

Stress, Coping Strategies and Work Performance of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

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Abstract:

The study examined the stress levels, coping strategies, and work performance of secretaries to the Sanggunian in Negros Occidental. It identified job-related stress sources, coping mechanisms, and performance dimensions (efficiency, quality, timeliness) and compared findings based on demographic variables. A descriptive research design was employed, involving 31 secretaries from 19 municipalities and 12 cities. Data were gathered using a researcher-made survey questionnaire to assess stress levels and coping strategies, and the Civil Service Commission's Office Performance Commitment Rating form (OPCR) to evaluate performance. Results showed that stress levels related to environmental, organizational, and personal factors did not significantly differ by demographic variables. Similarly, coping strategies (appraisal-focused, problem-focused, and emotion-focused) were consistently effective across groups. Overall, respondents reported low stress, high coping ability, and excellent performance in efficiency, quality, and timeliness. A notable finding was the significant relationship between environmental factors and problem-focused coping. Recommendations included capability-building programs to help secretaries handle stress-related office situations and a proposed performance enhancement program. This initiative aims to support the Strategic Performance Management System of the Civil Service Commission, ensuring secretaries meet the necessary competencies for effective Sanggunian operations.

Keywords: Coping strategies, Sanggunian, secretaries, stress, Work performance

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

The Secretaries to the Sanggunian serve as critical communication links between the legislative and executive branches of local government and their external clientele. In fulfilling their duties as mandated by the Local Government Code, they face numerous challenges, many of which contribute to workplace stress. This stress can stem from organizational pressures, political influences, limited resources, and lack of support from both the sanggunian members and vice mayors, their direct supervisors. Despite their rank and salary equivalent to department heads, these conditions hinder their ability to achieve organizational goals effectively.

While stress is often viewed negatively, it is an inherent part of life and can serve as a catalyst for growth and resilience when managed well (Horowitz and McIntosh, 2018). Individuals respond to stress differently, making it crucial to identify and adopt coping strategies tailored to their unique needs. Effective stress management enables individuals to create practical plans that foster productivity and well-being.

Understanding the relationship between stress factors, coping strategies, and work performance is vital for Secretaries to the Sanggunian. As Rivera (2017) noted, evaluating job performance is essential for identifying productivity levels and developing programs to enhance employee effectiveness. This study investigates the stressors and coping mechanisms affecting the secretaries' performance, aiming to uncover challenges and propose actionable solutions. The findings will serve as a foundation for developing a performance improvement program to strengthen human resource management practices in local government units across Negros Occidental.

Current State of Knowledge

Workplace stress is a widespread issue, with its intensity and frequency influenced by individual circumstances and the workplace environment. According to Koo (2017), stress arises when the demands placed on an individual surpass their perceived or actual ability to cope, leading to disruptions in emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. This stress can manifest in either acute forms, such as the fight-or-flight response, or chronic stress, which often has harmful long-term effects like headaches and insomnia. The evolving nature of workplace stress, particularly with the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs), adds another layer of complexity. Fleischer & Wanckel (2024) argue that ICTs can lead to "digital overload," where the constant influx of technology accelerates work routines and interruptions, reducing employees' autonomy and job satisfaction. Their research suggests that job autonomy, rather than being a precondition for stress management, is itself a consequence of digital overload.

This highlights the need for workplace policies that promote both autonomy and effective workload management to mitigate chronic stress and enhance overall job satisfaction.

In the context of rural schools, employees face unique stressors. Workloads and demands in rural settings often intensify stress levels, leading to lower work-life quality compared to urban counterparts. This increased stress makes rural workers more vulnerable to mental health issues, exacerbated by the shortage of psychologists (Ogakwu et al., 2024). The dynamic nature of coping with stress, as described by Kelburn and Whitlock, means that individuals may shift between different coping strategies depending on the situation. Carver and Smith, cited by Horowitz and McIntosh (2018), describe coping as efforts to reduce threats, harm, or distress through various actions, with emotion-focused coping sometimes being an effective short-term strategy. In rural school settings, where stress is compounded by limited resources, adopting adaptive coping mechanisms is crucial. Koo (2017) distinguishes between emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies, noting that while the former involves managing personal strain (e.g., through social support or distractions), the latter requires more direct actions to change the stressful situation, such as negotiating workload adjustments or resolving internal conflicts.

