

Stress and Coping Mechanism of Jeepney Drivers in Marinduque: Basis for an Intervention Plan

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the Stress and coping mechanisms of Jeepney Drivers in Marinduque. It also intends to investigate the stressors experienced by jeepney drivers in Marinduque and explore the coping mechanisms employed to manage these stressors. Jeepney drivers, serving as vital contributors to local transportation networks, face multifaceted challenges that impact their overall well-being. The researcher used a descriptive correlational approach in analyzing the data and constructed survey questionnaires to conduct the study. Based on the results and discussion, the study concludes that there is High level of stress experienced by the jeepney drivers in Marinduque and have a Highly Practiced, Coping Mechanism used to manage the stress level. The findings and recommendations of the

study is to contribute deeper understanding of the unique stressors faced by this specific occupational group in Marinduque and provide insights into potential interventions to improve their overall well-being. This research aims to raise awareness about the mental health of jeepney drivers and inform policies and support systems that address the specific needs of this essential workforce.

Keywords: *stress, coping mechanisms, jeepney drivers*

INTRODUCTION

The transportation industry plays a crucial role in the business sector, ensuring the smooth flow of goods and services. In the Philippines, jeepneys are a popular mode of public transportation, serving as a lifeline for many commuters. However, behind the scenes, jeepney drivers face various stressors that can impact their well-being and ultimately affect their performance on the road. This study aims to explore the stressors experienced by jeepney drivers in Marinduque and identify coping mechanisms they employ to manage these challenges.

Jeepney drivers in Marinduque encounter numerous stressors on a daily basis. These stressors may include heavy traffic congestion, long working hours, financial pressures, dealing with difficult passengers, and concerns about road safety. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges for jeepney drivers. Understanding the specific stressors faced by this group is essential to develop effective intervention plans that address their unique needs.

Coping mechanisms play a vital role in helping individuals manage stress effectively. Jeepney drivers in Marinduque have developed various coping strategies to navigate their demanding work environment. These coping mechanisms may include seeking social support from fellow drivers or family members, engaging in relaxation techniques such as deep breathing exercises or listening to music during breaks, practicing positive self-talk to boost resilience, or finding solace through religious practices.

The relevance of this study extends beyond its contribution to understanding the experiences of jeepney drivers in Marinduque. The findings will provide valuable insights for businesses operating within the transportation industry. By identifying the specific stressors faced by jeepney drivers and exploring their coping mechanisms, businesses can design targeted interventions to support driver's well-being and enhance overall performance. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of addressing the well-being of transportation industry workers, such as the qualitative exploration conducted amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, explored the lived experiences of jeepney drivers and shed light on their challenges (Garcia, Reyes, et al., 2023). This research emphasized the need for interventions that promote driver well-being and improve their coping strategies.

This study aims to investigate the stressors experienced by jeepney drivers in Marinduque and explore their coping mechanisms. The findings will not only contribute to the understanding of this specific group but also provide valuable insights for businesses operating within the transportation industry. By implementing targeted intervention plans based on these findings, businesses can support driver's well-being and ultimately enhance overall performance in the sector.

METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive correlational research design was employed in this study. This design is a non-experimental quantitative research design which describes the degree of relationship or association between the variables of the study (Creswell, 2015). Using this research design, this study described the participants' demographic profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment and driving experience, the level of stress in terms of physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral, the focused of coping mechanism of the participants in terms of problem focused strategy, emotion focused strategy and social seeking strategy, and the difference in the level of stress and focused of coping mechanism when grouped according to their demographic profile. Furthermore, the study also described the relationship between the participants' level of stress and focused of coping mechanism.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the province of Marinduque that shown in Figure 3. The jeepney drivers have four associations/cooperatives in Marinduque, namely: Mogpog Boac MSC Jeepney Operators Driver Association (MBMscJODA) with 38 members; Boac Buenavista Drivers Operators Association (BBDOA) with 47 members; The United Marinduque Transport Cooperative with 25 members; and Sta.Cruz Boac Route Transport Cooperative (SBRT Coop) with 28 members.

Sampling Technique

The participants of this study were the jeepney driver in Marinduque. The list of the jeepney drivers were taken from the different associations/cooperatives. In order to collect data on the said study, the researcher used the Raosoft online sample size calculator that show in Table 1, where the selection of the participants has an equal probability of being chosen. A waiver of consent was asked from the participants to answer the self-made questionnaires.

