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Military and school personnel psychological states amidst the Pandemic: A Kruskal-Wallis comparative analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress among Military and School Personnel.

Method - Quantitative descriptive-comparative research design was used. There are 147 respondents participated in this study.

Result - Compassion Satisfaction levels of Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were Average, while for the Military-Officer and Non-Teaching School Personnel were High; Burnout for the Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were both Average, while the Military-Officer and Non-Teaching School Personnel were both low; and the Secondary Traumatic Stress was Low for the Military-Officer and Average to other three groups of respondents. Significant differences manifested after employing the parametric test MANOVA and non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis. Post Hoc test was employed in order to identify the specific significant differences.

Implication – The researchers have identified significant pattern and trends that contribute to the understanding of comparison, personnel who are less often directly exposed to the clients have better Psychological States descriptively.

Originality - This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the areas of Compassion, Burnout and Stress experienced by militaries and educators in the conduct of their respective public services.

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Keywords:

Belas kasih, kelelahan, stres, kesehatan mental.

Abstrak

Tujuan - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui Kepuasan Belas Kasih, Burnout, dan Stres Trauma Sekunder di antara Personel Militer dan Sekolah, serta untuk membandingkan kondisi-kondisi psikologis tersebut.

Metode - Desain penelitian deskriptif-komparatif kuantitatif digunakan. Ada 147 responden yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini.

Hasil - Tingkat Kepuasan Belas Kasih pada Tamtama Militer dan Tenaga Pengajar tergolong sedang, sedangkan pada Perwira Militer dan Tenaga Kependidikan tergolong tinggi; Burnout pada Tamtama Militer dan Tenaga Pengajar tergolong sedang, sedangkan pada Perwira Militer dan Tenaga Kependidikan tergolong rendah; dan Stres Traumatis Sekunder tergolong rendah pada Tamtama Militer dan tergolong sedang pada tiga kelompok responden lainnya. Perbedaan yang signifikan terlihat setelah menggunakan uji parametrik MANOVA dan non parametrik Kruskal-Wallis. Uji Post Hoc digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi perbedaan signifikan yang spesifik,

Implikasi - Para peneliti telah mengidentifikasi pola dan tren signifikan yang berkontribusi pada pemahaman perbandingan, personel yang lebih jarang terpapar langsung dengan klien memiliki kondisi psikologis yang lebih baik secara deskriptif.

Originalitas - Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengetahuan yang sudah ada di bidang Welas Asih, Kelelahan dan Stres yang dialami oleh militer dan pendidik dalam melaksanakan layanan publik masing-masing.

Introduction

The World Health Organization declared the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a pandemic (*WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020*, 2020). In the Philippines, as a result of the Covid-19 threat, then President Rodrigo declared a nationwide public health emergency, and the Department of Health (DOH) issued Code Red (Sub-level 2) alerts (*Proclamation No. 922 s. 2020 | GOVPH*, 2020). Following that, community quarantines and strict social distancing were implemented, requiring residents to remain at home, involving checkpoints, travel restrictions, curfews, and the closure of numerous establishments, including schools, malls, and other commercial establishments (Praveen, 2020).

Early reports of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines noted moderate-to-severe anxiety, moderate-to-severe stress, and moderate-to-severe depression, in addition to the psychological effects of the outbreak, which included the presence of particular physical symptoms (such as headache, cough, and chills), a feeling of being overly concerned about COVID-19, worries about family members becoming ill, and a feeling of being discriminated against by other countries (Tee et al., 2020). Similar to what Lakhan et al., 2020 reported in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with greater rates of depression, anxiety, stress, sleep issues, and psychological discomfort in the general population. Izumi & Shaw (2022) underscore that the loss of money, stress on one's mental health, and loss of social connections are some of the long-term effects of the COVID-19 epidemic.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and their members assisted authorities with logistical and medical support. They were tasked to transport medical supplies, establish field hospitals, distribute personal protective equipment, and providing medical equipment and personnel, among other things. Aside from that, military personnel were tasked to enforce lockdowns or perform other tasks such as disinfecting public areas and conducting Covid-19 testing. This is a manifestation how relevant and difficult the tasks assigned for these frontliners, aside from protecting the people, they must protect themselves, including their families and loved ones but it is inevitable for them to avoid being infected. This situation may not only cause physiological fatigue but psychological burden as well. Frontline workers in this global pandemic have faced higher chances of catching the virus themselves and passing it on to their loved ones, especially in health and care settings, emergency services, and community supply chains (Liu et al., 2020). Dealing with infected patients can result in significant emotional stress, high anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for frontline workers based on experience with prior epidemics (Chersich et al., 2020)

