

Job-Related Stressors and Coping Strategies of Social Workers in Isabela Province

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Abstract. This study examined the job-related stressors and coping strategies of social workers in Isabela to inform the development of more effective support systems and interventions that enhance their well-being and effectiveness. Using a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, data were gathered from 30 licensed social workers in the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices. Results showed that overall job-related stress levels were generally low, reflecting strong resilience and adaptability. Demographic factors, including sex, age, civil status, and years of service, did not significantly influence overall stress levels. However, single social workers reported feeling more concern and helplessness in specific situations than their married peers. Coping strategies were effective across the group, with men preferring relaxation and recreational activities, while married workers and those with 6 to 10 years of service more often used problem-solving approaches and religiosity. These findings emphasize the value of developing stress management programs that consider individual differences to support social workers more effectively. Future research could explore other factors that influence stress and coping, or examine long-term trends to strengthen workplace interventions.

Keywords: Coping strategies; Job-related stressors; Resilience; Social workers; Stress management; Support systems.

1.0 Introduction

Social work is a recognized profession in the Philippines, with practitioners working across various government and non-government settings (Price & Artaraz, 2013). The profession focuses on improving the welfare of Filipinos through anti-poverty initiatives and development programs aimed at enhancing social functioning (Look Upgrade, 2019; Price & Artaraz, 2013). Social work emphasizes building strong relationships with clients to provide practical and psychological assistance (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2011).

Many individuals enter the field of social work with a deep desire to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. While rewarding, social work is also widely recognized as demanding and emotionally challenging (Krukenberg, 2019). Social workers often face significant stress due to the complex nature of their roles. Tan (2017) describes work stress as a reaction to job-related pressures that can lead to harmful effects. Research highlights that social work is a particularly stressful field, often due to role conflict between advocating for clients and meeting agency requirements. This conflict can result in social workers feeling personally or professionally responsible for failing to meet societal expectations (Lloyd et al., 2011). Such pressures increase the risk of burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of reduced personal accomplishment (Krukenberg, 2019).

Additionally, social workers are frequently exposed to cases involving abuse, violence, neglect, and other traumatic situations. Their work may include responding to physical or sexual assault cases, injury or death, suicidal ideation, and bereavement, which heightens their risk of secondary trauma (Krukenberg, 2019). These emotional demands, combined with practical challenges, underscore the high-stress nature of the profession. Stress in social work has been linked to factors such as role ambiguity, mismatches between professional ideals and work realities, and personal vulnerabilities typical among those drawn to the field (Lloyd et al., 2011). Although existing research is limited, available evidence shows that social workers consistently report high levels of stress and burnout. Beer (2016) reinforces this by noting that social work faces rising demands, inadequate resources, poor staff retention, and negative media portrayals, all of which contribute to workplace stress. Furthermore, the gap between social work ideals and practice reality remains a significant source of stress for many practitioners (Lloyd et al., 2011).

While international studies have explored these issues, there is a limited body of research focusing on the specific experiences of social workers in the Philippines, particularly in regional areas such as Isabela. This lack of local data creates a gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by social workers in this context. To address this gap, this study explores the job-related stressors and coping strategies of social workers in Isabela. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights that can guide the development of better support systems and interventions to enhance the well-being and effectiveness of social workers in the region.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. According to Williams (2007), descriptive research is a method that helps to understand and describe a situation at a specific point in time. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative approach to investigate the job-related stressors and coping strategies of social workers in Isabela Province. It also examined whether significant differences existed in these variables when participants were grouped by sex, age, civil status, and years of service. The cross-sectional design was chosen because it allowed data collection from participants simultaneously, making it a practical and efficient way to address the research objectives.

2.2 Research Participants

The study participants were thirty (30) licensed social workers employed for at least one year in the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices of Isabela province, located in the Cagayan Valley region of Luzon, Philippines. The province comprises six districts, three cities, and thirty-four municipalities. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, as the researcher specifically targeted licensed social workers directly handling community welfare programs. This method ensured that the participants had relevant experience related to the study's focus, providing meaningful data for analysis.

2.3 Research Instruments

The study employed three primary tools to collect data. First, a four-item demographic profile questionnaire was used to collect basic information about participants' sex, age, marital status, and years of service. Second, the researcher constructed a Work Stress Scale (WSS) based on Albrecht's Four Types of Stress to measure job-related stressors. The WSS consisted of 31 items divided into four subscales: time stress, anticipatory stress, situational stress, and encounter stress. Items were presented in both English and Tagalog to ensure clarity and comprehension. Participants answered using a 4-point Likert scale: 1 – Never (Hindi), 2 – Seldom (Minsan), 3 – Often (Madalas), and 4 – Always (Palagi). A pilot test conducted with 30 social workers in Nueva Vizcaya showed strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.925. Third, the study employed the Filipino Coping Strategies Scale, developed by Rilveria (2018), to measure coping strategies. This 37-item tool assessed nine coping strategies commonly used among Filipinos, employing the same 4-point Likert scale as the WSS. Permission to use the scale was obtained from the developer, and its validity and reliability were previously established through extensive testing.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first contacted the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices in Isabela through email, phone, and Messenger to invite potential participants. After receiving approval from the Local Chief Executives and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers, the researcher coordinated with the offices to arrange

data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form. The researcher personally visited the offices of Alicia, Cauayan, Echague, Roxas, San Guillermo, San Isidro, and Santiago City to distribute the questionnaires. Participants first completed the demographic profile section, followed by the Work Stress Scale and Filipino Coping Strategies Scale. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires after the administration.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to describe participants' demographic characteristics, while means and standard deviations were calculated to analyze levels of job-related stress and coping strategies. To examine whether there were significant differences in stressors and coping strategies based on participants' demographic profiles, the researcher used t-tests and one-way ANOVA. Before performing these tests, the researcher checked statistical assumptions, such as normality and variance homogeneity, to ensure the validity of the analysis.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and maintain confidentiality. Ethical approval was obtained from a recognized ethics committee prior to commencing data collection. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and provided written consent before participating. They were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous, with no personal identifiers in the data. All questionnaires were securely stored in a locked cabinet and were properly shredded after the study was completed to ensure data protection and privacy.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of Social Workers

Table 1 presents the distribution of social worker profiles by sex, age, marital status, and years of service.

