

Original Research Article

# Mental Health of Public School Teachers in Davao De Oro

## ABSTRACT

**Aims:** The present investigation aims to determine the status of mental health of public-school teachers post pandemic. This study seeks to provide descriptive results on depression, anxiety, and stress scale of the respondents.

**Study Design:** The study employed quantitative survey design.

**Methodology:** A total of 175 public school teachers responded in the survey. This utilized the DASS-21. Data was analyzed using frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, ANOVA, and Independent Samples T-test.

**Results:** The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents are male, 34.86% age between 31 to 35 years old, 41.71% of the respondents have also been in service for 6 to 10 years. At the time of the conduct of this study, 45.71% of the respondents are currently enrolled in graduate studies. Status of their mental health were as follows: stress scale (20), depression scale (13), anxiety (9), interpreted as moderate, mild, and mild respectively.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that public school teachers are experiencing mild symptoms of anxiety and depression, and moderate levels of stress. This entails that there remains room for improving current efforts to rally contextualized efforts to improve mental health status of teachers.

*Keywords: mental health status, teachers, DASS-21, descriptive*

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community (WHO, 2022). Due to numerous factors the mental health of teachers is being affected. While it is known that when it comes to delivering the curriculum, services, and skill mastery of the Department of Education (DepEd) to the students, teachers are on the front lines. Today, there are far more demands and obligations placed on teachers, a particularly relevant topic which is detrimental to growth of students' academic abilities and accomplishment (KARAP, & Inaltekin, 2022).

Globally, New Orleans, teachers who are experiencing pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic reported having worse mental health and finding it more difficult to cope and teach their students (Baker, et al., 2021). In both subjective and objective, studies have indicated a significant rise in stress and burnout in school teachers (Pellerone, 2021), as well as technostress among teachers during the pandemic (Penado-Abilleira et al., 2021). Also, teachers in schools and universities experience moderate to low levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (von der Embse et al., 2019; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). Non-university

teachers have noted an increase in psychosocial risks related to scarce resources, issues with organizational justice, interpersonal issues, role confusion and work overload, uncertainty management, psychosomatic disorders, and burnout in their workplaces (von der Embse et al., 2019; Prado-Gascó et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, teachers at public schools deal with a lot of paperwork and workload. In fact, everyone working for the government, including teachers, is overworked and under a lot of pressure, according to former DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones (Terrazola, 2018). The development of teachers' learning resources is drastically influenced by their mental health (Jimenez, 2021). Apart from the potential stress that COVID-19 poses to themselves and their families, teachers must adjust to the new norm in the educational scene and engage in efficient remedial instruction (Guillasper et al., 2020; Moralista & Oducado, 2020).

In Davao Region, Casamayor (2019) stated in a report that the past suicide incidents of teachers allegedly due to depression in the city and in other places could be connected to too much workload and pressure from the piled-up requirements. Teachers continue to experience stress and a lack of family-work balance issues even though we recover from the pandemic and return to normal. Teachers may be experiencing increased burnout as a result, which could result in high turnover rates in the near future (Kotowski, Davis, & Barratt, 2022).

Moreover, there is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of sustaining teachers' mental wellbeing during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to address the mental health issues of teachers to avoid the detrimental mental outcomes and prevent future mental health problems (Kidger et al., 2016). However, despite the extent of the issue on mental health of public teachers, there is a sparse of local studies intended to describe the mental health of teachers.

Taken together, the researcher sought to conduct this descriptive study on the current status of mental health of public-school teachers in the province. The findings of this study can help in identifying the prevalence of mental health problems in the chosen sample. Lastly, the study could offer insightful data that guide practice and policy, thereby improving the mental health of teachers.

### **Research Questions**

The goal of this study was to determine the mental health of public-school teachers. Specifically, this research sought:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 Gender;
  - 1.2 Age;
  - 1.2 Years in Service;
  - 1.3 Educational Attainment?
2. What is the status of mental health of public-school teachers in terms of:
  - 3.1 Depression;
  - 3.2 Anxiety; and,
  - 3.3. Stress?
3. Is there a significant difference in the status of mental health of public-school teachers when analyzed based on profile?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

In conducting this study, the researcher employed a quantitative survey design. This is an appropriate approach to the study which allowed the researcher to provide numerical results describing the mental health of the respondents.

