Interpersonal Skills And Work Challenges As Correlates Work Resilience Of Library Paraprofessionals

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Abstract— This research delves into the impact of interpersonal skills and work challenges on the work resilience of library paraprofessionals employed in public libraries across Region X (Northern Mindanao), Philippines. Though playing a critical function in maintaining the operation of the library, paraprofessionals usually suffer from professional and personal issues without much institutional intervention. From Role Theory, the present study delves into the ways in which interactions at work with colleagues, managers, and library patrons, along with personal and work-related problems, influence the resilience of support staff. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, utilizing a self-designed survey instrument administered to a stratified random sample of paraprofessionals in library settings. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine correlations between variables. Work-life challenges, interpersonal skills and work resilience were high. Positive relationships with supervisors and patrons were discovered to be a key factor in interpersonal skills for resilience. The study emphasizes the need for interventions and policies to enhance working conditions and sustainable employment of library paraprofessionals to ensure enhanced delivery of library services and SDG on quality education and decent work. Future research is recommended to explore the role of organizational culture and leadership styles in strengthening the work resilience of library paraprofessionals in diverse library settings.

Keywords— work resilience, library paraprofessionals, interpersonal skills, work-life challenges, public libraries, Northern Mindanao, Role Theory, Sustainable Development Goal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries play a strategic function in promoting lifelong learning and social inclusion, especially among rural and resource-deprived communities. While minor attention has been focused on professional librarians, the issue and concern of library paraprofessionals are not less researched especially in the Philippine context. This study complements the aforementioned gap by centering on library paraprofessionals in Region X (Northern Mindanao), Philippines, public libraries. Paraprofessionals are key support staff, frequently without library education, but they undertake a broad scope of work, increasingly digital services and outreach to communities. Yet, these new duties have sparked concerns over work resilience, particularly in the absence of professional growth and workload expansion (Johnston et al., 2022; Zhang & Li, 2023).Previous research (Macapodi et al., 2022; Santos & Rivera, 2024) established that paraprofessionals in libraries in the Philippines lack proper training, precarious jobs, and weak institutional support. Region X, however, is under researched, and instances of overwhelmed paraprofessionals and limited career advancement opportunities have been reported (Mercado-Gracia, 2023).

This research explores the impact of interpersonal skills and work issues such as family obligations, economic pressure, work-life balance, and socio-cultural factors on library paraprofessionals' resilience at work in Region X. It seeks to recommend policy and practice that encourages inclusive workplace culture, improves conditions of work, and increases public library service delivery. The research contributes to the overall goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), i.e., SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by reminding us of the easily forgotten paraprofessionals' needs as central players in fair access to information.

II. RATIONALE

This study utilizes Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) to explain the role of environmental and personal factors in shaping the choice of students to pursue Library and Information Science (LIS). SCCT posits that career choices are

shaped by self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and environmental facilitators such as education, social, and family. Personal factors such as students' values, interest, motivations, and aspirations are relevant— students who regard computer systems and information work highly, and who view LIS as a path to personal achievement, are likely to pursue the profession. Aside from personal motivation, school experiences also shape LIS career interest. LIS familiarity gained via school training, mentorship, access to libraries, and study of ancillary activities has the potential to raise awareness and create interest. School experience and perception by students that they are competent to be successful and achieve well in LIS occupations are also influential in deciding enrollments, yet again further endorsing SCCT's contention that both internal and external factors lead to vocational choice.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research is intended to explore the impact of interpersonal skills and work problems on the work resilience of library paraprofessionals working in public libraries in Region X. To be specific, it aims to:

1. To determine the library paraprofessionals' assessments of their work-life challenges, particularly in terms of: Personal challenges; and Professional challenges.
2. To evaluate the library paraprofessionals' interpersonal skills, specifically in relation to: Colleagues; Supervisors; and Patrons.
3. To examine whether there is a significant relationship between work-life challenges and interpersonal skills with their work resilience.
4. To examine whether there is a significant relationship between work-life challenges and interpersonal skills with their work resilience.

IV. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The present research draws its anchor on Role Theory that theorizes human experience and behaviors being guided by expectations related to the social role played by them. The theory, which has been formulated by Ralph Linton (1936), validates that expectations of work-life problems and people skills account for work resilience. Earlier studies have indicated how conflicts in role playing, primarily personal versus work life, will deter resilience negatively. Studies by Nguyen & Huynh (2019) and Chaudhuri & Bartlett (2020) illustrate how interpersonal relationships and role handling impact resilience among library personnel. Additionally,

resilience has also been defined as the capacity to manage adversity at work without sacrifice of performance and well-being (Bernuzzi et al., 2022). In the case of the public library environment where paraprofessionals deal with technological advancement and public facing demands, Role Theory offers an effective perspective on how interpersonal skills and work-life blending contribute towards resilience maintenance.