The ability to cope effectively can be influenced by one's sense of meaning and purpose at work. Koo (2017) suggests that a positive and supportive workplace, where employees feel part of a collective effort to improve the world, can reduce stress and enhance well-being. In this context, meaningful work—rooted in authenticity, self-efficacy, and purpose—becomes a critical factor in managing stress. Rosso, as cited by Koo, identifies four sources of work meaning: from oneself, from others, from one's work context, and from one's spiritual calling. When employees find meaning in their work, they are better equipped to cope with stress, as it provides them with a sense of belonging, transcendence, and personal fulfillment. This interconnectedness between stress, coping, autonomy, and meaningful work underscores the importance of creating supportive, purposeful environments where employees can thrive both professionally and personally.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on a model of stress by Cooper and Payne (1978) as cited by Judge and Robins (2011) that presents the potential sources of stress and categorized it into three potential stressors: environmental, organizational and personal. For each category of the potential stressors, it identifies sources of stress. It reveals the experienced stress as influenced by individual differences. It shows the physiological, psychological and behavioral symptoms as the consequences of stress. Moreover, this study is also anchored on the Theory of Performance (TOP) of Elger (2013) which develops and relates foundational concepts to form a framework that can be used to explain performance as well as performance improvements. It was theorized that in order to perform is to produce valued results. This theory covers the axioms that were proposed for effective performance improvements. These involve a performer's mind-set, immersion in an enriching environment and engagement in reflective practice (Delfinado, 2013).

Objectives

This study was conducted to determine the extent of stress, coping strategies and work performance of the secretaries to the Sanggunian of Negros Occidental. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) the stress level of the secretaries to the sanggunian in terms of environmental, organizational and personal factors; 2) the coping strategies adapted by the secretaries to the sanggunian in terms of appraisal, problem, and emotion-focused strategies; 3) the significant relationship between the extent of stress of the secretaries of the sanggunian and their coping strategy; 4) the significant relationship between the extent of stress of the secretaries of the sanggunian and their work performance; and 5) the significant relationship between the coping strategy of the secretaries of the sanggunian and their work performance.

Methodology

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This research used the descriptive design that seeks to provide information regarding the stress, coping strategies and performance of Secretaries to the Sanggunian in Negros Occidental. According to Gay as cited by Magallanes (2013), this method of research involves in the collection of data in order to test the hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject under study. It is also concerned about existing conditions or the conditions desired as well as the relationship that exists, beliefs that are held, practices that prevail, effects that are felt or trends that are developing. Magallanes (2013) added as he cited Travers, descriptive method of research is used to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study, and to explore the causes of a particular

phenomenon. The design however, enabled the researcher to study the causal relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The independent variables for study include secretaries to the sanggunian's profile: age, civil status, length of service, highest educational attainment and local government classification. Intervening variables are the sources of stress namely: environmental, organizational and personal factors. Dependent variables include secretaries to the sanggunian's stress, coping strategies and work performance.

Study Respondents

The respondents of the study covered only the secretaries to the sanggunian in the (19) municipalities and (12) cities in the province of Negros Occidental.