The Department of Education (DepEd), the agency in-charge in managing the Philippine basic education, predominantly in the public-schools system, though it has regulating authority over the private schools. DepEd adopts Basic Education Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) as the framework of education amidst the pandemic

(DepEd, 2020). Education should shift from traditional face-to-face instruction to any available and suitable learning mode (Relleve, 2022b). Schools, teachers and personnel then ran into issues with their abilities and understanding of the new teaching and learning delivery, communication with students, parents, and other stakeholders, internet connectivity, gadgets, familiarity with the features of the Learning Management System (LMS), time management, monitoring, and student availability, stress brought on by the community quarantine, due dates for submissions, and demands from higher offices (Alea et al., 2020). These required adjustments and changes may lead to additional stress and apprehension to school staff, both teaching and non-teaching who are considered frontliners of education.

Receiving help and providing help to others were both significant predictors of mental health, but providing help was a more significant predictor of better reported mental health than receiving help because some people may experience positive emotions when working hard and seeing how their efforts benefit others (Schwartz et al., 2003). Compassion is a fundamental professional principle, the profound feelings and experiences widened one's understanding of compassionate care and sparked a development of one's professional identity (Nijboer & Van der Cingel, 2019).

However, no matter how compassionate or altruistic a person is, experiencing fatigue is inevitable particularly on service-oriented jobs. Compassion fatigue, and other forms of psychological/emotional discomfort exist across varied practitioner groups and can have a major influence on professional practice and workforce (Cavanagh et al., 2020). Military personnel are not excluded on this, as stated in the study of Best et al., (2020) because of additional stressors, such as frequent environmental changes and other required services, military particularly providers are highly susceptible to acquiring compassion fatigue. Likewise, school personnel are susceptible in developing compassion fatigue particularly during the pandemic (Ormiston et al., 2022).

In the study of Antonovsky et al. (2022) burnout was also experienced by the home front command soldiers during the pandemic. A comparative study on the burnout was also conduct by Martínez-Cuazitl et al. (2022), significant difference exists between military personnel and civilians at the conclusion of the first wave

and during the third wave, with civilians being the most impacted, in terms of military rank, significant disparities were only discovered during the first wave, with bosses being the most impacted.

In the educational setting, teachers with greater stress loads and more psychophysical signs of discomfort had higher rates of professional burnout, findings highlight the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the teaching staff and support the creation of intervention strategies to protect professionals' health (Vargas Rubilar & Oros, 2021).

In reaction to the COVID-19 epidemic, nations all across the world have deployed their armed forces (Kalkman, 2021). Military personnel have been a major task force in the fight against COVID-19, which has put a strain on their mental health, given that they are already at risk (such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD) in times other than pandemics, the added workload and stress caused by COVID-19 may increase the likelihood of psychological distress (Guo et al., 2020).

Educators report increased levels of behavioral, psychological, and physical stress symptoms, yet many are unwilling to talk to their employers about their worries (Eddy et al., 2020). Numerous educators reported having high or relatively high levels of stress, the main stressors were uncertainty about the pandemic's effects, work overload, and an unsuitable work environment, the more stress they felt, the more unwelcome psychophysical symptoms appeared (Vargas Rubilar & Oros, 2021).

The present study aims to determine the Professional Quality of Life among Military and School Personnel, as well as to compare these as they performed their noble services amidst the pandemic.