V. METHODS

Research Design

This research applied a descriptive correlational design in order to analyze the interactions of life challenges, social contacts, and work resilience among public library paraprofessionals. With the help of surveys and statistical measures, the design made it possible to explore the mentioned variables within an organic setting where there is no interference by researchers, yet delivering context-specific evidence that will enhance staff welfare.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

Eighty (80) library paraprofessionals purposively selected in public libraries from Region X took part in the study. The participants were chosen because of their active role in library functions at the province, city, municipal, or barangay level. Purposive sampling assured that respondents having direct, similar experiences were involved so that different and significant representations of work-life concerns, social competencies, and resilience in the public library setting could be conducted.

Research Instruments

The study utilized a researcher-developed questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection, aimed to measure important variables of work resilience, work-life issues, and interpersonal ability among library paraprofessionals. The questionnaire had three parts: the first section measured work resilience, gauged the aspects contributing to job satisfaction and fulfillment. The second part dealt with work-life issues, categorized into personal and professional issues, and the third part evaluated interpersonal skills in terms of relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and customers.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, percentage, and standard deviation were employed to examine the first three research problems, namely the levels of work resilience, work-life challenges, and

interpersonal skills among library paraprofessionals. Pearson's r correlation coefficient was used for the fourth research problem, which examined the relationships between variables, to identify the significant relationships between work-life challenges, social interactions, and work resilience.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What are the participants' assessments of their work-life challenges in terms of:

1.1 Personal Challenges; and

1.2 Professional Challenges?

Table 1 shows the respondents' self-ratings of their work-life issues, highlighting personal issues such as stress, financial, and health problems. With a mean rating of 3.90 ("Often") and standard deviation of 0.84, the results reveal a uniform trend, albeit with some variation among individuals. This means that individual concerns are the norm and not exceptional among Region X library paraprofessionals, which are precipitated by economic, physical, and mental stressors. The findings emphasize the juggling between professional and personal responsibilities in the sector.

***Table 1.** Participants' Assessment of their Work-Life Challenges (Personal Challenges)*

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	19	23.75
3.51 – 4.50	Often	38	47.50
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	18	22.50
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	4	5.00
1.00 – 1.50	Never	1	1.25
	Total	80	100
	Mean	3.90	
	Description	Often	
	SD	0.84	

The table indicates that a large number of participants (47.50%) scored their personal difficulties in achieving work-life balance often, while 23.75% scored theirs always. A relatively small number (22.50%) scored theirs as sometimes, while 6.25% only scored theirs as rarely. The findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Allen et al. (2021), which has Work-life balance outcomes being attributed to stressors in personal life. The highest mean score belonged to "Managing financial obligations and economic pressures" (4.10), reflecting the ongoing economic struggles of library paraprofessionals that impact their work-life balance. Lowest mean score belonged to "Coping with stress from personal life impacting work performance" (3.61) which means personal stress exists, but its influence on work performance is relatively slight.

The financial difficulties are in line with the comparatively low wages and restricted financial rewards in library support staff. Reyes and Tudy (2002) discovered that library paraprofessionals tend to experience financial difficulties but manage to overcome them through resilience and peer support.

Additionally, Table 2 reveals a notable range of professional work-life challenges (mean score 3.76), with 43.75% of the sample having often professional challenges and 20% always challenges.

These include workload, implementation of policy, and lack of support, all of which have serious impacts on the health of library paraprofessionals.

***Table 2.** Participants' Assessment of their Work-Life Challenges (Professional Challenges)*

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	16	20.00
3.51 – 4.50	Often	35	43.75
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	20	25.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	7	8.75
1.00 – 1.51	Never	2	2.50
	Total	80	100
	Mean	3.76	

	Description	Often
	SD	0.88

The results are consistent with Chong et al. (2021), who reported that increased professional requirements and job stressors, more specifically from increasingly changing workplaces, have increased workers' work-life conflict, and subsequently, have caused reduced job satisfaction and well-being. Out of the professional issues, the highest mean rating was for "Adapting to changing work processes and policies" (4.08), reflecting that library paraprofessionals do not find it easy to accommodate changing workplace procedures and institutional requirements without proper training or support. On the other hand, the lowest mean rating was for "Coping with job insecurity and contractual employment" (3.31), which indicates that although job insecurity is a problem, it is less of an issue than other problems. The research also pointed to mounting stress with adjusting to new responsibilities, such as technical support, event planning, and outreach, which fall outside the mainstream library work. Researchers such as Schilperoort et al. (2021) and Wahler et al. (2020) note the escalating complexity of paraprofessionals' tasks, which lead to work stress and lowered satisfaction.

