Sources and Level of Stress Coping Strategies of Faculty Members in the University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract: This study generally aimed at investigating the stressors that affect faculty members in the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), and identify the coping strategies they use in response to these stressors. Specifically, it sought to find the profile of the respondents, the causes and levels of stress, and the coping strategies used by the respondents in managing stress. Mixed-method research design was used to attain its objectives. The population of the study was composed of UEP faculty members. Findings on the profile showed that majority of the faculty members were female and were 35 years old and above. Findings on the level of stress of the respondents revealed that more than 50 percent had “high” level of stress on work load and role overload. “Average Level” on relationship with students, relationship with colleagues, and control of work environment. In terms of sources of stress of the respondents, findings showed that they were “very much stressed” with lack of school facilities, lack of resources, completing forms, and paper works. And lack of well-defined goals and objective and common tasks, “much stressed” on lack of cooperation of other staff members, dealing with slow learners, poor lightning and ventilation, working with associates whom they felt incompetent, and meeting deadlines. The respondents were “averagely stressed” with unmotivated students, open area classroom, dealing with individual differences, with insufficient salary for work done, lack of opportunity for promotion, dealing with students with personal problems, and students absenteeism. As regards to stress coping mechanism of the respondents, finding show that majority of the respondents diverted their attention to other things of ignored the problems, “often” did symptom intervention such as concentrate efforts on doing something about it, do what has to be done, one step at a time, and take additional action to try to get rid of the problem. Likewise, they consult an expert to help them sort out their problem and sought emotional support. “sometimes” they indulge in productive activities, read the Bible, discuss feelings with friends, ask people who have similar experiences. On the test of relationship between profile and level of stress, results show that faculty members’ stress can be attributed to the profile of the respondents in terms of age sex. Based on the findings, it is recommended that: The administration may prioritize school facilities and other school needs; Team building may be organized and conducted which may result to cooperation and coordination among the faculty; Additional Clerks may be hired to help faculty in their paperwork, such as encoding and production; Learning Assistance Program be strictly implemented to help slow learners; and Work load be reduced to two preparation with 15 units or one preparation with maximum of 18 units.

Keywords: Stressor, Coping strategies, personality type

1. Introduction

This study generally aimed at investigating the stressors that affect faculty members in Teaching is a profession which develops the minds of people. It drives the growth of a country not only on the basis of economic consideration but also on the basis of improved and tolerant society, culture, and civilization. Just like other professions, however, teaching can be a source of stress which could lead to decline in teaching performance and the performance and the performance of the students. It is therefore important to deal with the stress issues in order to gain advantage and attain to peak in teacher job performance. However, it must also be kept in mind that stress cannot be eliminated fully from work place, rather, it can be reduced if administered properly with the right stress coping strategies.

Teacher stress is experienced by a teacher from unpleasant emotions, such as tension, frustrations, anger, and depression (Brown and Uehara, 2009). It is caused by environmental factors as well as individual characteristics. Major environmental factors include poor working conditions, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads, and students’ behavior. Individual characteristics can include sex, age, personality, and the ability to cope (Guglielmi and Tatrow, 2008).

The mixed-method study explores possible strategies that faculty members can use to cope with stress that is directly related to their specific work environment. This will also contribute to the field of health education and promotion by providing faculty members with insight and information on how to effectively cope with the stress at work so that they can continuously meet educational goals. The administration will have a clear picture of the faculty members’ condition and find solutions to improve causes of stress in the workplace.

2. Objectives

This research investigated the stressors that affect members and identified the coping strategies that faculty members use in response to these stressors. More specifically, it aimed to: 1) Determine the profile of the respondents, in terms of age and sex; 2) Identify the causes and the level of stress of the respondents; and 3) Find out the strategies used by the respondents to cope with their stressors.
3. Methodology

A mixed-method research design was used in this study. It determined the level of stress and coping strategies of faculty members using instruments and interview schedule. The research is quantitatively driven with a quantitative foundation, and a qualitative sequential element (Richards and Morse, 2002).