### Participants

The participants of this study were public school teachers employed in Davao De Oro. There was a total of 175 public school teachers who responded in the survey. The following were the inclusion criteria that were used for the selection of the respondents were (1) the respondent must be a public-school teacher in one of secondary schools in Davao De Oro; (2) the respondent must be licensed teacher; (3) the respondent taught at the mentioned province for at least 6 months at the time that the study was conducted; and, (4) the respondent was willing to participate in the study.

### Research Instruments

The survey questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part included the information where respondents tick boxes that correspond to their profile. The second phase included the questionnaire of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales - Short Form (DASS-21) crafted by Lovibond S. and Lovibond F. It is a valid and reliable 21-item questionnaire divided into its three domains, depression (Items 3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, 21), anxiety (Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 19, 20), and stress (Items 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18). In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's alpha for the DASS-21 were 0.94 for Depression, 0.87 for Anxiety, and 0.91 for Stress. Scores are summed up, and total scale is multiplied by 2 and interpreted using the following:

### Data Treatment and Analysis

The findings came from the analysis of the numerical data gathered through a survey questionnaire. Appropriate statistical tools are used to analyze the gathered data. Frequency and percentage are utilized to determine profile of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation is used to calculate the level of mental health of public-school teachers. One-way analysis of variance, is used to calculate the difference in the level of mental health when analyzed according to age, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment of respondents. Independent Samples t-test is used to analyze significant difference in mental health in terms of gender.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows that 58.8% of the respondents are female, while 41.71% are male. In terms of age, 34.86% of the respondents age between 31 to 35 years old. Also, 41.71% of the respondents have also been in service for 6 to 10 years. At the time of the conduct of this study, 45.71% of the respondents are currently enrolled in graduate studies. There was a total of 175 public school teacher who responded in the survey.

**Table 1.**  
**Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents**

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	102	58.29
Male	73	41.71
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
21 - 25	33	18.86

26 - 30	40	22.86
31 - 35	61	34.86
36 - 40	20	11.43
> 40	21	12.0
<b>Years in Service (in years)</b>		
<1 year	25	14.29
1 to 5 years	50	28.57
6 to 10 years	73	41.71
>10 years	27	15.43
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Licensed Teacher	35	20
Master Teacher	60	34.29
Currently enrolled in graduate studies	80	45.71

N=175

### Level of Mental Health Among Public School Teachers

**Table 2.**  
**Level of Mental Health of Respondents**

Statements	Score	Interpretation
<b>Depression</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Mild</b>
1 I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all		
2 I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things		
3 I felt that I had nothing to look forward to		
4 I felt down-hearted and blue		
5 I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything		
6 I felt I wasn't worth much as a person		
7 I felt that life was meaningless		
<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Mild</b>
1 I was aware of dryness of my mouth		
2 I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)		
3 I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands).		
4 I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself.		
5 I felt I was close to panic		
6 I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)		
7 I felt scared without any good reason		
<b>Stress</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
1. I found it hard to wind down		
2. I tended to over-react to situations		
3. I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy		
4. I found myself getting agitated		
5. I found it difficult to relax		
6. I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing		

7. I felt that I was rather touchy

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Table 2 presents the level of the mental health of public-school teachers. In particular, the table shows the level of level of depression, anxiety, and stress of the respondents. The scores are interpreted using DASS-21 scoring manual by Lovibond S. and Lovibond P. (1995), wherein, each of the total summed scores for each scale is multiplied by 2. Among the three scales, stress scale had a score of 20, which falls within 19-25, which is interpreted as moderate. Meanwhile, score in depression scale is 13, which falls within the score range of 10-13 interpreted as mild. In anxiety, score is 9 which falls within 8-9, interpreted as mild.

**Test on Significant Difference**

Table 3 shows the test on significant difference on mental health of respondents when analyzed based on profile. The scores of the respondents are analyzed using gender, age, years in service, and educational attainment. Apparently, the results show that there is significant difference when grouped according to years in service ( $t/F=.4.428$ ,  $p=.000^*$ ). On the other hand, there is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the status of their mental health ( $t/F= .787$ ,  $p=.440$ ). Also, in terms of age and status of their mental health ( $t/F= .441$ ,  $p=.850$ ). Similarly, there is no significant difference between educational attainment and status of their mental health ( $t/F=.263$ ,  $p=.793$ ).

