

## Stress-Alis Program: A Psychosocial Intervention

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### Abstract

The descriptive study aimed to determine whether the Stress – Alis Program: A Psychosocial Intervention is an effective tool in managing the stress level of the school personnel. The respondents of the study were the fifteen (15) personnel who scored high in the Perceived Stress Scale assessment. The fifteen (15) identified participants experienced the 2-day program. Two days after the activity, the participants undergone a guided focus group discussion to know their insights, learnings, realizations and feelings throughout the entire activity. Results found out that majority of the participants realized the importance of loving and valuing oneself others. Data also revealed that all of the participant manifested positive emotions such as being happy and excited for the entire activity. Furthermore, it was also revealed that all of the participants have agreed that the Stress - Alis Program helped them realized about their life and it helped the managed their stress level. Finally, all the participants said that Stress - Alis Program should also be applied and experienced with the other schools as means of de- stressing and checking and improving one’s mental health.

**Keywords:** Stress – Alis Program, Perceived Stress Scale, Content Analysis, San Miguel Technical Vocational School, Mental Wellness, School Personnel, Stress Level, Action Research

### Introduction

Stress is a normal response of the body. Several circumstances or life events may trigger it. A stress response is typically activated when someone encounters something different, unpredictable, or undermining their sense of self. Hence, with all the challenges (e.g., overlapping tasks) inherent in the teaching profession, particularly for public-school teachers during the new normal, it is no wonder that most teachers experience episodes of psychological distress.

According to Greenberg et al. (2016), teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the country. Sarabia and Collantes (2020) revealed in their studies that selected elementary and secondary school teachers in Angeles City, Philippines experienced moderate work-related stress, with "demand" as a subcomponent significantly contributing to stress. The study also reported that poor teaching effectiveness is an impact of high psychological demand. Notably, those teachers who underwent stress management sessions performed better in the classroom than those who did not. Thus, stress management interventions such as mental wellness seminars and other related activities could potentially empower and improve the stress coping mechanisms of public-school teachers.

According to the Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036), Chapter 5, *Education, Promotion of Mental*

*Health in Educational Institutions and the Workplace*, the educational system needs to incorporate mental health. To increase awareness of mental health issues among students, teachers, and other staff, educational institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, and technical schools must devise policies and initiatives. (Department of Health, 2019).

In support of the government's Mental Health Campaign, the Department of Education reinforces mental health awareness campaigns amid the COVID-19 situation by launching Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Psychological First Aid (PFA) webinars for school personnel and students. DepEd Memorandum No. 98 ensured that Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services were implemented through TV broadcast, online, and self-guided modules (DepEd Task Force COVID, 2020). Furthermore, DepEd Memorandum No. 053 s. 2020 stressed that when Brigada Eskwela is implemented, school administrators must ensure that psychological first aid or other psychological interventions and debriefing are carried out in collaboration with stakeholders. Other mental health-related seminars were conducted for the school personnel to manage stress and anxiety and promote well-being (Department of Education, 2020).

Despite all government and department efforts, this pandemic continued to threaten the school personnel's well-being. San Miguel Technical Vocational School, San Miguel District had experienced multiple lockdowns due to local transmissions that happened

just before the school year opened. All personnel were subjected to swab testing because of the rising number of suspected COVID cases. From that incident, personnel became more anxious and stressed with the environment and the situation. School personnel were hesitant to report to school because of the fear of acquiring COVID. Some personnel always ask for work-from-home set-up and complain a lot whenever tasks and activities require face to face gatherings. Thus, the school acted regarding the matter by assessing the stress level of all the teaching personnel using the Perceived Stress Scale tool. It was found out that among the teaching personnel, there were fifteen (15) teachers who were highly stressed. Hence, Stress-Alis Program, a psychosocial intervention, was implemented.

The researchers hope that teacher participants can manage stress effectively and improve their well-being after the program is conducted.

### **Research Question**

How effective is Stress- Alis Program as stress coping mechanism of San Miguel Technical Vocational School teachers in San Miguel District, Division of Bohol for the School Year 2020-2021?

### **Methodology**

This chapter presents the research methods utilized in the study to carry out its purpose. This includes discussion on research design, selection of participants, data gathering method, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design**

The study employed an action research design utilizing content analysis approach. In order to find trends in recorded dialogue, researchers utilize content analysis. The texts' words, topics, and concepts were categorized or coded, and the results were then examined.

### **Participants**

Purposive sampling was utilized in this research. This method was used in order to select the participants

fitted to be research subject. The participants were 15 teachers who scored highly stressed in the Perceived Stress Scale instrument. Consent was obtained from the participants.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

To gather the data needed, the researchers used a form for the participants' demographic profile and Perceived Stress Scale to determine the participants' level of stress. The Perceived Stress Scale is a 10-item scale that would help us understand how different situations affect one's feelings and perceived stress. Item numbers 1, 2, 6, 8, and 9 fall under psychosocial stress, while item numbers 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 are under psychological stress. The scale points are 0 – never, 1 – almost never, 2 – sometimes, 3 – fairly often, and 4 – very often. Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress; scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress, and scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress. An interview guide was used to gain feedback, insights, and recommendations regarding the Stress – Alis Program. Furthermore, the interview guide was also used to determine the program's effectiveness in managing the stress level.