The quantitative aspect focused on understanding the sources and level of teacher stress through the perspectives of some faculty members guided by the instruments while the Qualitative element was done through informal interviews.

All regular faculty members of the UEP Main Campus were targeted as respondents. However, one hundred percent retrieved was not realized.

4. Results and Discussion

Profile of UEP Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Above 50</td>
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<td>45-50</td>
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<td>34 to 44</td>
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<td>34 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The table shows the age distribution of respondents. The data revealed that faculty members whose age ranges from 45 to 50 had the highest number with 34.78% of the total. This was followed by those within the age range of 34 to 44 or 28.26%. Those with age ranges from 50 and above and 34 and below had the least number of 26 or 18.44% and 25 or 18.12%, respectively.

The presented data would mean that majority of the respondents are categorically matured and experienced. This may further mean that they were in the teaching profession for a quite number of years and had experienced different stressors.

Table 2: Sex Distribution of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the sex distribution of respondents. The data revealed that of the 138 faculty members, 96 of 69.57% were male. It can be inferred that teaching profession is a female-oriented and dominated profession.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Causes and Levels of Stress Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Causes of Stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role overload</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing forms, surveys, and paperwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students with personal problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with individual differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing help to colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of public appreciation for &quot;I do&quot; as a teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing extra-curricular activities</td>
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<td>Sub mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of cooperation of other staff members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with associates I feel are competent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagreeing on how a task is to be done</td>
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<td>Lack of communication between the school and central office</td>
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<td>Lack of participation in making decisions that may affect my work</td>
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<td>Being accountable for the work of others</td>
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<td>Lack of well-defined goals and objectives on common tasks</td>
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<td>Sub mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work load</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of &quot;breaks&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunity to interact with peers</td>
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<td>Lack of school facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient salary for work done</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of clerical help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunity for promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub mean</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows the causes and the level of stress of respondents in terms of role overload, relationship with colleagues, work load, with students and control of the work environment.

As shown in the presentation, the respondents considered completing forms, surveys, and paperwork as the main source of stress under role overload. The mean of 4.21 is interpreted as “very much stressful”. Meeting deadlines with 3.50, and dealing with individual differences, 3.46, both interpreted as “much stressful”. On the other hand, providing help to colleagues has the mean of 2.82 interpreted as “averagely stressful”, while helping students with personal problems has 2.52 mean and managing extra-curricular activities with 2.51, both “low stressful”. The respondents perceived lack of public appreciation as teachers as “not stressful” with the mean of 1.67. The sub mean of 2.95 would mean overload of teachers was averagely stressful for them.

In the category “relationship with colleagues”, it was found out that lack of well-defined goals and objectives on common tasks ranked first with 4.23 mean, interpreted as “very much stressful”. On the other hand, working with associates the respondents feel incomplete had a mean of 3.51 and 3.47 for lack of cooperation of other staff members, are “much stressful”. Those with “averagely stressful” are being comfortable for the works of others, with 3.02 mean, disagreeing on how a task is to be done with 3.00 mean, and lack of participation in making decisions that affect work had a mean of 2.83. The respondents, however, considered lack of communication between the school and the central office to be “low stressful” with the mean of 2.26.

It could be noted that relationship with colleagues was rated by the respondents as “averagely stressful”.

The findings in general is contrary to claim of J. Blasé (2006) which says that the most stressor is caused by organizational issues dealing with other teachers, tough the respondents considered lack of well-defined goals as “very much stressful”.

Under the category on work load, it was revealed that lack of school facilities is the number on stressor with 4.95 mean and lack of resources, 4.70, both are interpreted as “very much stressful”. Lack of insufficient salary for work done, had a mean of 4.01, lack of opportunity for promotion, 3.65 mean, and lack of clerical help with the mean of 3.12. These are interpreted as “averagely stressful”. The respondents considered lack of opportunity to interact peers, with 2.09 mean as “low stressful” while lack of “breaks” with 1.65 mean as “not stressful.

The findings revealed that work load with the sub mean of 3.45, interpreted as “much stressful” is the top stressor among faculty members in the University of Eastern Philippines.