**Table 3.**  
**Test on Significant Difference when Analyzed according to Profile**

Profile	t/F	Sig.	Decision
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	.787	.440	Not Significant
Male			
<b>Age (in years)</b>			
21 - 25	.441	.850	Not Significant
26 - 30			
31 - 35			
36 - 40			
> 40			
<b>Years in Service (in years)</b>	4.428	.000*	Significant
<1 year			
1 to 5 years			
6 to 10 years			
>10 years			
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	.263	.793	Not Significant
Licensed Teacher			
Master Teacher			
Currently enrolled in graduate studies			

\*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

## **Discussion**

Based on the findings, it can be deemed that the public-school teachers of this study are experiencing mild depression and anxiety. This is congruent to the findings of Gokyldiz et al. (2021), that indicated teachers during the pandemic are experiencing mild depression.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous detrimental effect on mental health, with numerous individuals displaying moderate depressive and anxious symptoms. According to studies, these illnesses are becoming more common as a result of the pandemic and corresponding lockdown measures. One study conducted in the United States found that rates of depression symptoms increased from 8.5% before the pandemic to 27.8% during the pandemic. Additionally, rates of anxiety symptoms increased from 29.2% before the pandemic to 43.3% during the pandemic (Ettman et al., 2020).

According to a study by Al Lily et al. (2020), teachers' capacity to teach effectively may be hampered by the growth in anxiety and depression symptoms as well as the rates of divorce and domestic violence. These results have important ramifications since even slight manifestations of anxiety and depression can negatively impact a person's quality of life and general wellbeing. In addition to affecting relationships and productivity, these situations can have an adverse effect on the economy. Further, teachers' who are feeling greater responsibility for younger children, as they need more care and protection. Due to this, teachers felt under pressure to care for children effectively and response to their families' worries (Hong, Liu, & Zhang, 2021). Hence, leading to development of symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Furthermore, the results showed that there is no significant difference between age of the respondents when analyzed according to age, gender, and educational attainment, contrary to the results of the related studies (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2020). Meanwhile, most of the respondents are currently enrolled in graduate studies, in order to improve their abilities and eventually assist them in being promoted to their rightful rank, the DepED supports teachers' advanced studies. As a result, several of the participants pursued graduate degrees to improve their credentials and skill set. Hence, many of the respondents took graduate degrees to enhance their skills and credential.

The DepEd supports teachers' advanced studies to upgrade their competencies and eventually to help them be promoted in their respective rank. Moreover, there is significant difference in status of mental health of public-school teachers when analyzed based on years in service. Based on the study by Sarabia and Collantes (2020), significant difference in work-related stress is evident when analyzed according to years in service of teachers. It was found that teachers who are have more than 10 years of teaching experience reported lower stress amid the pandemic, compared to teachers who have less than 10 years of experience. The findings are congruent in a finding of a meta-analysis which revealed teacher's level of mental health based on anxiety (17%), depression (19%), and stress (30%). Overall, teachers in schools have more anxiety than those at colleges. However, professors at colleges have reported more stress than their counterparts at schools from kindergarten to 12th grade (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study was conducted to determine the descriptive status of mental health of public-school teachers in Davao De Oro using DASS-21 to measure depression, anxiety, and

stress. Public school teachers from the province are currently experiencing mild depression and anxiety, if untreated and addressed may lead to symptomology of other related psychological challenges. Also, results revealed that public school teachers are experiencing moderate level of stress. Many factors are affecting the current mental health of teachers in general, hence, psychoeducational and DepEd level program interventions may be implemented. Take together, these results show that mental health of public teachers in the province can be further improved, or current program plans may be improved in ways that would be suited for time-relevant needs of teachers, regardless of age, educational attainment, and gender.

## CONSENT

The author has requested and received approval from the respondents. Both informed consent and assent forms have been completed, signed and documented.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical considerations are important to be made during the conduct of a study. This ensures that this research considers the participants' best interests. This also ensures that boundaries that may make the participants uncomfortable or that may impinge upon their basic rights are considered. The ethical considerations that have been made in this research are beneficence and non-maleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect for People's Rights, Dignity, and Diversity.

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