Table 1. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Social Workers' Profile (n=30)*

Variables	Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	3	10.00
	Female	27	90.00
Age	21 to 35 years old	15	50.00
	36 to 50 years old	13	43.30
	51 to 65 years old	2	6.70
Civil Status	Single	12	40.00
	Married	18	60.00
Number of Years in Service	5 years and below	10	33.30
	6 to 10 years	7	23.30
	11 to 20 years	8	26.70
	21 years and above	5	16.70

As shown in Table 1, out of the 30 social workers, 27 or 90 percent are female, and three (3) or 10 percent are male. As to age, 15 or 50 percent belong to the age group of 21 to 35 years old, 13 or 43.30 percent belong to the age group of 36 to 50 years old, and two (2) or 6.70 percent belong to the age group of 51 to 65 years old. Regarding civil status, 18 or 60 percent are married, and 12 or 40 percent are single. As to the number of years in service, 10 or 33.30 percent have been working for 5 years and below, eight (8) or 26.70 percent for 11 to 20 years, seven (7) or 23.30 percent for 6 to 10 years and five (5) or 16.70 percent for 21 years and above.

3.2 Job-Related Stressors

Social workers' job-related stressors are classified into four categories: time, anticipatory, situational, and encounter.

Time Stressors

As shown in Table 2, the social workers agreed that the following are often time stressors: I always need to finish my tasks alongside the fast pacing at work ($M=3.06$; $SD=0.74$), the nature of my work is challenging and demanding ($M=2.56$; $SD=0.89$) and I am given extra work besides my actual work ($M=2.50$; $SD=0.75$). Social Workers also agreed that the following are seldom time stressors: I always rush to do my work to avoid being late ($M=2.18$; $SD=0.58$), I fear that I would fail in doing my tasks ($M=2.03$; $SD=0.72$), I am given unreasonable deadlines to finish my work ($M=1.91$; $SD=0.87$) and my immediate head gives me too much workloads ($M=1.82$; $SD=0.63$).

With a total mean of 2.29, this implies that social workers experience few job-related time stressors.

Table 2. *Job-Related Stressors of Social Workers in terms of Time Stressors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I always need to finish my tasks alongside the fast pace at work	3.06	0.74	Often
I am given unreasonable deadlines to finish my work	1.91	0.87	Seldom
My immediate boss gives me too much work	1.82	0.63	Seldom
I am given extra work besides my actual work	2.50	0.75	Often
The nature of my work is challenging and demanding	2.56	0.89	Often
I fear that I would fail in doing my tasks	2.03	0.72	Seldom
I always rush to do my work to avoid being late	2.18	0.58	Seldom
Aggerate Result	2.29	0.84	Seldom

Note: Never: 1-1.74; Seldom: 1.75-2.49; Often: 2.50-3.24; Always: 3.25-4.00.

Anticipatory Stressors

As presented in Table 3, the social workers never experienced the following anticipatory stressors: I fear that I would have a hard time talking with our clients ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 0.70$), and I do not think I can do my job ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 0.53$). Meanwhile, social workers seldom experience the following anticipatory stressors: I am always given unexpected tasks ($M=2.24$; $SD=0.70$), I feel anxious on my future presentations and projects ($M=2.21$; $SD=0.69$), I fear that I would not perform well the tasks given to me ($M=1.97$; $SD=0.80$), I fear that I would disappoint my immediate head ($M=1.94$; $SD=0.69$) and I always feel that something will go wrong at work ($M=1.76$; $SD=0.82$). A total mean of 1.87 implies that social workers have few job-related stressors in terms of anticipatory stressors.

Table 3. *Job-Related Stressors of Social Workers in terms of Anticipatory Stressors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I do not think I can do my job	1.32	0.53	Never
I feel anxious about my future presentations and projects	2.21	0.69	Seldom
I am always given unexpected tasks	2.24	0.70	Seldom
I always feel that something will go wrong at work	1.76	0.82	Seldom
I fear that I would have a hard time talking with our clients	1.62	0.70	Never
I fear that I would disappoint my immediate head	1.94	0.69	Seldom
I fear that I would not perform well the tasks given to me	1.97	0.80	Seldom
Aggerate Result	1.87	0.76	Seldom

Situational Stressors

As gleaned for Table 4, the social workers seldom experience the following situational stressors: I get pressured over emergencies ($M=2.35$; 0.92), I feel stressed when I feel I have no control over a situation ($M=2.29$; $SD: 0.80$) and I feel stressed when I do major mistakes in front of my workmates ($M=2.09$; $SD=0.67$). Meanwhile, social worker never experienced the following situational stressors: I feel that my efforts are unappreciated ($M=1.65$; $SD=0.65$), I feel powerless in the decisions made at my department ($M=1.41$; $SD=0.50$), My workmates hate me ($M=1.29$; $SD=0.46$), My workmates do not believe in me ($M=1.26$; $SD=0.45$), I do not like my workmates ($M=1.24$; $SD=0.43$) and I feel I do not belong at my workplace ($M=1.18$; $SD=0.39$). A total mean of 1.64 implies that social workers experience no job-related situational stressors.