Research Methods

This study used a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design. Data were collected via an online survey which was determined appropriate in light of the Community Quarantine restrictions. The data were gathered from one of the premier science high schools in the country and military personnel stationed in Luzon area. Respondents of this study included individuals 22 years of age and

older, teaching, and non-teaching personnel, military officers, and enlisted personnel. Informed consent to use the data for this specific study was solicited prior to the start of the actual tools. The online survey gathered a total of 148 responses. However, one response was disqualified because the date stamp and a particular response was not aligned with the truthfulness of the response made. Detailed distribution of the respondents is presented below:

Table 1. Respondents of the Study

Designation	Counts	% of Total
Military Personnel- Enlisted Personnel	71	48.3 %
Military Personnel- Officer	30	20.4 %
School Personnel - Non-Teaching	17	11.6 %
School Personnel - Teaching	29	19.7 %

Research Instrument

A Professional Quality of Life Scale version 5 (ProQol) was used to measure the participants’ Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout and Secondary traumatic stress. Compassion satisfaction can be described as the degree of enjoyment after helping others. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to one’s ability to be effective in a job. The next two subscales are components of a concept called compassion fatigue. The first component is called Burnout. Burnout is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. It is important to note that burnout, unlike secondary traumatic stress, increases gradually and can go unnoticed when not given attention to. Burnout can be reflected when one feels that efforts make no difference, or it can be linked with a very high workload and/or belonging to a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that a person has a higher risk for burnout. The second component is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is described when a helper is exposed to another person who is undergoing extremely stressful events. In other words, when a helper is affected by the stressful circumstances by the people, he/she is giving assistance to. Hence, the

“secondary” nature of traumatic stress. Higher scores in this subscale are an indicator that one is affected too much by the people and circumstance he or she is giving assistance to whether voluntarily or as part of the regular tasks and responsibilities. A person with a high score needs to evaluate how one feels about the work and/or work environment.

Data collection procedure and ethical considerations

The research instruments used in this study were transferred and administered through Google Forms, this was used by the researchers to collect data. Following a formal inquiry from the administrators of the two institutions, the researchers identified the respondent by convenient sampling and later sent a letter of approval containing information about the study, such as the objectives, the participants' roles, and the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the data. The researchers assured these institutions that no identifying information such as names and emails will not be collected. After obtaining approval, the researcher conducted the survey by sending a link to the individuals who had been identified as respondents. The responses were collated by Google Forms into a spreadsheet.

Statistical Treatments

Descriptive Statistics such as frequency, percentage and standard deviation were used in order to give succinct description of the variables used in this study. In the Inferential Statistics the supposed treatment in the conceptualization is one-way-MANOVA. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is used to compare group with more than one dependent variables (Smith et al., 2020). In this study, the designation serves as the comparative group while psychological states: Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Traumatic Stress. In order to ensure if the parametric test could be used, test of assumptions was conducted using Shapiro-Wilk Multivariate Normality Test and Box's Homogeneity of Covariance Matrices Test. When the violation of assumptions was realized, and the Univariate Test was automatically revealed by the Statistical Software, the non-parametric One-way Kruskal was employed, after the significant differences were

found Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Fligner Test was used for pairwise comparisons. All data were analyze using Jamovi Version 2.3.21.0 (*Jamovi - Stats. Open. Now.*, n.d.)

Results and Discussions

Table 2. Level of Professional Quality of Life of the Respondents

Professional Quality of Life	Designation	Mean	Description/ Level	SD
Compassion Satisfaction	Military - Enlisted	39.5	Average	6.96
	Military - Officer	43.4	High	5.47
	Non-Teaching Personnel	41.5	High	5.98
	Teaching Personnel	39.4	Average	4.92
Burnout	Military - Enlisted	23.1	Average	4.93
	Military - Officer	19	Low	4.84
	Non-Teaching Personnel	19.2	Low	3.96
	Teaching Personnel	25	Average	6.24
Secondary Traumatic Stress	Military - Enlisted	25.1	Average	6.99
	Military - Officer	20.6	Low	6.24
	Non-Teaching Personnel	23.1	Average	4.68
	Teaching Personnel	26.2	Average	6.07

Psychological States of the respondents which such as Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress are presented in Table 2. It can be gleaned that the Military Officer and Non-Teaching Personnel in the School have High level of Compassion Satisfaction similarly they also score Low in Burnout, while for the Secondary Traumatic Stress it is only the Military-Officer got Low and the rest of respondents which are distributed by designation have Average Level.