Table 1. *Population of jeepney drivers in Marinduque*

Association/Cooperative of Jeepney Drivers In Marinduque	Total Population	Sample Size
Mogpog Boac MSC Jeepney Operators Driver Association (MBMscJODA)	38	35
Boac Buenavista Drivers Operators Association (BBDOA)	47	42
The United Marinduque Transport Cooperative	25	24
Sta.Cruz Boac Route Transport Cooperative (SBRT Coop)	28	27
Total	138	128

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Stressors of the Jeepney Drivers

The level of stressors of the jeepney drivers are determined upon administering the Stress Mechanism questionnaire which is a 20-item self-reported assessment. The study determined the level of stressors of the participants in terms of physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral.

The level of stressors of the jeepney drivers has obtained an overall median of 4 which is interpreted as High. This result is based on the specific areas pertaining to the stress of jeepney drivers in terms of physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral. All the items, obtained the highest median of 4 which is interpreted as High. It can be gleaned from the items that most of the jeepney drivers experienced stress. These implications highlight the urgent need for support systems that prioritize the well-being of jeepney drivers through initiatives such as access to mental health resources, improved working conditions, driver education programs on stress management techniques, and fostering a culture of respect among passengers towards jeepney drivers' vital role in public transportation.

Physical. In term of physical, jeepney drivers experience a high level physical stress due to the demanding nature of their work. The physical demands of driving for long hours in heavy traffic, constantly maneuvering through crowded streets, and dealing with challenging road conditions can take a toll on their bodies. The repetitive motions involved in operating the vehicle, such as shifting gears and stepping on the clutch pedal, can lead to muscle strain and fatigue. Additionally, jeepney drivers often have to assist passengers with loading and unloading their belongings or navigating steep steps, which further adds to the physical strain they endure. This continuous exposure to physical stress can contribute to various health issues over time if not properly managed.

Emotional. In terms of emotional, jeepney drivers often experience a high of emotional stress as a result of various factors related to their profession. The demanding nature of the job, including long working hours and dealing with heavy traffic, can lead to feelings of frustration and anxiety. Additionally, jeepney drivers may face challenges such as difficult passengers, fare disputes, or encounters with unruly behavior on the road. These situations can contribute to heightened levels of stress and emotional strain.

Psychological. In terms of psychological, jeepney drivers in Marinduque face a myriad of psychological stressors in their challenging profession, affecting their mental well-being and job satisfaction. These stressors include financial instability, concerns about inadequate earnings, uncertainty regarding jeepney routes, overwhelming responsibilities, and difficulties in maintaining focus and concentration. Understanding the impact of these psychological stressors is crucial for developing targeted interventions to support the mental health and overall well-being of jeepney drivers.

Behavioral. In term of behavioral, jeepney drivers often experience a high of behavioral stress due to various factors associated with their profession. The jeepney drivers may face challenges such as fare disputes, unruly behavior from passengers, or encounters with aggressive motorists on the road. These stressful situations can contribute to heightened levels of irritability and impatience among jeepney drivers.

Jeepney drivers in Marinduque face a multitude of stressors that encompass physical, emotional, psychological, and behavioral aspects of their profession. These stressors significantly impact their overall well-being, job satisfaction, and quality of life. The physical stress of prolonged driving in congested traffic, coupled with exposure to environmental pollutants, can lead to health challenges. Emotional stressors arising from dealing with passengers, interpersonal conflicts, safety concerns, and negative emotional effects further add to the burden. Psychological stressors, such as financial instability, uncertainties in jeepney routes, overwhelming responsibilities, and difficulties in concentration, contribute to mental fatigue and reduced coping abilities. Moreover, behavioral stressors, including engagement in smoking and alcohol consumption, irregular sleep patterns, and strained relationships, negatively affect their health and personal lives.

Focus of the Coping Mechanism Strategy

The results show that the jeepney drivers obtained an overall median of 4 in the focused of coping mechanism which is interpreted as “Highly Practiced”. All the three areas, the jeepney drivers acquired the highest mean score of 4 in problem focused strategy, emotion focused strategy and social seeking strategy.

