought the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent to administer the questionnaire to the respondents of the study. Upon approval, this was distributed to the teachers and school heads taking two weeks to retrieve all the questionnaires from 11 schools. Information and data reflected were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tests.

Statistical Treatment of Data.

Frequency and percentage were used in presenting the profile of the respondents. The occurrence frequencies of occupational stressors were measured on the five-point Likert Scale and the simple mean was utilized as follows: 4.50-5.00, true most of the time; 3.50-4.49, usually true; 2.50-3.49, often true; 1.50-2.49, occasionally true and 1.00-1.49, never true. For burnout, a seven-point Likert Scale was used: 6.50-7.00, every day; 5.50-6.49, a few times a week; 4.50-5.49, every week; 3.50-4.49, a few times a month, 2.50-3.49, monthly; 1.50-2.49, a few times a year; and 1.00-1.49, never.

Pearson Product Moment of correlation was employed to determine the significant relationship between occupational stressors and burnout.

Results and Discussion:-

Profile of the respondents. There were nine (9) school heads and 393 teachers distributed as follows:

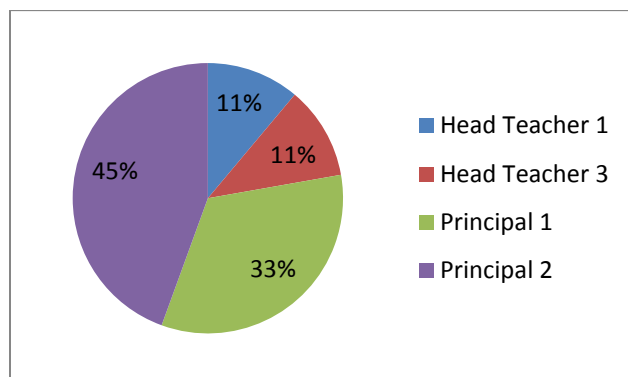


Figure 1:-Distribution of school heads according to position

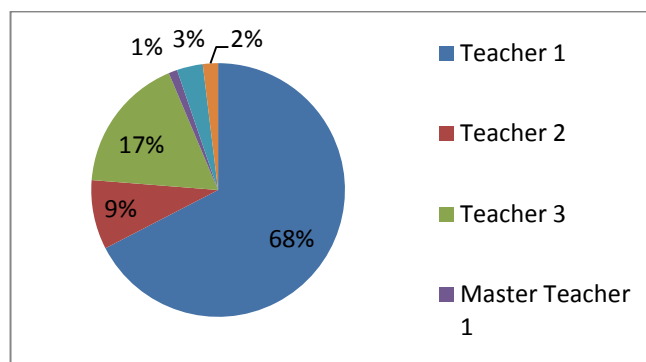


Figure 2:-Distribution of teachers according to position

As can be glimpsed in Table 1 occupational stressors are often encountered by both school heads and teachers. Among stressors indicators, role overload was claimed to be usually true with mean of 4.01 and 3.54 according to the school heads and teachers respectively.

Table 1:-Occurrence level of occupational stressors among school heads and teachers

Indicators	School Heads	Descriptive Interpretation	Teachers	Descriptive Interpretation
Role Overload	4.01	UT	3.54	UT
Role Insufficiency	3.05	OfT	2.79	OfT
Role Ambiguity	3.02	OcT	2.85	OcT
Role Boundary	2.79	OfT	2.84	OfT
Role Responsibility	3.55	UT	3.08	OfT
Physical Environment	2.26	OcT	2.71	OfT
Overall Assessment	3.11	OfT	2.97	OfT

Legend: 4.50-5.00 True Most of the Time (TMT); 3.50-4.49 Usually True (UT); 2.50-3.49 Often True (OfT); 1.50-2.49 Occasionally True (OT); 1.00-1.49 Never True (NT)

When role related duties are structured in way that leads to problems for the employee, as discussed by Kebelo (2012), "role stress may take place that could lead to role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload." Studies have also shown that when experience of role stressors is high, then job satisfaction is low which may well be coupled with anxiety and depression (Stranks, 2005).

The occurrence level of school burnout is reflected in Table 2. Based upon their work, Martin, Sass, and Schmidt (2011) suggested that "high levels of work stress can lead to depression and strengthens the idea that emotional

exhaustion is the main component of burnout.” In the same essence, Herioux (2012) concluded that chronic stress is strongly correlated with two major indicators of burnout, emotional exhaustion and depressive symptoms.

Table 2:-Occurrence level of school burnout among school heads and teachers

Indicators	School Heads	Descriptive Interpretation	Teachers	Descriptive Interpretation
Emotional Exhaustion	3.37	M	3.65	AFTM
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	2.42	AFTY	2.77	M
Depersonalization	2.68	M	3.06	M
	2.82	M	3.16	M

Legend: 6.50-7.00 Every day (ED); 5.50-6.49 A Few Times a Week (AFTW); 4.50-5.49 Every week (EW); 3.50-4.49 (AFTM); 2.50-3.49 Monthly (M); 1.50-2.49 A Few Times a Year (AFTY); 1.00-1.49 Never (N).

The current study revealed that reduced personal accomplishment manifests among school heads a few times a year with a mean of 2.42 and among teachers monthly with a mean of 2.81. These imply that the school heads and teachers, once in a while, experience lack of feeling of success and accomplishment which is the negative belief of self-capacity in classroom.

The respondents feel depersonalization for quite sometimes as indicated by general assessments of 2.68 and 3.06 for school heads and teachers respectively. In relation to this, Bousquet (2012) concurred that depersonalization occurs when one separates himself from colleagues, family, and friends. Separation may manifest through a physical isolation or through distancing oneself emotionally (Roloff & Brown, 2011).

Table 3 illustrates the correlational analysis which resulted in significant relationships in five out of six cases with correlation coefficients generating p-values less than the level of significance equal to 0.05. The findings show that school burnout is pairwise related significantly with role overload, role insufficiency, role boundary, role responsibility and physical

Table 3:-Bivariate correlation of occupational stressors and burnout

First Variable: Occupational Stressors	Second Variable: Teachers' Burnout	
	Pearson Correlation	Significance (2-tailed) p-value
Role Overload	0.260**	<0.001
Role Insufficiency	0.125*	0.011
Role Ambiguity	0.075	0.132
Role Boundary	0.320**	<0.001
Role Responsibility	0.348**	<0.001
Physical Environment	0.451**	<0.001

Legend: ** - significant at .01; * - significant at .05

environment. However, it is not related to role ambiguity. All of these imply that occupational stressors in general are significantly related to school burnout among school heads and teachers that may cause serious health and mental problems if not recognized and addressed accordingly.

Diehl & Carlotto (2014) stressed that persistence and the intensity at which an individual experiences stressor, coupled with successive attempts of dealing with them appropriately, may make him or her vulnerable to the appearance of the burnout syndrome, a psychosocial phenomenon that occurs as a chronic response to stressors in work-related situations.

Conclusion and Recommendation:-

There was a significant relationship between occupational stressors and burnout among school heads and teachers. Those who experience a higher level of stressors are those who also experience a higher level of burnout. In as much as it is unlikely that a school head or a teacher can alleviate all of the environmental factors that trigger burnout, one

must focus on the steps that can be taken to prevent and/or address it whenever possible. School officials may prioritize activities to lower such stressors to achieve the maximum effectivity of the teachers.

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