Instruments

A researcher-made survey-questionnaire was used to gather the needed data in this study. The instrument used in this study was divided into three parts. Part I focused on the respondents' profile, including age, civil status, highest educational attainment, and local government classification. Part II aimed to assess the extent of stress based on environmental, organizational, and personal factors, with responses rated on a scale from 1 (Very Low Level) to 5 (Very High Level). Part III evaluated the coping strategies employed by secretaries to the sanggunian, classified as appraisal-focused, problem-focused, and emotion-focused, with responses ranging from 1 (Very Low Extent) to 5 (Very Great Extent). To assess work performance, the researcher used the Office Performance Commitment Rating (OPCR) based on the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Strategic Performance Management System, focusing on quality, efficiency, and timeliness, with performance rated from 1 (Very Low Level) to 5 (Very High Level). The survey questionnaire was formulated with the assistance of two licensed psychologists to ensure the proper application of psychological dimensions. Additionally, a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) method was conducted to supplement survey data, allowing for a deeper exploration of the respondents' perspectives on stress and their roles. FGD, as explained by Gregorio (2018) and LP Wong (2008), is a method where a small group of participants discusses a specific topic, fostering interaction that generates valuable data through deliberation, which reduces the time and staff needed for individual interviews. The research instrument was subjected to validity (4.80-excellent) and reliability (0.945-highly reliable). All of them were interpreted as worthy and good; respectively.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study was conducted with a permission from the League of Sanggunian Secretaries of Occidental Negros (LESSON), Incorporated. The researcher closely coordinated with the LESSON members. Upon the approval of the officers of LESSON Inc., the researcher sought the instrument's validity by experts and administered reliability of instrument thereafter. After the administration of the validity and reliability tests of the research instrument, the researcher sponsored a meeting and there was the administration of the study. For those who were not able to attend the meeting, the researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the respondents in their respective offices. The researcher gathered the questionnaire after the respondents were given a week to answer. After the data were collected, the scores were tabulated, analyzed and the results were interpreted through the use of the appropriate statistical tools in order to answer the statement of the problems.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the extent of stress of the secretaries to the sanggunian in Negros Occidental according to environmental factors, organizational factors and personal factors.

Objective No. 2 used a descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the coping strategy adapted by the secretaries to the sanggunian in Negros Occidental in terms of appraisal-focused strategy, problem-focused strategy and emotion-focused strategy.

Objective No. 3 utilized, a relational-analytical scheme and Spearman *rho* test determine the significant relationship between the extent of stress and coping strategies of the secretaries to the sanggunian.

Objective No.4 utilized, a relational-analytical scheme and Spearman *rho* test to determine significant relationship between the extent of stress and work performance of the secretaries to the sanggunian in Negros Occidental in terms of Environmental, Organizational, and Personal Stressors.

Objective No.5 utilized, a relational-analytical scheme and Spearman *rho* test to determine the significant relationship between coping strategies and work performance of the secretaries to the sanggunian in Negros Occidental in terms of Environmental, Organizational and Personal stressors.

Ethical Consideration

To protect the participants, the researcher emphasized voluntary participation, informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participants were asked to voluntarily sign a consent form, either by providing initials or an alias, and parental consent was also obtained. Even after agreeing, participants could withdraw at any time without explanation. Informed consent ensured participants were fully aware of the study's procedures and risks. The researcher took steps to avoid any harm, allowing participants to skip questions or withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that identifying information remained accessible only to those directly involved in the study, and anonymity was upheld by using aliases or initials for all respondents.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Table 1

Level of Stress of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Environmental Factors

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. Absence of Internet Connection	2.82	Moderate Level
2. Poor maintenance of equipment	2.89	Moderate Level
3. Office is not well-ventilated	2.93	Moderate Level
4. Inadequate office supplies	2.71	Moderate Level
5. Preparation of legislative documents with the use of laptop/desktop has become a problem	2.70	Moderate Level
6. Use of electronic system for Legislative tracking	3.36	Moderate Level
7. Insufficient budget allocation for office maintenance	2.82	Moderate Level
8. Council members intervening management of office	2.54	Low Level
9. Staff not cooperating with office' activities and programs	2.43	Low Level
10. Lack of the Presiding Officer's support	2.70	Moderate Level
Overall	2.80	Moderate Level

The results indicate that the secretaries to the sanggunian experience a moderate level of stress due to environmental factors, with an overall mean score of 2.8. Among the environmental stressors, the item "Use of electronic system for legislative tracking" recorded the highest mean of 3.36, reflecting a significant level of stress in this area. In contrast, "Staff not cooperating with office activities and programs" received a lower mean of 2.43, indicating a relatively lower stress level for this particular factor. These results suggest that while some environmental factors, such as the use of electronic systems for legislative tracking, contribute to stress, most of the secretaries are relatively comfortable in their roles and are not significantly affected by environmental stressors. The findings were further validated by a comment from one of the secretaries during the focus group discussion, who shared, "Just stand with your principle. No matter how stressful the situations are, just continue your job as if nothing happened. Focus on your job and do some extra mile and be reminded that public service is beyond politics. Always remember that we are Secretaries to the Sanggunian with permanent plantilla positions and we should not be affected by political influences but rather we should do our job with honor."