The coping mechanisms employed by jeepney drivers, specifically in terms of focused strategy, emotion-focused strategy, and social seeking strategy, have significant implications for their overall well-being. Jeepney drivers often rely on focused coping strategies to address the challenges they face on a daily basis. This includes adopting problem-solving approaches and actively seeking solutions to overcome obstacles related to their work. Additionally, emotion-focused strategies play a crucial role in managing the emotional toll of their job. Jeepney drivers may engage in techniques such as positive reframing or acceptance to reduce negative emotions associated with the demands of driving. Moreover, social seeking strategies are utilized by jeepney drivers to seek emotional support from their peers or loved ones, creating a sense of camaraderie and solidarity within their community. These coping mechanisms contribute to the resilience and adaptability of jeepney drivers as they navigate the physical and emotional stressors inherent in their profession

Problem focused strategy. In terms of problem focused strategy, it can be noted from the table that the jeepney drivers obtained the highest median of 5 interpreted as “Very Highly Practiced” in one specific item which is “I take steps to improve my driving skills to cope with the challenges of driving a jeepney” and 1, 2, 3 and 4 items interpreted as Highly Practiced. To effectively cope with these stressors and manage the demands of their job, many jeepney drivers employ problem-focused coping strategies. These strategies involve actively seeking solutions, prioritizing the root cause of stress, making plans and actions to prevent stress, seeking information to handle stress effectively, and continuously improving their driving skills. The prevalence and effectiveness of these problem-focused strategies is crucial for enhancing the well-being and job satisfaction of jeepney drivers.

Emotion focused strategy. In the emotion focused strategy, the jeepney drivers scored highest in items “I use mindfulness techniques to help me manage my emotions while driving a jeepney.” This implies the expertise of the jeepney drivers using their mindfulness techniques to manage emotions while driving a jeepney has been incredibly beneficial for their well-being. It has helped to navigate the challenges of their profession with greater ease, ensuring that they can provide safe and efficient transportation services to all passengers. The 1, 2, 3, and 4 items are same as interpreted as highly practiced of the jeepney drivers. To effectively manage their emotions and cope with the stress of their profession, many jeepney drivers employ emotion-focused coping strategies. These strategies involve

regulating emotions, fostering a positive mindset, and maintaining emotional well-being while navigating the demands of their job.

Social Seeking strategy. In the social seeking strategy, the highest median of 5 is interpreted “Very highly practiced” in the three specific items which are “I seek advice and guidance from colleagues who have more experience in driving a jeepney”, “I try to build positive relationships with my passengers to improve my emotional well-being while driving a jeepney” and “I seek professional help from counsellors or therapists when I feel overwhelmed by the stressors of driving a jeepney”. On the other hand, item 1 and 3 is interpreted as “highly practiced”. To cope with the stresses of their job, many jeepney drivers utilize social support-seeking strategies. These strategies involve seeking emotional support from family and friends, seeking advice and guidance from experienced colleagues, actively participating in support groups or organizations, building positive relationships with passengers, and seeking professional help from counsellors and therapists. Understanding the prevalence and effectiveness of these social support-seeking strategies is crucial for enhancing the well-being and job satisfaction of jeepney drivers.

Jeepney drivers in Marinduque employ various coping strategies to navigate the stressors and challenges inherent in their profession. Problem-focused strategies, such as actively seeking solutions, prioritizing root causes of stress, making preventive plans, seeking information, and improving driving skills, empower drivers to address stressors proactively and enhance their overall efficiency and job satisfaction.

Emotion-focused strategies, including remaining calm, using positive talk and affirmations, engaging in relaxing activities, shifting perspectives, and utilizing mindfulness techniques, enable jeepney drivers to manage their emotions effectively during demanding situations. These strategies promote emotional well-being, contributing to a more positive and resilient workforce.

Moreover, social support-seeking strategies, such as seeking emotional support from family and friends, seeking advice from experienced colleagues, participating in support groups, building positive relationships with passengers, and seeking professional help, play a crucial role in buffering the impact of stressors and fostering a supportive network for jeepney drivers.