The findings proved to claim of R. Hastings that the most stressor can be found in the work environment such as heavy workloads, organizational problems, lack of resources, lack of support and on autonomy, and decision making. J. Blaise also pointed out that low salary, stagnation, and boredom cause burnout.

Under relationship with students’ category, the sub mean is 3.32, which is “averagely stressful”. The results revealed that dealing with slow learners had a mean of 3.87, unmotivated students, 3.73, and disruptive students with the mean of 3.57. These are interpreted as “much stressful”. Those which were “averagely stressful” were students absenteeism and tardiness with the mean of 3.23, and adjustment to students with different personality types with 2.98 mean.

On the other hand, students vandalism with the mean of 2.11 and lack of parental support of the students, with the mean of 2.10 were “low stressful” while verbal abuse by the students had a mean of 1.65, “not stressful”.

The faculty members in the university are psychotically prepared in dealings with the students. Again, this is far from the statement of J. Griffin (1999) that the major sources of teachers’ stress can be directly attributed to the students, which was supported by R. Hastings and Bham in 2003 based on their survey and interview that the major stressors is on students discipline.
Under the category on the control of the work environment, the sub mean is 3.34, which is “averagely stressful”, poor lighting and ventilation with 3.68 mean, “much stressful” while theft or damage to personal property had a mean of 2.84 “averagely stressful” and home to school distance had 2.31 mean which is interpreted as “low stressful”. The Grand mean of 3.25 with the interpretation “averagely stressful” implies that the respondents can still manage the stressors without losing composure.

Table 4: Stress Coping Mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping Mechanism</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diverting Attention/ Ignoring</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I refuse to believe that problem has happened</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I divert myself by giving more attention to my duties and responsibilities</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I act as though there are no problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to help those who have the same problems as I have</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell myself that worrying will not solve a problematic situation</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I divert my attention from my problems by going out with friends</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see other people who are in a worse situation than I am in</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to forget the event and tell myself that tomorrow is another day</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I convince myself that my happiness should not depend on other people</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I indulge in an exercise and other worthwhile activities to fill my time</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub mean</strong></td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symptom Intervention</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do what has to be done, one step at a time</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I indulge in productive activities or hobbies to improve my self</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do something to improve myself physically and intellectually</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to involve my peers in the problem so we can solve it together</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I send signals to my peers to let them/know that something is wrong</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep an open verbal communication with my clinical instructor so we can openly discuss the problem</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write notes to my Head Teacher/Principal so they know how I feel</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub mean</strong></td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grading/Sharing Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask people who has similar experience what they did</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to get advice from someone about the problem</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to someone to find who could do something about the problem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to someone to find out more about the situation</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read books to learn more about the problem</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share experiences with someone similarly situated as I am so we can learn from each other</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consult an expert to help me sort out my problem</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I confide my problems with confidants or seek spiritual advice</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read the Bible and other inspirational materials for guidance</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub mean</strong></td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeking Emotion Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to someone about how I feel</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss my feelings with someone</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get sympathy and understanding from someone</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read the Bible for comfort and inspiration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask God in my prayer and meditation to give me solace</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take comfort of the love of my siblings and friends</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek support from my friends and relatives</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek comfort by keeping a journey of my problem and feelings</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub mean</strong></td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand mean</strong></td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the stress coping mechanism or strategies of the respondents in terms of diverting attention or ignoring, symptom intervention, gaining or sharing information and seeking emotional support.

The sub mean of 3.99 under diverting attention or ignoring had been interpreted as “often”.

This may seem that the respondents give more attention to other concerns rather than the problems which may hinder teaching-learning experiences.

