

When employee wears many hats

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Many workers in the Philippines face a heavy burden because they take on more than one job role. Teachers may teach classes, lead clubs, and manage paperwork. Public servants often handle citizen requests, write reports, and assist extra projects. Health care or business staff may juggle client services and office administration. At first, this multitasking may seem efficient. However, it often creates role overload—a state in which a person has more responsibilities than they can handle. This situation causes stress, lowers morale, and leads to lower work quality.

The Job Demands–Resources model shows how this problem develops. When workers have heavy duties but little help or resources, they may experience burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Studies confirm that role overload leads to stress, sadness, and weaker job performance (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). Workers who feel rushed, anxious, and unsupported often struggle both mentally and physically.

In the Philippine education sector, role overload is very common. A study of teachers in Leyte found that those given extra tasks experienced high stress and self-doubt. These teachers managed their roles by improving time management and asking for support, and they stressed the need for institutional changes (Francisco et al., 2023). In Davao, teachers who taught, advised students, and ran school events reported tension and fatigue. Some loved the extra responsibilities, but many felt very stressed (Toñacao & Oliva, 2022).

The pandemic increased this problem. In Nueva Ecija, primary school teachers had to teach online, plan new lessons, attend online training, and handle technical issues. These teachers reported high stress, anxiety, and trouble balancing work and personal life (Santiago, 2021). In Zambales, elementary teachers experienced burnout due to heavy workload. Many ended the day tired but still worked on lesson preparation (Magtalas & Eduvala, 2024).

Even beyond teaching, role overload affects many workers. A survey of educators in Pangasinan found moderate stress and occasional depression. Teachers often faced unclear job expectations, many students, and heavy paperwork (Ventayen & Ventayen, 2022; Geronimo & Olegario, 2020). Even when they performed well, they suffered low well-being and lost work-life balance (Ancho & Bongco, 2019).

A study in Malaysia found that workers with strong belief in their own ability and control over their lives were better able to cope with role overload (Omar et al., 2019). This supports the idea that role overload can be managed, but only when adequate support is provided.

There are steps institutions can take to help workers. In Leyte, teachers suggested that schools provide clear job descriptions, share tasks fairly, and offer training in time management (Francisco et al., 2023). In Bohol, researchers recommended hiring support staff to handle administrative work (Jabilles, 2019). In Nueva Ecija, teachers managed their load by using flexible times, rest breaks, and digital tools (Santiago, 2021).

Government agencies and organizations must review job assignments and reduce extra duties. These institutions should hire support staff for non-core tasks. They should also provide training in task planning and technology use. Offering mental health support such as wellness programs or counseling can also boost worker resilience.

Role overload is a serious issue in Philippine workplaces across education, public service, and private sectors. When people handle too many roles, they become stressed and lose motivation. Institutions must create better systems to keep jobs meaningful and manageable. A clear distribution of roles, supportive policies, and mental health programs can help employees thrive. When workers are well supported, organizations succeed and community's benefit.

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