Relationship between the Level of Stress and Focused of Coping Mechanism of the Jeepney Drivers

The study intended to determine the relationship between the level of stress and the focused of coping mechanism of the jeepney driver participants. Table 17 shows the significant relationship between the level of stress and the focused of coping mechanism, the provided data presents the Spearman rank correlation and p-values for different coping mechanisms (problemfocused strategy, emotion-focused strategy, and social seeking strategy) in relation various stressors (physical, emotional, psychological, and behavioral). The remarks indicate whether the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted or rejected based on the pvalues.

Problem-Focused Strategy. In terms of physical stress the Spearman rank correlation coefficient is 0.144 with a p-value of 0.104. The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, indicating a weak positive correlation between problem-focused strategy and physical stress. In emotional stress the coefficient is 0.372 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between problem-focused strategy and emotional stress. In psychological stress the coefficient is 0.359 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, indicating a moderate positive correlation between problem-focused strategy and psychological stress. And in behavioral stress the coefficient is 0.163 with a p-value of 0.066. The H_0 is accepted, suggesting a weak positive correlation between problem-focused strategy and behavioral stress. The overall the coefficient is 0.380 with a pvalue of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, indicating a moderate positive correlation between problem-focused strategy and overall stress.

Emotion-Focused Strategy. In physical stress the coefficient is 0.117 with a p-value of 0.190. The H_0 is accepted, suggesting no significant correlation between emotion-focused strategy and

physical stress. In emotional stress the coefficient is 0.336 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, indicating a moderate positive correlation between emotion-focused strategy and emotional stress. Psychological Stress the coefficient is 0.359 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between emotion-focused strategy and psychological stress. And behavioral stress the coefficient is 0.016 with a p-value of 0.858. The H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant correlation between emotion-focused strategy and behavioral stress. The overall coefficient is 0.364 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between emotion-focused strategy and overall stress.

Social Seeking Strategy. In terms of physical stress the coefficient is 0.132 with a p-value of 0.139. The H_0 is accepted, suggesting no significant correlation between social seeking strategy and physical stress. Emotional Stress the coefficient is 0.344 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, indicating a moderate positive correlation between social seeking strategy and emotional stress. Psychological Stress the coefficient is 0.287 with a p-value of 0.001. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a weak positive correlation between social seeking strategy and psychological stress. And behavioral stress the coefficient is 0.079 with a p-value of 0.378. The H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant correlation between social seeking strategy and behavioral stress. And the overall coefficient is 0.327 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between social seeking strategy and overall stress.

Overall Coping Mechanisms. In terms of physical stress the coefficient is 0.062 with a p-value of 0.486. The H_0 is accepted, suggesting no significant correlation between overall coping mechanisms and physical stress. Emotional Stress the coefficient is 0.363 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, indicating a moderate positive correlation between overall coping mechanisms and emotional stress. Psychological Stress the coefficient is 0.365 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between overall coping mechanisms and psychological stress. Behavioral Stress the coefficient is 0.107 with a p-value of 0.228. The H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant correlation between overall coping mechanisms and behavioral stress. And the overall coefficient is 0.356 with a p-value of 0.000. The H_0 is rejected, suggesting a moderate positive correlation between overall coping mechanisms and overall stress.

Based on the study, problem-focused strategy coping mechanism shows meaningful relationships with emotional and psychological stressors as well as an overall relationship with all stressors combined. Emotion-focused strategy coping mechanism also demonstrates meaningful relationships with emotional and psychological stressors as well as an overall relationship with all stressors combined, although it has no significant relationship with behavioral stressors. Social seeking strategy coping mechanism exhibits meaningful relationships with emotional and psychological stressors as well as an overall relationship with all stressors combined, while having no significant relationship with physical or behavioral stressors.

Intervention for Jeepney Drivers to Manage Stress Level

The intervention for jeepney drivers to manage stress level is a comprehensive and targeted approach aimed at addressing the significant stressors faced by these essential members of transportation. Jeepney drivers play a critical role in the daily lives of commuters, but their demanding work environment exposes them to various stressors that can negatively impact their physical and mental well-being. To safeguard their health and improve their overall job satisfaction, it is essential to implement effective interventions that support drivers in effectively managing stress.