This section described the steps and procedures in the conduct of data gathering. A permission letter was sent to the Schools District Supervisor for approval to conduct the Stress – Alis Program among the fifteen (15) San Miguel Technical Vocational School highly stressed teachers. And another permission letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent. The school research team worked on the technicalities of the program. The school research team also asked for partnership with the Local Government Unit – San Miguel for financial assistance and inputs. The research team proceeded to the plans and preparations for the program. All school personnel answered the Perceived Stress Scale and the highly stressed scorers were chosen as the participants of the study. After answering, tools were retrieved and safely kept that only the researchers have access. The answers were checked and interpreted. After the program is implemented, the research team conducted a guided interview with the participants. The gathered data were analyzed, coded and analyzed through content analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The gathered data was treated and analyzed statistically.

The participants' stress level was determined using the



weighted mean for each item.

To determine the effectiveness of the Stress - Alis program, a guided focus group discussion was done after the activity.

After the focus group discussion was conducted, recorded answers of the participants were subjected to content data analysis. The content to be analyzed were selected. For each research questions, the same answers or themes were grouped and coded. After which, different categories were set. Set of rules for coding were develop to ensure that all texts were coded consistently. We went through each text and recorded all relevant data in the appropriate categories. The process was done manually. Once coding was complete, the collected data was examined to find patterns and drawn conclusions in response to the research questions. Out of the data's results, an action plan was crafted to address the issues.

### Ethical Considerations

The study utilized an ethical consideration process. The participation of respondents/participants in this study is voluntary and that they are not compelled to participate should they believe detrimental to their interest. Furthermore, the respondents/participants were informed that the research is conducted solely for academic purposes and the data gathered from them shall be exclusively used for such purpose.

The researchers ensured the confidentiality of the gathered data relative to the personal information of the respondents/participants of this study and shall not be disclosed to the public at any cause. This can be guaranteed by the following activities: the names of the respondents will be replaced by codes, the sheet containing the name of the respondents shall be removed and be kept or destroyed when no longer needed for the research, the researchers shall have the sole access to the code's master list and the files containing research data shall be password protected and encrypted to keep the data safe.

The interest of the respondents or participants is protected by Republic Act 10173 also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, henceforth, any pertinent data or information of the respondents/participants of this study shall not be accessed, transported, or copied without the approval and consent of the Regional Research Committee.

## Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses results and reflections of the study which includes survey of the Perceived Stress Scale and the qualitative information gathered during focus group discussion relative to psychosocial intervention program.

### Perceived Stress Scale Results

Perceived Stress Scale were administered to all the teaching and non-teaching personnel of San Miguel Technical Vocational School in order to determine the target participants for the Stress - Alis Program. The Perceived Stress Scale is a well-known stress measurement tool. This scale asks you about your feelings and ideas from the last month. Takers will be asked to indicate how often they felt or thought a certain way in each scenario. Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress; scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress; and scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress. Fifteen (15) personnel scored high perceived stress, thus, making them the participants of the said program. Table 1 shows the obtained scores of the participants in the Perceived Stress Scale tool:

<i>Participant Code No.</i>	<i>Score Obtained</i>
011	27
015	27
027	28
033	27
037	28
038	28
043	28
044	29
051	29
057	30
060	33
075	27
077	27
078	28
082	38

### Psychosocial Intervention Program Results

Stress - Alis Program is a psychological 2-day program that aims to address the stress of school personnel. Series of activities were planned and crafted to help lessen and manage their stress level.

After the Stress – Alis: A Psychosocial Intervention Program was conducted, a focus group discussion was conducted in order to gather experiences, feedbacks, and opinions from the participants. The data that were gathered were analyzed through content analysis in order to answer the research question on whether



Stress - Alis Program helped the participants managed and lessened their stress level.

The following were the structured interview guide questions that were asked to the fifteen (15) participants: 1. What are the things or inputs that you learn from the activity? 2. What is the dominant feeling during the entire activity? 3. How would you apply your learnings from the activity? 4. Does the Stress - Alis Program helped you in dealing and managing your stress? 5. Would you recommend Stress - Alis Program to other schools as a tool in managing your stress? Why or why not?