The moderate level of stress experienced by the secretaries, particularly with regard to the use of electronic systems for legislative tracking, highlights the need for ongoing support and training in this area. While technological advancements are integral to improving office efficiency, the stress they cause indicates a potential gap in training or system usability that should be addressed. On the other hand, the lower stress levels related to staff cooperation suggest that the majority of the secretaries have adapted well to their work environment, demonstrating resilience and commitment to their duties. The statement shared by a secretary in the focus group discussion reinforces the idea that the secretaries' dedication to their roles—despite political pressures—helps maintain their focus and motivation. This underscores the importance of fostering a work environment where public servants can separate personal or political challenges from their professional responsibilities. Encouraging this mindset, alongside addressing stressors such as technological challenges, can contribute to a healthier work atmosphere and improved performance. Moreover, promoting resilience and a sense of honor in public service, as indicated by the participants, should be a priority for leadership to ensure sustained job satisfaction and well-being among the secretaries to the sanggunian.

Table 2

Level of Stress of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Organizational Factors

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. Having too much workload assigned by the Presiding Officer	2.79	Moderate Level

2. Lack of office personnel/staff to accomplish work	3.07	Moderate Level
3. Limited utilization of break-time due to workload	2.41	Low Level
4. Having disagreement/misunderstanding with subordinates/superiors	2.48	Moderate Level
5. Having difficulty in establishing rapport with the Mayor, Vice Mayor, members of the sanggunian, staff and other employees	2.31	Low Level
6. Could not openly express concerns, ideas and thoughts with others	2.21	Low Level
7. Job assignments and organizational structure are not defined clearly	2.52	Moderate Level
8. Difficulty in meeting work goals	2.59	Moderate Level
9. Limitation on promotion opportunities	2.48	Low Level
10. Lack of career advancement opportunities to enhance profession as Secretary to the Sanggunian	2.38	Low Level
Overall	2.52	Moderate Level

Regarding organizational factors, the overall mean score of 2.52 indicates that the secretaries experience a moderate level of stress in this area. Of the 10 items assessed, half were associated with low levels of stress, while the other half resulted in moderate stress levels, with mean scores ranging from 2.48 to 3.07. Notably, the item "Lack of office personnel/staff to accomplish work" had the highest mean of 3.07, reflecting a moderate level of stress, while "Could not openly express concerns, ideas, and thoughts with others" recorded the lowest mean of 2.21, indicating a low stress level. These findings were further substantiated by the focus group discussion, where many secretaries identified the lack of competent staff as one of the major challenges they face in their roles. This reflects an important organizational stressor that affects their overall work experience.

In contrast, this result diverges from findings in a 2013 survey of HR directors in major companies in Great Britain, which identified excessive workloads and long working hours as significant stress contributors. The discrepancy could be attributed to differing organizational structures and the nature of the work environment, particularly between private and public sectors.

The moderate level of stress reported by the secretaries, particularly stemming from insufficient staffing, highlights a crucial area for intervention. The lack of competent staff to support the secretaries in their legislative functions directly impacts their ability to manage workloads and perform efficiently. This finding implies that addressing staff shortages and providing adequate training and resources could alleviate this stressor, ultimately enhancing productivity and work satisfaction. Additionally, while the ability to express concerns and ideas was not a significant source of stress in this study, the relatively low score for this item suggests that creating a more open and communicative organizational culture could further reduce stress and increase employee morale.

Furthermore, comparing these results to the 2013 survey from the private sector suggests that organizational stressors may vary significantly between different work environments. While the private sector may be more focused on workload and long hours, public sector workers like the secretaries to the sanggunian seem to face stress primarily due to staffing issues. These insights suggest that public sector organizations may need to take a more tailored approach to managing stress, focusing on staffing solutions and fostering a supportive work environment that can manage the unique challenges of the public service sector.