Table 3. *Summary Table of the Participants' Assessment of their Work-Life Challenges*

Work-Life Challenge	Mean	Description	Standard Deviation
Personal	3.90	Often	.84
Professional	3.76	Often	.88
Overall Mean	3.83	Often	.86

Problem 2. What are the participants' self-report of their interpersonal skills with:

2.1. Colleagues; 2.2. Supervisors; and 2.3. Patrons?

Table 4 illustrates how the subjects estimated their people skills with staff were often with the overall mean value of 4.44 and indicated a healthy interpersonal climate of library paraprofessionals. Communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork are core values in their work environment, serving to buffer adversity in the form of workload stress or procedural changes. These are complemented by Clem (2021), who highlighted that high levels of social relationships and embeddedness in the workplace help ensure staff retention and engagement in academic libraries, adding that paraprofessionals tend to remain committed to their job when they experience collaboration and relational support.

Table 4. *Participants' Assessment of their Interpersonal Skills with Colleagues*

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	40	50.00
3.51–4.50	Often	35	43.75
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	4	5.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	1	1.25
1.00 – 1.51	Never	0	0.00
	Total	80	100
	Mean	4.44	
	Description	Often	
	SD	0.73	

The results are in line with Shakil and Mairaj's (2021) study, where interpersonal relationships and the workplace played a significant role in library staff job satisfaction. The majority of the respondents rated their people skills with others at work as always (50%) or often (43.75%), and 93.75% felt extremely competent in relating to others at work. This indicates harmonious, effective relationships among the participants, as necessary for success in collaboration and productivity. The low variability mean score of 4.44 reflects a stable level of often demonstrated interpersonal skills.

The item with the highest mean rating was "Trust and respect in working relationships" (4.53), indicates the high level of cooperation among library paraprofessionals. The lowest mean rating was for

"Mutual support during busy periods" (4.30), suggesting that teamwork is appreciated but maintaining consistent support in busy periods is troublesome because of practical issues such as workload of an individual and staff constraints.

Table 5. Participants' Assessment of their Interpersonal Skills with Supervisors

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	31	38.75
3.51 – 4.50	Often	38	47.50
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	10	12.50
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	1	1.25
1.00 – 1.51	Never	0	0.00
	Total	80	100
	Mean	4.25	
	Description	Often	
	SD	0.65	

The research concluded that effective library supervisory relationships are established through regular interaction, cooperation, and resolution of problems, with trust and psychological safety developing as a result. Supervisors were often rated on approachability (mean = 4.40), demonstrating open communication and leadership support, although the absence of formal reward for accomplishments (mean = 4.03) was observed as a shortcoming impacting job satisfaction.

Region X paraprofessionals indicated positive relationships with supervisors and patrons, with interpersonal skills highly rated—86.25% for supervisor relationships (mean = 4.25) and 4.46 for patron interaction. Supervisor support and communication were both strong, but the study identifies a need for more effective recognition systems and more effective strategies for addressing patron concerns.

Table 6. Participants' Assessment of their Interpersonal Skills with Patrons

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	39	48.75
3.51 – 4.50	Often	37	46.25
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	4	5.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.51	Never	0	0.00
	Total	80	100
	Mean	4.46	
	Description	Often	
	SD	0.54	

The research revealed that 95% of the respondents scored their interpersonal skills with library users as always (48.75%) or often (46.25%), reflecting consistently high interpersonal skills. The mean score of 4.46, with a rarely standard deviation of 0.54, confirms this finding. These findings align with Robbins and Judge (2023) Organizational Behavior concepts, which emphasize the importance of high interpersonal skills in promoting customer satisfaction and loyalty in service environments. The highest mean rating was for "Positive interactions with library users" (4.64) which shows that library paraprofessionals are friendly and communicate well with patrons. However, the lowest mean ratings were for "Success in meeting patron needs" and "Positive feedback from library users" (4.41) which suggest failure to meet patrons' needs occasionally or variability in feedback. These shortfalls may be due to time constraint, patron expectation variance, or making feedback challenging. These findings are aligned with Holm & Kantor (2021), who pointed out the difficulty of serving various patron needs, particularly in tight staffing conditions. Further, the study is aligned with Lapidus et al. (2020), who identified that paraprofessionals are very good at making positive interactions, but the consistency and quality of such interactions might not be equal.