Table 4. *Job-Related Stressors of Social Workers in terms of Situational Stressors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I feel stressed when I feel I have no control over a situation	2.29	0.80	Seldom
I get pressured over emergencies	2.35	0.92	Seldom
I feel stressed when I make significant mistakes in front of my workmates	2.09	0.67	Seldom
I feel powerless in the decisions made at my department	1.41	0.50	Never
I feel that my efforts are unappreciated	1.65	0.65	Never
My workmates do not believe in me	1.26	0.45	Never
I do not like my workmates	1.24	0.43	Never
My workmates hate me	1.29	0.46	Never
I feel I do not belong at my workplace	1.18	0.39	Never
Aggerate Result	1.64	0.75	Never

Encounter Stressors

As shown in the Table 5, the social workers seldom experience the following encounter stressors: I feel stressed over very demanding clients at my workplace ($M=2.00$; $SD=0.89$), I always feel anxious talking with dissatisfied client s ($M=2.00$; $SD=0.60$), I do not want to be involved in confrontations with my workmates ($M=1.94$; $SD=0.92$) and I feel stressed after speaking with many clients ($M=1.85$; $SD=0.70$). The social workers also agreed never to

experience the following encounter stressors: I tend to withdraw from people after interacting with them for a long time (M=1.59; SD=0.70), and I feel intimidated being with my immediate head (M=1.53; SD=0.56). A total mean of 1.82 implies that social workers experience few job-related stressors.

Table 5. *Job-Related Stressors of Social Workers in terms of Encounter Stressors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I feel stressed over very demanding clients at my workplace	2.00	0.89	Seldom
I feel intimidated being with my immediate head	1.53	0.56	Never
I do not want to be involved in confrontations with my workmates	1.94	0.92	Seldom
I feel stressed after speaking with many clients	1.85	0.70	Seldom
I always feel anxious talking with dissatisfied clients	2.00	0.60	Seldom
I tend to withdraw from people after interacting with them for a long time	1.59	0.70	Never
Aggregate Result	1.82	0.76	Seldom

3.3 Coping Strategies

As presented in Table 6, the social workers often use the following coping strategies: Cognitive Reappraisal (M=3.13; SD=0.54), Relaxation/Recreational (M=2.88; SD=0.46), Social Support (M=2.76; SD=0.56), and Tolerance (M=2.52; SD=0.61). Social workers always use the following coping strategies: Religiosity (M=3.54; SD=0.62) and Problem Solving (M=3.38; SD=0.54). Social Workers seldom use the following coping strategies: Overactivity (M=2.11; SD=0.44) and Emotional Release (M=1.93; SD=0.37). Social workers never rely on Substance Use (M=1.24; SD=0.43) as their coping strategy. With a total mean of 2.61, this implies that social workers often employ coping strategies.

Table 6. *Coping Strategies of Social Workers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Cognitive Reappraisal (<i>Pagsusuri</i>)	3.13	0.54	Often
Social Support (<i>Paghingi ng Tulong</i>)	2.76	0.56	Often
Problem Solving (<i>Pagtugon</i>)	3.38	0.54	Always
Religiosity (<i>Pagkarelihiyoso</i>)	3.54	0.62	Always
Tolerance (<i>Pagtitiis</i>)	2.52	0.61	Often
Emotional Release (<i>Paglabas ng Saloobin</i>)	1.93	0.37	Seldom
Overactivity (<i>Pagmamalabis</i>)	2.11	0.44	Seldom
Relaxation/Recreational (<i>Paglilibang</i>)	2.88	0.46	Often
Substance Use (<i>Pagbibisyo</i>)	1.24	0.43	Never
Aggregate Result	2.61	0.27	Often

3.4 Relationship Between Job-related Stressors and Profile Variables

Time Stressors

As presented in Table 7, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the time stress for sex and marital status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in the social workers' time stress when they are grouped by age and number of years in service.

Table 7. *Differences in Social Workers' Time Stressors*

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	2.26	0.61	28	0.05	0.957
	Female	2.25	0.37			
Civil Status	Single	2.39	0.43	28	1.62	0.116
	Married	2.16	0.33			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.41	0.39	2	2.67	0.087
	36 to 50 years old	2.09	0.34			
	51 to 65 years old	2.11	0.31			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.43	0.43	3	1.50	0.236
	6 to 10 years	2.06	0.37			
	11 to 20 years	2.26	0.34			
	21 years and above	2.13	0.30			

*p<0.05

Descriptive statistics indicate that males (M = 2.26, SD = 0.61) and females (M = 2.25, SD = 0.37) scored almost equally for time stress. Single social workers (M=2.39; SD=0.34) whose age is from 21 to 35 years old (M=2.41; SD=0.39) have higher time stress compared to married social workers (M=2.16; SD=0.33) aged 36 to 50 (M=2.09; SD=0.34) and 51 to 65 years old (M=2.11; SD=0.31). Participants who have served for 6 to 10 years (M=2.06; SD=0.37) have the least probability of feeling time stress compared to those with 5 years or less (M=2.43; SD=0.43) work experience. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no

significant differences in the social workers' time stress when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = .054$, $p=0.957$], age [$F(2) = 2.679$, $p=0.087$], civil status status [$t(28) = 1.621$, $p=0.116$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 1.506$, $p=0.236$]. These findings suggest that sex, age, marital status, and years of service do not significantly affect variations in time stress.