Table 3
Level of Stress of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Personal Factors

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. Work performance has been affected by family concerns	1.76	Low
2. Coming to the office late due to household chores	1.72	Low
3. Lack of concentration at work due to children's needs	1.76	Low
4. Insufficient take home pay	2.21	Low
5. Disturbed of thinking about payment of monthly bills	2.07	Low
6. Difficulty in maintaining family expenditures	2.07	Low
7. Lack of family understanding and support	1.72	Low
8. Conflict with colleague	1.76	Low
9. Unsettled family concerns	1.59	Low
10. Feeling of burnout	2.21	Low
Overall	1.89	Low

The respondents' stress level concerning personal factors was found to be low, with an overall mean of 1.89. All 10 items in this category indicated low stress levels, with mean values ranging from 1.72 to 2.21. Notably, items such as "Insufficient take-home pay" and "Feeling of burnout" both had the highest mean value of 2.21, while "Unsettled family concerns" had the lowest mean of 1.59. These findings suggest that personal stressors do not significantly affect the secretaries to the sanggunian, implying that they exhibit considerable resilience in managing such challenges. This low level of personal stress is likely contributing to their high work performance, as their ability to manage personal stress seems to foster greater professional focus and effectiveness.

The low levels of stress related to personal factors highlight the importance of resilience among the secretaries, suggesting that they are effectively balancing personal and work-related demands. This resilience may be a crucial factor in maintaining high work performance despite external pressures. Additionally, these findings align with Tarata's (2014) work, as cited by Galang (2015), which emphasizes that employee motivation and performance are not solely driven by financial incentives. Rather, a holistic approach that includes non-financial rewards, such as recognition, performance awards, and even simple gestures of appreciation, could be just as effective. Employers should consider integrating these non-financial incentives into their reward systems, as they may strengthen employee morale, reduce stress, and further enhance overall job performance. This balanced approach would help sustain a positive and resilient work environment.

Table 4

Extent of Coping Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Appraisal-Focused Strategy

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. I usually face the problem with a positive attitude	4.66	Very Great
2. I keep my emotion when my superior/subordinate annoys me	3.90	Great
3. I pretend to be listening to the instructions of my superior	2.34	Low
4. I distance myself from the problem or challenge	2.31	Low
5. I make instant decisions when I feel pressured at work	2.78	Moderate
6. I usually change my way of thinking to solve the problem	3.75	Great
7. I delegate tasks such as taking of minutes of the session every time I feel pressures at work	2.75	Moderate
8. I take short vacation or break to temporarily divert my attention	3.32	Moderate
9. I entertain thoughts of taking a break	3.61	Great
10. I take no responsibility of my staff's conduct	1.96	Low
Overall	3.07	Moderate

The results indicate that, on average, the respondents exhibit a moderate level of coping strategy in terms of the appraisal-focused strategy, with a mean value of 3.07. Notably, item 1, "I usually face the problem with a positive attitude," scored the highest, with a mean value of 4.66, reflecting a very great level of coping strategy. This suggests that a majority of the respondents frequently employ a positive outlook when confronting challenges. The findings were further supported by insights from the focus group discussion, where many secretaries expressed that they tend to prioritize tasks that yield greater benefits, rather than dwelling on the problem at hand. This approach reflects a proactive coping strategy that helps them manage their stressors more effectively.

These results align with the findings of Horowitz and McIntosh (2018), which suggest that a positive attitude toward stress, including the ability to manage emotions constructively, helps individuals reduce the harmful effects of stress, such as panic attacks and anxiety. When individuals adopt a positive mindset, they are less likely to be overwhelmed by stress and more capable of managing it in a healthy way.

The findings imply that a positive approach to problem-solving is a key coping mechanism for secretaries to the sanggunian. The high mean value for facing problems with a positive attitude highlights the importance of fostering a constructive mindset in the workplace, as it allows individuals to effectively navigate stress without becoming overwhelmed. This suggests that training programs or interventions aimed at enhancing emotional resilience and promoting a positive outlook could be beneficial for improving employees' coping strategies. Encouraging secretaries to prioritize productive tasks over stress-inducing issues may also improve overall performance and well-being.

Additionally, the connection between a positive attitude and reduced stress, as noted by Horowitz and McIntosh, suggests that interventions focusing on emotional regulation could be particularly useful for individuals working in high-pressure environments. By equipping secretaries with the tools to manage their emotions effectively, organizations can help mitigate the negative impacts of stress, promoting both personal well-being and professional effectiveness.