Table 3: Test of Significant Differences in the Psychological States of the respondents using One-way MANOVA

		value	F	df1	df2	p
Designation	Pillai's Trace	0.231	3.98	9	429	< .001
	Wilks' Lambda	0.779	4.12	9	343	< .001
	Hotelling's Trace	0.271	4.20	9	419	< .001
	Roy's Largest Root	0.210	9.99	3	143	< .001

Table 4. Univariate Test

	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Designation	Compassion Satisfaction	367	3	122.3	3.17	0.026
	Burnout	753	3	250.9	9.64	< .001
	Secondary Traumatic Stress	572	3	190.8	4.60	0.004
Residuals	Compassion Satisfaction	5514	143	38.6		
	Burnout	3721	143	26.0		
	Secondary Traumatic Stress	5928	143	41.5		

Presented in Table 3, the result of Multivariate Analysis of Variance, which was automatically followed by Univariate Test. This is an initial test to compare the psychological states of the respondents when group according to designation. As can be observed significant difference (p-value < 0.01) exist among the psychological states of the respondents with the One-way MANOVA, similarly for the Univariate Test: Compassion Satisfaction $F=3.17$, $p\ 0.026$; Burnout $F=9.64$, $p < .001$; and Secondary Traumatic Stress $F=4.60$ $p\ 0.004$, all the Psychological States are below 0.05, but in order to test if there are no violation of assumptions the Shapiro-Wilk and Box's Homogeneity of Covariance were tested. The following results were generated:

Table 5. Shapiro-Wilk Multivariate Normality Test

W	p
0.927	< .001

As can be gleaned in Table 4, Shapiro-Wilk test was showed that the distribution of departed significantly from normality ($W = 0.927$, p-value < 0.01).

Table 6. Box's Homogeneity Test

χ^2	df	p
31.6	18	0.025

Similarly, a violation in the assumption of homogeneity of variance as reflected in Table 4 of Box's M Test ($\chi^2 = 31.6$, p-value 0.025)

Table 7: Test of Significant Differences in the Psychological States of the respondents using Kruskal-Wallis

	χ^2	df	p
Compassion Satisfaction	10.3	3	0.016
Burnout	24.3	3	< .001
Secondary Traumatic Stress	13.6	3	0.003

Reflected in Table 6, the significant differences exist in all the psychological states of the military and school personnel at 0.05 level of significance, thus Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Fligner Test was employed for pairwise comparisons.

Table 8. Pairwise Comparisons of Compassion Satisfaction

Designation	Mean	Designation	Mean	W	p
Military -Enlisted	39.5	Military - Officer	43.4	3.827	0.034*
		Non-Teaching	41.5	1.662	0.643
		Teaching Personnel	39.4	-0.339	0.995
Military- Officer	43.4	Non-Teaching	41.5	-1.538	0.697
		Teaching Personnel	39.4	-3.998	0.024*
Non-Teaching	41.5	Teaching Personnel	39.4	-2.340	0.348

As can be seen in Table 7, significant difference on the compassion satisfaction of Military Personnel Officer and Enlisted $W=3.827$, p 0.034 at 0.05 level of significance. Officers have high compassion as described in Table 2 while the enlisted is Average. The role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines during the Pandemic Covid-19 was very crucial, including but not limited to the following: transportation of medical equipment and supplies, helped civilians in transporting in their home provinces, distribution of food packs, cash donation from the portion of their salary and deployment of medical doctors, nurses and other medical personnel in the Covid 19 treatment and quarantine facilities (Nepomuceno, 2020). The difference with the Military Personnel might be due to the fact that it

is usual for the enlisted to be in the field, wherein the possibility of cumulative exposure in the ground work alleviate compassion though not totally become compassionless (Berzoff & Kita, 2010).

Compassion Satisfaction of Military Personnel – Officer and School Personnel – Teaching are significantly different $W = -3.998$, $p = 0.024$. Referring to Table 2 descriptive value the Compassion of the Officer is High and Teacher is Average. Just like the enlisted personnel, teachers are the front liner of education, due to Pandemic Covid 19, there are changes in the delivery of learning (Relleve, 2022a) that might affect teachers compassion due to the concern of how to ensure learning of the students.