Anticipatory Stressors

As shown in Table 8, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the anticipatory stress for sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social workers' anticipatory stress when grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that females ($M=1.85$; $SD=0.55$) are more likely to experience anticipatory stress than males ($M=1.52$; $SD=0.50$). Single social workers ($M=2.11$; $SD=0.58$) aged 21 to 35 years old ($M=1.96$; $SD=0.56$) with 5 years and below years of service ($M=2.10$; $SD=0.61$) have a higher chance to perceive anticipatory stress compared to married social workers ($M=1.63$; $SD=0.44$) aged 51 to 65 years old ($M=1.57$; $SD=0.61$). Moreover, an independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference in social workers' anticipatory stress when grouped by civil status [$t(28) = 2.589$, $p = 0.015$]. This may suggest that single social workers are more likely to perceive anticipatory stress than married social workers. There were no significant differences in the social workers' anticipatory stress when they were grouped by sex [$t(28) = .989$, $p=0.331$], age [$F(2) = 1.083$, $p=0.353$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 1.758$, $p=0.180$]. These findings may suggest that sex, age, and years of service do not influence anticipatory stress.

Table 8. Differences in Social Workers' Anticipatory Stressors

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	1.52	0.50	28	0.98	0.331
	Female	1.85	0.55			
Civil Status	Single	2.11	0.58	28	2.58	0.015
	Married	1.63	0.44			
Age	21 to 35 years old	1.96	0.56	2	1.08	0.353
	36 to 50 years old	1.69	0.52			
	51 to 65 years old	1.57	0.61			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.10	0.61	3	1.75	0.180
	6 to 10 years	1.57	0.38			
	11 to 20 years	1.82	0.57			
	21 years and above	1.60	0.42			

* $p<0.05$

Situational Stressors

As presented in Table 9, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the situational stress for sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in situational stress among social workers grouped by age and years of service.

Table 9. Differences in Social Workers' Situational Stressors

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	1.37	0.46	28	1.30	0.204
	Female	1.65	0.34			
Civil Status	Single	1.80	0.36	28	2.43	0.021
	Married	1.50	0.30			
Age	21 to 35 years old	1.71	0.32	2	1.04	0.367
	36 to 50 years old	1.53	0.34			
	51 to 65 years old	1.50	0.71			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	1.72	0.38	3	1.09	0.370
	6 to 10 years	1.56	0.30			
	11 to 20 years	1.68	0.30			
	21 years and above	1.40	0.42			

* $p<0.05$

Descriptive statistics show that females ($M=1.65$; $SD=0.34$) are more likely to experience situational stress than males ($M=1.37$; $SD=0.46$). Single social workers ($M=1.80$; $SD=0.36$) aged 21 to 35 years old ($M=1.71$; $SD=0.32$) who have 5 years and below ($M=1.72$; $SD=0.38$) have a higher tendency to perceive situational stress at work compared to married social workers ($M=1.50$; $SD=0.30$) aged 51 to 65 years old ($M=1.50$; $SD=0.71$) who have more than 21 years ($M=1.40$; $SD=0.42$) work experience. Moreover, an independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference in the social workers' situational stress levels when grouped by civil status [$t(28) = 2.438$, $p = 0.021$]. This may suggest that single social workers perceive situational stress more than married ones. There were no significant differences in the social workers' situational stress when they were grouped by sex [$t(28) = 1.300$, $p=0.204$], age [$F(2) = 1.041$,

$p=0.367$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 1.092, p=0.370$]. These findings may suggest that sex, age, and years of service do not significantly affect situational stress.

Encounter Stressors

As revealed in Table 10, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the encounter stress for sex and marital status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in the social workers' encounter stress when grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that females ($M=1.82$; $SD=0.51$) have a higher chance of experiencing encounter stress than males ($M=1.33$; $SD=0.29$). Married social workers ($M = 1.62, SD = 0.40$) tend to perceive encounter stress more than single social workers ($M = 1.20, SD = 0.61$). In terms of age and number of years in service, social workers aged 21 to 35 years ($M=1.91$; $SD=0.55$) with below 5 years ($M=2.07$; $SD=0.63$) are more likely to experience encounter stress than social workers aged 51 to 65 years old ($M=1.42$; $SD=0.59$) with more than 21 years ($M=1.47$; $SD=0.46$) work experience. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' encounter stress when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = 1.601, p=0.121$], age [$F(2) = 1.329, p=0.282$], civil status [$t(28) = 1.955, p=0.061$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 2.635, p=0.071$]. These findings may suggest that sex, age, marital status, and years of service do not influence encounter stress.

Table 10. Differences in Social Workers' Encounter Stressors

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	1.33	0.29	28	1.60	0.121
	Female	1.82	0.51			
Civil Status	Single	1.20	0.61	28	1.95	0.061
	Married	1.62	0.40			
Age	21 to 35 years old	1.91	0.55	2	1.32	0.282
	36 to 50 years old	1.67	0.45			
	51 to 65 years old	1.42	0.59			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.07	0.63	3	2.63	0.071
	6 to 10 years	1.52	0.34			
	11 to 20 years	1.81	0.31			
	21 years and above	1.47	0.46			

* $p<0.05$

3.5 Relationship Between Coping Strategies and Profile Variables

Cognitive Reappraisal (Pagsusuri)

As shown in Table 11, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the cognitive reappraisal for sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in cognitive reappraisal among social workers grouped by age and years of service.