Table 5

Extent of Coping Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Problem-Focused Strategy

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. Work overtime to finish your work	3.89	Great
2. Attend seminar to enhance our skills and acquire knowledge	4.29	Very Great
3. Use assessment strategies to identify problems	3.96	Great
4. Evaluate performance of the staff	4.11	Great
5. Perform analysis of courses of action in providing solution to the problem	4.14	Great
6. Request additional personnel or consultants to perform tasks or provide solution to the problem	3.46	Moderate
7. Reprimand office staff that caused the problem	3.24	Moderate
8. Delegate workload to staff	3.86	Great
9. Create strategies to handle problems	4.31	Great
10. Provide solution rather than avoiding problems	4.48	Great
Overall	3.88	Great

The findings indicate that, with a mean value of 3.88, the respondents predominantly utilize a problem-focused coping strategy to address stress. Among the various items, "Provide solution rather than avoiding the problem" stands out with the highest mean value of 4.29, suggesting that this particular approach is the most frequently employed by the respondents. This highlights a strong inclination towards actively confronting challenges and seeking practical solutions rather than avoiding them. The results from the focus group discussion further support this, with the majority of secretaries affirming that reading and researching are essential practices for defending their work, decisions, and opinions when necessary.

This reliance on problem-focused coping strategies implies that the secretaries to the sanggunian are likely to demonstrate a proactive approach when managing work-related stress, preferring to tackle challenges head-on rather than resorting to avoidance behaviors. By prioritizing solution-oriented methods, such as seeking information or enhancing their knowledge, these employees may be better equipped to handle the demands of their roles effectively. This insight suggests that fostering an environment that encourages problem-solving, continued learning, and professional development could further enhance the secretaries' coping abilities and overall performance. Furthermore, investing in resources like research tools or training programs could empower employees to refine their problem-solving strategies, ultimately benefiting their productivity and well-being.

Table 6

Extent of Coping Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian in terms of Emotion-Focused Strategy

Content	Mean	Interpretation
1. Take a vacation	3.10	Moderate
2. Assert ideas prudently	3.68	Great
3. Suppress emotion to one's self in order not to avoid burden to others	3.14	Moderate
4. Express emotion calmly and constructively	3.96	Great
5. Watch movies/television, listen to music and relax	3.86	Great
6. Spend leisure time with office staff/family	3.90	Great
7. Confide emotions to staff or colleague	3.38	Moderate
8. Take a coffee break	3.72	Great
9. Take time to drive or walk and hang-out with friends	3.59	Great
10. Connect with friends on social media	3.45	Moderate
Overall	3.61	Great

The results for the emotion-focused strategy revealed that the respondents exhibit a strong use of coping strategies, with an overall mean value of 3.61, indicating that they frequently rely on emotion-focused strategies. Out of the 10 items, 6 were rated as "great" and 4 as "moderate." Notably, item 4, "Express emotion calmly and constructively," scored the highest with a mean of 3.90, suggesting that the respondents particularly emphasize maintaining composure while expressing their emotions. These findings imply that a significant majority of the secretaries to the sanggunian utilize emotion-focused strategies to manage stress, focusing on processing and expressing their emotions in a controlled and constructive manner.

The high mean score for the emotion-focused strategy highlights that emotional regulation is a key coping mechanism for the secretaries to the sanggunian. This suggests that when faced with stressful situations, they are more likely

to manage their emotions rather than suppress or avoid them, which is essential for long-term well-being and professional performance. According to Horowitz and McIntosh (2018), emotion-focused coping can be highly effective in the short term, particularly when it helps individuals acknowledge and address their emotions directly. This implies that providing emotional intelligence training, which enhances awareness of one's feelings and promotes healthy expression of emotions, could be beneficial for secretaries in managing work-related stress.

Moreover, encouraging emotional regulation in the workplace may help reduce the harmful effects of stress, such as burnout and frustration, by fostering a more supportive and balanced work environment. Organizations could consider integrating strategies that allow employees to express emotions constructively, ultimately improving overall mental health and job satisfaction. Providing resources or workshops on emotional resilience and mindfulness could further strengthen these coping strategies, leading to enhanced work performance and a healthier work culture.