Under symptom intervention, the sub mean is 3.27, interpreted as “sometimes”. Although there were items with means interpreted as “often”, such as taking additional action to get rid of the problem with 4.10 mean, concentrate efforts on doing something about it, 4.17 mean, doing what has to be done, one step at a time, 4.27 “always”, doing productive activities, with 3.57 “often”. Doing something to improve myself, 3.61 “often”, the results show that those were items that the respondents did sometimes only and one item, writing notes to the head with a mean of 1.41, interpreted as “never”. This implies that the symptom intervention is not prioritized by the respondents.
On gaining or sharing information, the sub mean is 3.27 interpreted as “often”. The highest mean under this strategy is 4.2 with the interpretation of “often”, was asking advice from someone about the problem. On the hand, the least is reading books to learn more about the problem with 2.97 mean, interpreted as “sometimes”. This would mean that the respondents consider practical solutions to problems rather than theories from books.

On items under seeking emotion support, the sub mean is 3.42 interpreted as “sometimes”. This would further mean that the faculty members in UEP are matured and emotionally capable individuals.

In general, the grand mean of 3.60 shows that the faculty members had utilized some strategies or mechanism in coping stress often along items on diverting attention or ignoring, gaining or sharing information and sometimes seeking emotional support and did symptom intervention.

5. Conclusions

The level of stress of faculty members of the University of Eastern Philippines could be categorically considered “average”. Among the causes of stressors, only completing forms, surveys, and paperworks, lack of school facilities, lack of resources, and lack of well-defined goals and objectives and common tasks were “very much stressful”. These have nothing to do with relationships with students contrary to the claim of most theories that the major causes of stressors are students.

6. Recommendations

Based on items which were found very much stressful or much stressful, the hereunder recommendations are forwarded.

1) The administration may prioritize school facilities and other school needs.

2) Team building may be organized and conducted with may result to cooperation and coordination among the faculty.

3) Additional clerks may be hired to help faculty in their paperwork, such as encoding and production.

4) Learning assistance program be strictly implemented to help slow learners.

5) Work load be reduced to two preparations with 15 units or one preparation with a maximum of 18 units.

Implementing Agency: University Of Eastern Philippines

Budget: Php30,000.00

Total Amount of Expenditures: Php30,000.00

Duration of the Study: June 2015 – March 2015

Part II. Stress Assessment Scale

Instructions: Rate how often does each situation occur in your work as a teacher. Please ENCIRLE the number that corresponds to your answer using the hereunder options.

5 very much stressful
4 much stressful
3 stressful
2 a little bit stressful
1 not stressful

References


### Part III. Stress Coping Mechanism

Instruction: The following items are designed to assess the different ways in which you respond to stress. Please ENCIRCLE the number that corresponds to your answer using the hereunder options.

5 always  
4 often  
3 sometimes  
2 seldom  
1 never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Overload</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing forms, survey, and paperwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students with personal problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with individual differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing help to colleagues</td>
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<td>Lack of public appreciation for “I do” as a teacher</td>
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<td>Managing extra-curricular activities</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with Colleagues</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cooperation of other staff members</td>
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<td>Working with associates I feel a competent</td>
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<td>Disagreeing on how a task is to be done</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of well-defined goals and objectives on common task</td>
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<tr>
<th>Work lead</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of “breaks”</td>
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<td>Lack of opportunity to interact with peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of School facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient salary for work done</td>
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<td>Lack clerical help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunity for promotion</td>
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<td></td>
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<table>
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<td>Dealing with slow learners</td>
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<td>Disruptive students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmotivated Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal abuse by student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment to students with different personality types</td>
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<td>Lack of parental support of the students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student absenteeism/tardiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student vandalism</td>
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<td>Open area classroom</td>
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<td>Poor lighting and ventilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home to school distance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft or damage to personal property</td>
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2089
Table 4b: Comparison of Pupils’ Academic Performance in English, Science, and Mathematics in Central Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUPILS’ ACHIEVEMENT</th>
<th>BILBAO/LESA AREA</th>
<th>CENTRAL AREA</th>
<th>PACIFIC AREA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>INTERPRETATION</td>
<td>INTERPRETATION</td>
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Table 4c: Comparison of Pupils’ Academic Performance in English, Science, and Mathematics in Barangay Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUPILS’ ACHIEVEMENT</th>
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<th>CENTERAL AREA</th>
<th>PACIFIC AREA</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
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<td>177</td>
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