Table 11. Differences in Social Workers' Cognitive Reappraisal (Pagsusuri)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	3.27	0.64	28	0.44	0.663
	Female	3.12	0.54			
Civil Status	Single	2.90	0.42	28	2.01	0.053
	Married	3.29	0.57			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.95	0.40	2	2.36	0.113
	36 to 50 years old	3.37	0.56			
	51 to 65 years old	3.00	1.13			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.92	0.51	3	0.88	0.460
	6 to 10 years	3.34	0.46			
	11 to 20 years	3.18	0.57			
	21 years and above	3.20	0.692			

* $p<0.05$

Descriptive statistics indicate that males ($M = 3.27, SD = 0.64$) scored higher than females ($M = 3.12, SD = 0.54$) in the cognitive reappraisal strategy. The older age group of 36 to 50 years old ($M=3.37$; $SD=0.56$) and 51 to 65 years old ($M=3.00, SD=1.13$) tend to cope through cognitive appraisal compared to 21 to 35 years old ($M=2.95$; $SD=0.40$). Married social workers ($M=3.29$; $SD=0.57$) are more likely to cope with stress by hopeful thinking than single social workers ($M=2.90$; $SD=0.42$). Regarding the number of years in service, social workers with more than 6 years ($M=3.34$; $SD=0.46$) are more optimistic than social workers with less than 5 years ($M=2.92$; $SD=0.51$) of service. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' cognitive reappraisal coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = .441, p=0.663$], age [$F(2) = 2.369, p=0.113$], civil status [$t(28) = 2.017, p=0.053$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = .889, p=0.460$].

These findings suggest that sex, age, civil status, and years of service do not influence the use of cognitive reappraisal as a coping strategy.

Social Support (Paghingi ng Tulong)

As presented in Table 12, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the social support for sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social support among social workers, grouped by age and years of service. Descriptive statistics show that males ($M=3.27$; $SD=0.64$) are likelier to ask for social support than females ($M=3.12$; $SD=0.54$). Participants aged 51 to 65 ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.23$) tend to ask for support from their loved ones more often than their younger counterparts. Regarding civil status, both single ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.70$) and married ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.47$) social workers scored almost the same. Social Workers with less than 5 years of experience ($M=2.80$; $SD=0.65$) have a higher chance of seeking support from others than those with more than 6 years of work experience. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' social support coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = .286$, $p=0.777$], age [$F(2) = .058$, $p=0.943$], civil status [$t(28) = 0.040$, $p=0.968$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = .040$, $p=0.989$]. These findings suggest that sex, age, civil status, and years of service do not influence the social support coping strategy.

Table 12. *Differences in Social Workers' Social Support (Paghingi ng Tulong)*

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	3.27	0.64	28	0.28	0.777
	Female	3.12	0.54			
Civil Status	Single	2.75	0.70	28	0.04	0.968
	Married	2.76	0.47			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.78	0.63	2	0.05	0.943
	36 to 50 years old	2.72	0.54			
	51 to 65 years old	2.84	0.23			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.80	0.65	3	0.04	0.989
	6 to 10 years	2.76	0.60			
	11 to 20 years	2.71	0.63			
	21 years and above	2.73	0.28			

* $p<0.05$

Problem Solving (Pagtugon)

As shown in Table 13, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare problem-solving by sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social workers' problem-solving approaches when grouped by age and years of service.

Table 13. *Differences in Social Workers' Problem Solving (Pagtugon)*

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	3.50	0.25	28	.388	0.701
	Female	3.37	0.56			
Civil Status	Single	3.15	0.47	28	.075	0.047
	Married	3.54	0.54			
Age	21 to 35 years old	3.25	0.47	2	.992	0.384
	36 to 50 years old	3.54	0.58			
	51 to 65 years old	3.38	0.88			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	3.08	0.47	3	.184	0.114
	6 to 10 years	3.68	0.24			
	11 to 20 years	3.41	0.68			
	21 years and above	3.55	0.54			

* $p<0.05$

Descriptive statistics show that males ($M=3.50$; $SD=0.25$) are more likely to cope by solving the problem than females ($M=3.37$; $SD=0.56$). Social workers aged 36 to 50 years old ($M=3.54$; $SD=0.58$) and 6 to 10 years ($M=3.68$; $SD=0.24$) have a higher tendency to use problem solving as a coping strategy. Moreover, an independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference in the social workers' problem-solving coping strategies when they were grouped by civil status [$t(28) = 2.075$, $p = 0.047$]. Married social workers ($M = 3.54$; $SD = 0.54$) have a higher tendency to cope by using problem-solving strategies compared to their single counterparts. There were no significant differences in the participants' problem-solving coping strategy when they were grouped by sex [$t(28) = .388$, $p=0.701$], age [$F(2) = .992$, $p=0.384$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 2.184$, $p=0.114$]. These may suggest that sex, age, and number of years in service of the social workers do not differ when it comes to problem-solving coping strategies.

Religiosity (*Pagkarelihiyoso*)

As presented in Table 14, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the religiosity level for sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social workers' religiosity when grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that females ($M=3.61$; $SD=0.40$) are more likely to cope by praying than males ($M=2.92$; $SD=1.66$). Social Workers aged 36 to 50 years old scored the highest in terms of religiosity. Moreover, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were significant differences in the social workers' religiosity coping strategy when they are grouped by civil status [$t(28) = 2.705$, $p=0.047$] and number of years in service [$F(3) = 3.457$, $p=0.031$]. Married social workers ($M=3.72$; $SD=0.28$) have a higher tendency to cope by relieving their burdens to God compared to their single counterparts ($M=3.27$; $SD=0.28$).