Distinct themes merged from the research data. During the FGD, we were able to identify different themes from the utterances of the participants based on the following structured questions:

Table 2. Insights on Stress - Alis Program

Generated Themes	Theme Definition	Frequency
Valuing Oneself	This pertains to giving attention to the holistic needs of the self and being able to provide the needed care to oneself before others.	13
Valuing Others	This means getting to know more others and learning to understand them better.	11
Learning to balance work and life	The skill to know when the right time is to work and when is the right time to attend other personal matters.	9
Management of emotions	It refers to being more open to others on some things in order to lessen the weight of the burden.	8

The table above shows that majority of the participants realized the importance of loving and valuing oneself before others. As one of the participant said, “I should always prioritize myself first before others – *Ako sa diay gyud unahon akong kaugalingon usa ang uban*” .This theme stresses the importance of holistically taking good care of oneself before others. This holds true to the famous saying that, “you cannot give what you do not have.” And most of them also have recognized the importance of handling emotions through listening and being listened to. This tells the importance of good understanding and communication starts in the ears, that when someone starts to listen it could pave a way of healing others. One response was,

“It really feels great to know that there is someone who genuinely listens to you – *Lami kaayo sa pamati nga naay tinud-anay namati nimu.*” The theme valuing others highlights the value and essence of opening doors for others as a means of reducing judgements and discrimination from one another. One of the participant quoted, “Listen and get to know the person more – *pamati og ila-ila og maayo ang taw.*” And finally, the theme learning to balance work and life reminded the participants the value of time. “It is not all about work and hustling, sometimes it is just about looking around and cherishing – *Dili ra gyud diay puro trabaho og pampanimpad kanunay, usahay igo na kaayo ang pagtan-aw sa palibot og pagpasalamat.*”

Table 3. Affective Learning Experiences

Generated Themes	Theme Definition	Frequency
Positive Emotions	These include feelings such as happy, excited, satisfied, relieved and relaxed	15
Curious and nervous	These feelings are felt in waiting and thinking for the next activities.	7

The data above showed that all of the participants who attended the FOSTER Program manifested positive emotions such as being happy and excited for the entire activity. “ We were so happy for we were given a chance to experience an activity like this one – *Lipay kaayo mi ky naka suway gyud mi og ing-ani nga activity*” said by one of the participant. There were others also who shared that they felt nervous and curious as to what activities lay ahead for them for there were also activities done that showed the other side of them. One of the participant divulged, “ I am so curious and nervous at the same time for the activities are always unexpected – *Kulbaan ko basta next activity na ky di gyud nako matag-an og unsa nasad buhaton.*”

Table 4. Application of learning

Generated Themes	Theme Definition	Frequency
Reward System	It pertains to treating oneself whether in small and big achievements and finding time to rest.	13
Understanding not judging	This means being more open to knowing the person to understand her/him more.	10
Improving oneself	Working on the other aspects of life that needs to be developed	7

There are learnings that the participants have obtained from the two-day activity. The table above showed that most of the participants will practice treating themselves in small or big victories and leave work stuff after working time in order to cater other personal and family matters. As one of the participant recalled, “ I will practice the no-work-after-five-pm reward starting now – *Akong e praktis na ng di nako mag da og trabaho after alas singko, silbing reward nako.*” This theme reminds that every victory should be celebrated in whatever forms. And that one should appreciate self in every highs and lows and everything in between. The theme understanding not judging pertains to the act of getting to know the person first and seeing the person the way he/she is; “ It is much better to know the person more rather than judging him/her base on what we see or hear – *Mas maayo gyud ila-ilahon maayo ang taw kysa sa mo base ra ta sa atong nadungog og nakita anang tawhana.*” And some of the participants shared to work on the other parts of the wheel of wellness to keep balance on everything which refers to the last theme. In improving oneself, one aspect of life is not enough, all aspects must be balance to ensure an optimum functioning. One participant said, “I realized that there a lot of life’s aspect that I should focus and look into and I promised to myself to work on that – *Akong na realized nga daghang aspeto sa kinabuhi nga dapat sad diay nako hatagan og bili, og akong paninkamotan nga mabuhay na.*”

Table 5. Program Evaluation

Generated Theme	Theme Definition	Frequency
Helpful	The participants believed that the FOSTER Program has helped managed their stress level.	15

The above table showed that all of the participants have agreed that the FOSTER Program helped them realized about so many things life could offer and they added that the 2-day program helped them a lot especially in managing stress. The participants answered in chorus, “This activity really helped us a lot. It gave us an avenue to relax and unwind and learn and discover about ourselves and our colleagues – *Dako gyud kaayong tabang ni nga activity sa amo-a. Natagaan mi og higayon nga makalingaw og makapahulay og daghan sad mi na hibalan about sa among kaugalingon og mga kauban.*”

## Conclusion

The study was conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of Stress - Alis Program: A Psychosocial Intervention in managing the stress level of the participants. The participants were the personnel who scored high in the Perceived Stress Scale and they experienced Stress - Alis Program.

Based from the data being gathered, consolidated, and analyzed it was found out that the Stress - Alis Program: A Psychosocial Intervention is an effective tool in managing the stress of the highly stressed personnel of San Miguel Technical Vocational School for the S.Y 2020 – 2021. Furthermore, the participants shared their realizations that it is important to take good care of oneself and always find balance between work and other aspects of life. They also added that understanding rather than judging others can also help in minimizing stress in everyday life. Furthermore, the said program was effective and successful because all the participants gave their all-out consent, support and cooperation.

Thus, it is recommended that Stress - Alis Program: A Psychosocial Intervention be adopted by other schools, district or even in the whole division as one of the means in addressing the stress of school personnel. In addition, researchers recommend that the Program should be integrated and conducted in the school’s annual activity to look into and track the mental health of the personnel.

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