Table 9. Pairwise Comparisons of Burnout

Designation	Mean	Designation	Mean	W	p
Military-Enlisted	23.1	Military-Officer	19.0	-5.186	0.001*
		Non-Teaching	19.2	-4.292	0.013*
		Teaching Personnel	25.0	1.943	0.516
Military - Officer	19.0	Non-Teaching	19.2	0.330	0.996
		Teaching Personnel	25.0	5.105	0.002*
Non-Teaching	19.2	Teaching Personnel	25.0	4.380	0.011*

Reflected in Table 8 are significant differences on the Burnout of the following respondents: Enlisted Military Personnel and Officer $W = -5.186$, $p = 0.001$; Enlisted and Non-Teaching school personnel $W = -4.292$, $p = 0.013$; Military Officer and Teachers $W = 5.105$, $p = 0.002$; and Non-Teaching and Teaching School Personnel $W = 4.380$, $p = 0.011$. Similarly, patterns can be seen in this Psychological State the Military-Officer and Non-Teaching Personnel have Low level of burnout while the Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel have Average burnout (refer to Table 2). Military-Enlisted personnel are trained to adapt to dangerous circumstances, they are nonetheless susceptible to the psychological effects of protracted operations and ongoing risk, the additional stress brought on by the COVID-19 at work may

make it more likely for soldiers to experience psychological problems, such as burnout (Africa & Aganan, 2022). Burnout has affected teachers, who are the front-line educators, as they attempt to give teaching and learning (Gómez-Domínguez et al., 2022)

Table 10. Pairwise Comparisons of Secondary Traumatic Stress

Designation	Mean	Designation	Mean	W	p
Military- Enlisted	25.1	Military- Officer	20.6	-4.173	0.017*
		Non- Teaching Personnel	23.1	-1.910	0.531
		Teaching Personnel	26.2	0.996	0.896
Military - Officer	20.6	Non- Teaching Personnel	23.1	2.027	0.479
Military - Officer		Teaching Personnel	26.2	4.638	0.006*
Non-Teaching	23.1	Teaching Personnel	26.2	2.824	0.189

It can be gleaned in Table 9 that there is a significant difference between the Secondary Traumatic Stress of the Military-Enlisted and Military Officer $W = 4.173$, $p 0.017$, likewise significant difference also manifested between Military Officer and Teaching Personnel $W=4.638$, $p 0.006$. Military Officer have Low level of Secondary Traumatic Stress while Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel both have Average level (refer to table 2). Though the military-enlisted and teachers have different roles during the pandemic they were both soaked in increasing number of working hours just to cope with the demand of their work which is not conventional to them unlike the setting during the pre-pandemic. A higher risk of secondary traumatic stress may happen when employees worked more hours per day and overtime during the week (Cuthrell et al., 2022)

Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into Psychological States of Military and School personnel who are also considered as frontliners during the Pandemic Covid-19, the former through the rapid mobilization of relevant resources and enforcing lockdown, while latter is for the educational crisis. Through a comparative analysis of the respondents professional quality of life, the following conclusions were drawn: Compassion Satisfaction levels of Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were Average, while for the Military-Officer and Non-Teaching School Personnel were High; Burnout for the Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were both Average, while the Military-Officer and Non-Teaching School Personnel were both low; and the Secondary Traumatic Stress was Low for the Military-Officer and Average to other three groups of respondents. Significant differences manifested after employing the parametric test MANOVA and non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis. Post Hoc test was employed in order to identify the specific significant differences, and results revealed that Military Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were both significantly different to Military-Officer in the level of Compassion Satisfaction; Military-Enlisted and Teaching Personnel were both significantly different to Military-Officer and Non-Teaching Personnel as regard to Burnout Level; and for the comparison of Secondary Traumatic Stress the Military-Enlisted and Teaching-Personnel were both significantly different to Military-Officer. The researchers have identified significant pattern and trends that contribute to the understanding of comparison, personnel who are less often directly exposed to the clients have better Psychological States. Overall, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the areas of Compassion, Burnout and Stress experienced by militaries and educators in the conduct of their respective public services. Hoping that intensification of institutional supports for the overall well-being of these serving personnel may further recognize. Limitations are being acknowledged by the researchers such as investigating other possible variables like resiliency, personality, motivation, social support, demography and workplace situations which may influence and/or may serve as intervening or confounding variables which may be considered by future researchers.

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