Table 14. Differences in Social Workers' Problem Solving (*Pagtugon*)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	2.92	1.66	28	1.93	0.063
	Female	3.61	0.40			
Civil Status	Single	3.27	0.86	28	2.07	0.047
	Married	3.72	0.28			
Age	21 to 35 years old	3.37	0.80	2	1.63	0.214
	36 to 50 years old	3.77	0.28			
	51 to 65 years old	3.36	0.18			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	3.13	0.88	3	3.45	0.031
	6 to 10 years	3.93	0.12			
	11 to 20 years	3.75	0.27			
	21 years and above	3.50	0.31			

* $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 15, using Multiple Comparisons via Tukey HSD to test mean differences, Table 14 reveals a significant difference ($p=.031$) between social workers with 0 to 5 years in service and 6 to 10 years in service in their religiosity coping strategy. Thus, social workers in their 6 to 10 years of service ($M=3.93$; $SD=0.12$) are more likely to cope through their religion than those with less than 6 years of service. However, there was no significant differences found between social workers with 6 to 10 years of service and 11 to 20 years of service, 6 to 10 years of service and 21 years and above years of service, 11 to 20 years of service and 0 to 5 years of service, 11 to 20 years and 21 years and above, and 21 years and above and 0 to 5 years. There were no significant differences in the social workers' religiosity coping strategy when they were grouped by sex [$t(28) = 1.938$, $p=0.063$] and age [$F(2) = .992$, $p=0.384$]. These may suggest that sex and age do not influence the religiosity coping strategy.

Table 15. Mean Differences in terms of Number of Years in Service

Years of Service	Years of Service	Mean Difference	P-value
6 to 10 years	0 to 5 years	0.80	0.031
	11 to 20 years	0.17	0.922
	21 years and above	0.42	0.553
11 to 20 years	0 to 5 years	0.26	0.130
	21 years old and above	0.31	0.855
21 years and above	0 to 5 years	0.30	0.605

*Multiple Comparisons. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Tolerance (*Pagtitiis*)

As presented in Table 16, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the tolerance for sex and marital status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social workers' tolerance when grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that males ($M=2.67$; $SD=0.76$) are likelier to tolerate stress than females ($M=2.50$; $SD=0.60$). Single social workers ($M = 2.58$; $SD = 0.79$) aged 21 to 35 have a higher chance of experiencing stress than of confronting it. Moreover, participants with 11 to 20 years of service ($M = 2.69$; $SD = 0.37$) are most likely to be tolerant when faced with stress. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' tolerance coping strategy when they grouped by sex [$t(28) = .444$, $p=0.661$], age [$F(2) = 1.053$, $p=0.363$], civil status [$t(28) = 0.483$, $p=0.633$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 1.023$, $p=0.399$]. These may suggest that sex, age, civil status, and number of years in service of the social workers do not differ regarding coping tolerance strategy.

Table 16. Differences in Social Workers' Tolerance (Pagtitiis)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	2.67	0.76	28	0.44	0.661
	Female	2.50	0.60			
Civil Status	Single	2.58	0.79	28	0.48	0.633
	Married	2.47	0.47			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.63	0.77	2	1.05	0.363
	36 to 50 years old	2.50	0.38			
	51 to 65 years old	2.00	0.00			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.55	0.72	3	1.02	0.399
	6 to 10 years	2.57	0.79			
	11 to 20 years	2.69	0.37			
	21 years and above	2.10	0.22			

*p<0.05

Emotional Release (Paglabas ng Saloobin)

As presented in Table 17, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the emotional release for sex and marital status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in emotional release among social workers, grouped by age and years of service. Descriptive statistics show that females (M=1.94; SD=0.36) are more likely to cope with stress through emotional release than males (M=1.75; SD=0.50). Married social workers (M = 1.94; SD = 0.27) aged 36 to 50 have a higher tendency to vent their emotions compared to single social workers in the other two age groups. Regarding the number of years in service, social workers with 5 years and below (M=2.03; SD=0.55) have the highest likelihood of venting out their emotions in the workplace when stressed. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' emotional release coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = .854$, $p=0.400$], age [$F(2) = .448$, $p=0.643$], civil status [$t(28) = 0.345$, $p=0.733$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = .621$, $p=0.608$]. These may suggest that sex, age, civil status, and number of years in service of the social workers do not differ when it comes to emotional release coping strategy.

Table 17. Differences in Social Workers' Emotional Release (Paglabas ng Saloobin)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	1.75	0.50	28	0.85	0.400
	Female	1.94	0.36			
Civil Status	Single	1.90	0.51	28	0.34	0.733
	Married	1.94	0.27			
Age	21 to 35 years old	1.87	0.45	2	0.44	0.643
	36 to 50 years old	2.00	0.29			
	51 to 65 years old	1.88	0.18			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.03	0.55	3	0.62	0.608
	6 to 10 years	1.82	0.28			
	11 to 20 years	1.97	0.25			
	21 years and above	1.80	0.21			

*p<0.05

Overactivity (Pagmamalabis)

As presented in Table 18, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the overactivity for sex and civil status.