Table 7
Level of Work Performance of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Work Performance	Mean	Interpretation
Quality	4.32	High Level
Efficiency	4.29	High Level
Timeliness	4.29	High Level
Overall	4.29	High Level

In order to measure the work performance of the secretaries of the sanggunian, a 5-point likert scale was also used with values ranging from 1-5 which corresponds to a poor, unsatisfactory, satisfactory, very satisfactory and outstanding performance. The respondents are scored in terms of the three areas namely, quality, efficiency and timeliness.

As shown in the table, in terms of quality the respondents scored a mean value of 4.32 which corresponds to a quality of work which is at high level. In terms of efficiency, the respondents were also scored as high level having a mean value of 4.29. In addition, in terms of timeliness, a mean value of 4.29 was produced which indicate that respondents' rating is at high level.

Generally, the work performance of the respondents is at high level having a mean value of 4.29. The result implies that organizational climate is a major predictor of the quality and outcomes on the services of the secretaries to the sanggunian. This has been supported by the study of Johnson (2012) as cited in the study of Galang (2015) which explains that attitudes shared by the employees about their work environment are important determinants of the organization's effectiveness, it was concluded that the organizational climate had positive effect on both process and results. The study of Bednar (2008) as cited by Castillo (2015) supplements the findings of this study with similar results; apparently employee's perceptions of the workplace and their roles in that workplace can have an influence on client's services.

Table 8
Relational Analysis between Work Performance and Overall Level of Stress of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Variables	Rho-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Interpretation
Work Performance	0.146	0.43	0.05	Positive
Overall Level of Stress				Weak
				Not Significant

The implication of this result is that the study found no significant relationship between the work performance and the overall level of stress among secretaries to the sanggunian, as the p-value of 0.43 is greater than the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that, for this result, stress does not appear to strongly affect the work performance of the secretaries. The weak positive association indicated by the rho-value of 0.146 further reinforces this conclusion, showing that any impact of stress on work performance is minimal. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant relationship between these variables, is not rejected. This finding implies that other factors, aside from stress, might play a more substantial role in influencing work performance, or that the stress experienced by secretaries does not have a significant detrimental effect on their work outcomes in this context.

Table 9
Relational Analysis between Work Performance and Appraisal-Focused Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Variables	Rho-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Interpretation
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Work Performance				Positive
	0.224	0.225	0.05	Weak
Appraisal-Focused Strategy				Not Significant

As presented in Table 9, the p-value of 0.225 is greater than the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the relationship between work performance and the use of appraisal-focused coping strategies is not statistically significant. Additionally, the rho-value of 0.224 suggests a weak positive association between these two variables. As a result, the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no significant relationship between work performance and appraisal-focused coping strategies among the secretaries to the sanggunian, cannot be rejected. This implies that appraisal-focused coping strategies, which involve evaluating and reframing stressors in a positive light, do not significantly impact the work performance of secretaries to the sanggunian in this study. Although there is a slight positive relationship, it is weak and does not have a meaningful effect on their work outcomes. This suggests that other factors, such as different coping strategies, personal characteristics, or organizational variables, might play a more significant role in influencing work performance. The results highlight the need for further research to explore alternative coping mechanisms or other influences that may more strongly affect performance in the workplace.

Table 10
Relational Analysis between Work Performance and Problem-Focused Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Variables	Rho-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Interpretation
Work Performance				Positive
	0.355	0.05	0.05	Moderate
Problem-Focused Strategy				Significant

As shown in Table 10, the p-value of 0.05 indicates statistical significance, and the association between work performance and problem-focused coping strategies is positive and moderate, as evidenced by the rho-value of 0.355. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posited that there is no significant relationship between work performance and the use of problem-focused strategies among the secretaries to the sanggunian, is rejected.

The findings imply that problem-focused coping strategies, which involve addressing and solving the root causes of stressors, have a moderate but significant positive impact on the work performance of secretaries to the sanggunian. This suggests that secretaries who are able to actively tackle and resolve work-related challenges tend to perform better in their roles. The result highlights the importance of equipping employees with problem-solving skills and supporting them in addressing stressors directly, as it can lead to improved job performance. It also suggests that workplace interventions aimed at enhancing problem-focused coping may be beneficial in enhancing productivity and efficiency among secretaries.