Intervention for Jeepney Drivers to Manage Stress Level

FINDINGS OF STUDY	STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
1. Aggressive driving due to frustration and anger	Anger Management Techniques: Teach anger management skills.	- Conduct workshops on recognizing triggers and managing anger effectively.	Mental Health Professionals, Driving Instructors
		- Provide resources such as self-help books and online resources for ongoing support.	Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Providers, NGOs
		- Organize role-playing exercises to practice assertive communication techniques.	Driving Schools, Community Leaders
2. Difficulty in managing interpersonal conflicts.	Conflict Resolution Workshops: Provide conflict resolution strategies.	- Facilitate workshops on understanding conflict, negotiation, and compromise.	Mediation Specialists, HR Managers
		- Implement peer mediation programs for resolving conflicts among drivers.	Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Providers, Team Leaders
		- Establish clear policies and procedures for addressing conflicts in the workplace.	Union Representatives, Conflict Resolution Experts
3. Financial stressors impacting mental well-being.	Financial Counseling: Offer financial guidance and support.	- Provide one-on-one financial counseling sessions to help drivers manage budgeting, debt, and financial planning.	Financial Advisors, Financial Counselors
		- Conduct workshops on financial literacy, budget management, and smart spending habits.	NGOs specializing in financial education, Financial Institutions
		- Connect drivers with resources for accessing low-interest loans, insurance plans, and government assistance.	Credit Unions, Insurance Agencies
4. Feelings of anxiety and frustration due to traffic congestion	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Teach cognitive	- Conduct CBT sessions to help drivers reframe negative thoughts about traffic.	Mental Health Professionals, Psychologists

	reframing techniques.	- Provide tools and worksheets for drivers to practice cognitive restructuring.	Therapists, Counselors
		- Encourage mindfulness practices to help drivers stay present and calm during congestion.	Mindfulness Instructors, Stress Management Coaches
5. Long working hours contribute to driver stress.	Time Management Training: Enhance time management skills.	- Conduct workshops on effective time management.	Local Government (Labor Department)
		-Provide resources and tools for better scheduling.	Transportation Companies
		- Establish guidelines for reasonable working hours.	Transportation Unions
6. Traffic congestion leads to frustration and anxiety.	Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques: Promote relaxation.	-Offer mindfulness and relaxation workshops.	Land Transportation Office (LTO)
		- Introduce meditation sessions and breathing exercises.	Driving Schools
		-Educate drivers on stress reduction techniques during traffic jams.	Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

In conclusion, the intervention for jeepney drivers on how to cope up with stress adopts a holistic and multi-faceted approach. By addressing stressors, providing coping skills training, promoting mindfulness, creating support networks, and prioritizing health and well-being, the intervention aims to empower jeepney drivers with the tools and resources to effectively manage stress. Ultimately, these efforts contribute to a more resilient and healthier workforce, ensuring the continued provision of efficient and safe transportation services for the community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn: The level of stress in terms of physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral and overall level of stress of the jeepney drivers are High. This could mean that the jeepney drivers experienced high level of stress across various dimensions of their well-being. The focused of coping mechanism of the jeepney drivers in terms of problem focused, emotion focused and social seeking strategy is Highly Practiced. The jeepney drivers are actively engage in various coping methods to manage the stress they experience. There is a significant relationship between the level of stress and focused of coping mechanism of the jeepney drivers. Specifically, the level of emotional and psychological are both significantly associated with the focused of coping mechanism of the jeepney drivers. This implies that the higher the level of stress of the jeepney drivers, there a highly practiced coping mechanism to manage stress level. Therefore, an influences of level of stress of the jeepney drivers, both physical, emotional, psychological and behavioral, may also be a strategies on how to cope the high level of stress among jeepney drivers. Interventions aimed at reducing stress and fostering a supportive work environment can result in increased driver retention, ensuring a stable and experienced workforce. This, in turn, translates to a more reliable and customer-focused transportation service for the public. By investing in the well-being of jeepney drivers, we demonstrate social responsibility, acknowledging their vital

role in our communities. These interventions not only benefit the drivers themselves but also alleviate the economic burden of absenteeism and healthcare costs. In adhering to regulatory compliance and promoting better coping mechanisms, interventions empower drivers to handle challenges effectively, building resilience that extends beyond their profession. Ultimately, intervening to support jeepney drivers is a holistic approach that positively impacts their lives, their passengers, and the broader transportation industry.

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