Table 18. Differences in Social Workers' Overactivity (Pagmamalabis)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	2.07	0.50	28	0.18	0.852
	Female	2.12	0.45			
Civil Status	Single	2.18	0.52	28	0.69	0.491
	Married	2.07	0.39			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.24	0.51	2	1.28	0.293
	36 to 50 years old	2.00	0.35			
	51 to 65 years old	1.90	0.42			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.30	0.54	3	1.45	0.251
	6 to 10 years	2.00	0.33			
	11 to 20 years	2.15	0.44			
	21 years and above	1.84	0.26			

*p<0.05

A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in the social workers' overactivity when grouped by

age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that females (M=2.12; SD=0.45) are more likely to cope with stress through overactivity than males (M=2.07; SD=0.50). Single social workers (M=2.18; SD=0.52) aged 21 to 35 years old (M=2.24; SD=0.51) who have less than 5 years (M=2.30; SD=0.54) have the highest likelihood to overexert themselves to distance themselves from stress. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' overactivity coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = .188, p=0.852$], age [$F(2) = 1.286, p=0.293$], civil status [$t(28) = .698, p=0.491$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = 1.452, p=0.251$]. These may suggest that sex, age, civil status, and number of years in service of the social workers do not differ regarding the overactivity coping strategy.

Relaxation/Recreational (Paglilibang)

As shown in Table 19, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare relaxation and recreation by sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in social workers' relaxation and recreation practices when grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that males (M=3.60; SD=0.20) are more likely to cope with stress through relaxational/recreational activities than females (M=2.80; SD=0.41). Married social workers (M=2.97; SD=0.43) aged 51 to 65 (M=3.00; SD=0.38) are more likely to cope with stress with recreational activities compared to single and younger groups. Independent sample t-test and analysis of variance showed that there were significant differences in the social workers' relaxation/recreational coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = 3.316, p=0.003$] and number of years in service [$F(3) = 3.354, p=0.034$]. Males are more likely to cope with stress than females.

Table 20. Mean Differences in terms of Number of Years in Service

Table 19. Differences in Social Workers' Relaxation/Recreational (Paglilibang)

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	3.60	0.20	28	3.31	0.003
	Female	2.80	0.41			
Civil Status	Single	2.75	0.49	28	1.27	0.212
	Married	2.97	0.43			
Age	21 to 35 years old	2.80	0.52	2	0.44	0.645
	36 to 50 years old	2.95	0.41			
	51 to 65 years old	3.00	0.28			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	2.68	0.52	3	3.35	0.034
	6 to 10 years	3.23	0.35			
	11 to 20 years	2.70	0.40			
	21 years and above	3.08	0.18			

* $p < 0.05$

As presented in Table 20, Multiple Comparisons via Tukey HSD to test mean differences in Table 19 reveal no significant differences between social workers' years of service. There were no significant differences in the social workers' relaxation/recreational coping strategy when they were grouped by age [$F(2) = .445, p=0.645$] and civil status [$t(28) = 1.278, p=0.212$]. These findings suggest that the age and civil status of social workers do not differ in their use of relaxation and recreational coping strategies.

Table 20. Mean Differences in terms of Number of Years in Service

Years of Service	Years of Service	Mean Difference	P-value
0 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	0.20	0.055
	11 to 20 years	0.19	0.000
	21 years and above	0.22	0.309
6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	0.21	0.087
	21 years and above	0.24	0.926
11 to 20 years	21 years and above	0.23	0.387

Substance Use (Pagbibisyo)

As presented in Table 21, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the substance use by sex and civil status. A one-way ANOVA test was used to analyze the differences in the social workers' substance use when they are grouped by age and number of years in service. Descriptive statistics show that males (M=1.67; SD=0.95) are more likely to cope with stress through substance use than females (M=1.19; SD=0.34). Social Workers aged 21 to 35 years old (M=1.28; SD=0.56) have a higher likelihood of coping with stress through substance use compared to their older counterparts. Married social workers (M=1.28; SD=0.44) with 11 to 20 years in service (M=1.31; SD=0.29) are most likely to cope with substance use than other single social workers. However, independent sample t-test and analysis of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the social workers' substance use coping strategy when they are grouped by sex [$t(28) = 1.868, p=0.072$], age [$F(2) = .368,$

$p=0.695$], civil status [$t(28) = .553$, $p=0.585$], and number of years in service [$F(3) = .609$, $p=0.615$]. These may suggest that sex, age, civil status, and number of years in service of the social workers do not differ when it comes to substance use coping strategy.

Table 21. *Differences in Social Workers' Substance Use (Paghibisyo)*

Variables		Mean	SD	df	t	P-value
Sex	Male	1.67	0.95	28	1.86	0.072
	Female	1.19	0.34			
Civil Status	Single	1.19	0.43	28	0.55	0.585
	Married	1.28	0.44			
Age	21 to 35 years old	1.28	0.56	2	0.36	0.695
	36 to 50 years old	1.23	0.28			
	51 to 65 years old	1.00	0.00			
Number of Years in Service	0 to 5 years	1.28	0.46	3	0.60	0.615
	6 to 10 years	1.29	0.65			
	11 to 20 years	1.31	0.29			
	21 years and above	1.00	0.00			

3.6 Discussion

Job-related Stressors

Results show that social workers in Isabela province scored low in their overall job-related stressors. In contrast, researchers have found that social workers are likely to experience high stress levels and burnout (Beer, 2016; Lloyd et al., 2011). Job-related stressors results show that the social workers scored the lowest for situational stress and highest for time stress. Rather than feeling discouraged about their work, social workers in Isabela province feel empowered and supported by their colleagues in the workplace. They believe in their ability to respond to emergencies. However, they are still likely to experience, on low levels, pressure to meet deadlines due to the fast-paced nature of their job.