Table 11
Relational Analysis between Work Performance and Emotion-Focused Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Variables	Rho-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Interpretation
Work Performance				Positive
	0.205	0.269	0.05	Weak
Emotion-Focused Strategy				Not Significant

As presented in Table 11, the p-value of 0.269 exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between work performance and emotion-focused coping strategies is not statistically significant. The association, as reflected by the rho-value of 0.205, is positive but weak. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no significant relationship between work performance and emotion-focused strategies among the secretaries to the sanggunian, is not rejected.

The findings suggest that while there is a positive association between emotion-focused coping strategies and work performance, the relationship is weak and not statistically significant. This indicates that using emotion-focused strategies, which involve managing emotional responses to stress rather than addressing the stressor directly, may not have a strong or direct impact on the work performance of secretaries to the sanggunian. The results imply that while emotional regulation might help individuals cope with stress, it does not necessarily translate into improved work outcomes in this context. Thus, organizations may need to focus more on problem-focused coping strategies or a combination of both coping types to foster better performance.

Table 12

Relational Analysis between Work Performance and Overall Extent of Coping Strategy of the Secretaries to the Sanggunian

Variables	Rho-Value	P-Value	Significance Level	Interpretation
Work Performance	0.098	0.599	0.05	Positive Weak
Overall Extent of Stress				Not Significant

As shown in the table below, the p-value of 0.599 exceeds the 0.05 significance threshold, indicating that the relationship between work performance and the overall extent of coping strategies is not statistically significant. The association, as indicated by the rho-value of 0.098, is positive but weak. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no significant relationship between work performance and the overall extent of coping strategies among the secretaries to the sanggunian, is not rejected.

The results suggest that, although there is a weak positive association between the overall extent of coping strategies and work performance, this relationship is not statistically significant. This implies that the coping strategies employed by secretaries to the sanggunian may not significantly influence their work performance. While coping strategies can help mitigate stress, they may not directly enhance job outcomes in this particular context. The weak association could be attributed to the complexity of factors influencing performance, such as organizational support, workload, or individual differences, which might be more influential than coping strategies alone. Therefore, it may be necessary to explore other variables that could have a more substantial impact on performance or to examine whether specific coping strategies, such as problem-focused strategies, could have a more pronounced effect on work performance.

Conclusions

The study concluded that there was no significant difference in the level of stress based on environmental, organizational, and personal factors when respondents were grouped by demographic profile. However, secretaries to the sanggunian experienced low levels of stress overall, with notable exceptions, including high stress levels related to the use of electronic systems for legislative tracking, lack of staff, and insufficient take-home pay, which contributed to feelings of burnout. The study also found that secretaries who were older, with longer public service experience and graduate degrees, may have more stable psychological profiles. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between stress in environmental factors and problem-focused coping strategies, but no significant relationships were observed between stress, coping strategies, and work performance. This suggests that lower stress levels may reduce the need for coping strategies, while effective coping may enhance work performance. Overall, the study concluded that the secretaries' low stress levels and high work performance were largely attributed to their effective use of coping strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations were made to benefit secretaries to the sanggunian, Human Resources Management Officers (HRMOs) of Local Government Units (LGUs), Vice Mayors, members of the sanggunian, and Municipal Mayors. The researcher recommends that HRMOs expand the study on stress to include a broader range of LGU employees to better understand the prevalence of stress. The study identified a significant issue with the lack of competent staff, particularly in legislative and technical writing roles, suggesting that Vice Mayors should ensure that staff not only meet minimum qualifications but also possess additional capabilities to contribute effectively. To improve wellness, it is recommended that the sanggunian pass measures promoting the health and stress-free environment of their staff, and that secretaries holding permanent positions be politically insulated. Building rapport between the sanggunian members and staff can be achieved through capability-building workshops and team-building activities, strengthening relationships and enhancing legislative effectiveness. Additionally, Municipal Mayors are encouraged to allocate resources for programs that promote employees' moral, spiritual, and personal well-being, ensuring a stress-free work environment. A proposed performance enhancement program, which addresses the needs of the secretaries, is recommended for long-term sustainability. This program should include mechanisms for solving identified problems, with a focus on improving overall employee welfare and organizational performance.

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