In terms of sex, results show that females are more likely to feel anxious due to the uncertainty of the cases and the role social workers are held accountable for (Lloyd et al., 2011). They will likely feel helpless because they are less prepared to handle the situation. Padilla and Simo (2013) support this finding, which suggests that females feel more pressure from the qualitative or psychological demands of social work. Hsu (2018) stated that females experience extra stress due to increased work-family conflict and difficulty finding a good job. On the contrary, men feel more pressure from the quantitative demands of their work (Torres et al., 2013). Although mean scores vary in terms of sex, there was no significant difference reported in the job-related stressors.

Considering age, civil status, and years of service, analysis of variance showed significant differences in the social workers' anticipatory and situational stress when grouped by marital status. Single social workers are more likely to perceive work-related stress than their married counterparts. Mean scores agree with the results, which report that single social workers aged 21 to 35 have a higher chance of perceiving time, anticipatory, and situational stress at work compared to older married social workers, except for time stress. Likewise, social workers with five (5) years or fewer in service scored the highest in the anticipatory, situational, and encounter stress compared to those with at least six (6) years in service. Hsu (2018) supports this finding, stating that older married workers experience less stress than younger workers due to their higher level of resilience against work-family conflicts. Although age and number of years in service did not show a significant difference in the analysis of variance, civil status revealed significant differences in anticipatory and situational stress. Thus, the civil status of social workers can impact their perception of workplace stress.

Coping Strategies

Results show that social workers in Isabela province scored high in their coping strategies. This finding might explain why they scored low on their job-related stressors. In general, social workers in Isabela province confront stressful events by changing their views or assumptions about their problem through action. At the same time, others tend to endure difficulty and stress without constant effort to confront it. They seek help, receive advice from friends and family, and engage in activities that help them feel at ease and reduce the cognitive and emotional load of stress.

Social workers in Isabela province scored a very high religiosity (pagkarelihiyoso). Tan (2017) supports this finding, stating that Filipinos use religious beliefs and practices in problem-solving to adapt and alleviate the

pessimistic emotional effects of a stressful situation. Moreover, social workers in Isabela province scored very low in substance use (pagbibisyo) coping strategy. Results imply that they are less likely to resort to drugs, drinking alcohol, or even smoking to relieve their stress. However, social workers in Isabela scored low levels of emotional release (paglabas ng saloobin) and overactivity (pagmamalabis). The result is confusing because they scored high in social support (paghingi ng tulong) and problem-solving (pagtugon). Results may suggest that although they seek help and receive advice, they may not fully disclose their sentiments to their friends and family. Moreover, while some confront their stress by actively solving, some would manifest coping through underperforming and low productivity rates at work.

About sex, male social workers cope with work stress through cognitive reappraisal (pagsusuri), social support (paghingi ng tulong), problem solving (pagtugon), tolerance (pagtitiis), relaxational/recreational activities (paglilibang), and substance use (pagbibisyo). In contrast, female social workers cope through religiosity (pagkarelihiyoso), emotional release (paglabas ng saloobin), and overactivity (pagmamalabis). Collins (2008) contradicts the result, stating that considerable and substantial evidence suggests that women are better at seeking out and providing support. Men are less likely to seek and provide support to women, but tend to derive more satisfaction from receiving it from women. Likewise, women are far more likely to manage stress by connecting with others than men, like spending time with friends or family, and attending church or religious services (American Psychological Association, 2012). There was no significant difference in coping strategies when respondents were grouped by sex, except for relaxational/recreational activities (paglilibang). Results suggest that male social workers cope with stress through relaxation/recreational activities such as playing sports and exercise (APA, 2012).

As for age, civil status, and number of years in service, the study revealed a significant difference in the social workers' problem-solving when grouped by civil status. Likewise, there were meaningful differences in religiosity when grouped by civil status and years in service. Relaxation/recreational coping strategy showed a significant difference when grouped by the number of years in service. Notable results suggest that married social workers confront stress using problem-solving and religiosity than their single counterparts. Correspondingly, social workers with 6 to 10 years in service are more likely to use the religiosity coping strategy than social workers with less than 6 years in service.

Mean results show that older married social workers with more than five (5) years in service cope through cognitive appraisal and problem-solving. Older married social workers cope through relaxation/recreational activities, and married social workers with 11 to 20 years in service cope through substance use. Social workers aged 51 to 65 with 11 to 20 years in service have a higher tolerance to stress. They tend to ask for support from their loved ones more than their younger counterparts.

Single and married social workers reported the same levels of coping through social support. Young single social workers with five years or fewer of service are likely to cope through social support, tolerance, and overactivity. Young social workers are also likely to cope with stress through substance use. Social workers with five (5) years or fewer of service seek support from others and are likely to vent their emotions in the workplace. Lastly, married social workers aged 36 to 50 tend to vent out than single social workers in the other two age groups. There was no significant difference in coping strategies when respondents were grouped by age, civil status, and number of years in service. However, there were meaningful differences in civil status when they were grouped by problem-solving and religiosity. Likewise, for several years in service, they are grouped by religiosity and relaxation/recreation.

4.0 Conclusion

This study found that social workers in the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices of Isabela generally experience low levels of job-related stress, showing strong resilience and adaptability. While demographic factors such as sex, age, civil status, and years of service did not significantly affect overall stress levels, single social workers reported higher concern and helplessness in certain situations compared to their married peers. The social workers demonstrated effective coping strategies, with men favoring relaxation and recreational activities, and married workers and those with 6 to 10 years of service more likely to use problem-solving techniques and religiosity. These findings underscore the importance of supporting social workers' well-being through tailored stress management programs that consider individual differences. Future research could explore additional factors influencing stress and coping or examine long-term trends to enhance workplace interventions.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

The sole author reviewed the final content of the paper.

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7.0 Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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