Table 7. Summary Table of the Participants' Assessment of their Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal Skills	Mean	Description	Standard Deviation
Colleagues	4.44	Often	.73
Supervisors	4.25	Often	.65
Patrons	4.46	Often	.54
Overall Mean	4.38	Often	.64

Problem 3. What are the participants' assessments of their work resilience?

Table 8 indicates that paraprofessionals in the library reported working resilience often, with the overall mean value of 4.41. This indicates they tend to display strong resilience attributes like flexibility, dedication, and perseverance at work. Though parts of individual resilience may be in varying strength, the findings project that paraprofessionals can endure pressure, bend challenges, and preserve commitment to work even in hard times.

Table 8. Participants' Assessment of their Work Resilience

Score Range	Description	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	36	45.00
3.51 – 4.50	Often	40	50.00
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	4	5.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	0	0.00
1.00 – 1.51	Never	0	0.00
	Total	80	100
	Mean	4.41	
	Description	Often	
	SD	0.52	

The table indicates that 95% of library paraprofessionals evaluated their work resilience as always or often, with a mean rating of 4.41 and a low standard deviation of 0.52, showing robust and uniform resilience. Participants score particularly high on adaptability and commitment, evidenced by very high ratings on adapting to changes and remaining committed in difficult times.

However, the lowest-rated item—recovering from setbacks—suggests some struggle with emotional recovery, suggesting a potential need for enhanced mental health treatment.

These findings are in line with studies by Robbins and Judge (2023), Lindén et al. (2023), and Clem (2021), all of which emphasize the importance of adaptability, work commitment, and emotional resilience in sustaining performance in library settings.

Problem 4. Are the participants' work-life challenges and interpersonal skills significantly associated with their work resilience?

- H_{o1}: The participants' work-life challenges are not significantly associated with their work resilience.
- H_{o2}: The participants' interpersonal skills are not significantly associated with their work resilience.

Table 9 presents the Canonical Correlation Analysis (CCA) findings, which unveil a statistically significant yet weak association between work-life difficulties and work resilience among library paraprofessionals, characterized by a canonical correlation of $Rc = 0.37$ ($Rc^2 = 0.14$), $F(2,78) = 12.60$, $p < 0.001$. This finding supports the rejection of null hypothesis one (Ho1), thereby confirming that work-life difficulties are significantly related to work resilience. Normality was verified before analysis, and QQ plots are presented in the appendix.

Canonical Loadings			Rc	Rc²	F	Df₁	Df₂	p
Work-life Challenges		Work Resilience	1.00	.37	.14	12.60**	2	78	<.001
Personal	.99								
Professional	.86								

Interpersonal Skills		Work Resilience	1.00	.85	.72	65.53**	3	76	<.001
Colleagues	.67								
Supervisors	.82								
Patrons	.93								
**significant at .01 level.									

The model reveals that although work-life difficulties account for merely 14% of the variance in work resilience (a weak association), increased personal (loading = 0.99) and professional (loading = 0.86) difficulties remain positively related to resilience indicating that overcoming such difficulties tends to increase resilience. Empirical evidence (Marques & Berry, 2021; Bernuzzi et al., 2022; Köse et al., 2021) supports the validity that resilience supports balancing and development through professional and personal challenges.

On the other hand, the relationship between work resilience and interpersonal skills is very high, Rc = 0.85 (Rc² = 0.72), meaning that 72% of work resilience variation is explained by interpersonal skills. Positive loadings of 0.67, 0.82, and 0.93 for peer, supervisor, and customer contacts indicated that positive interpersonal relationships are significant in resilience. Internal and relational competencies, rather than external life adversity, are found to be at the core of coping processes and performances of library paraprofessionals.

This is underscored by research conducted by Wallin (2024), Lindén et al. (2023), Mauriello (2021), and Shaghaei et al. (2022), whose findings show the application of interpersonal relations, communication, and teamwork in librarianship resilience development.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study arrived at the following recommendations:

1. For School Administration that they may:
   1.1 explore developing a comprehensive career guidance program that helps students identify alignment between personal interests and LIS career opportunities, potentially highlighting how librarianship connects with diverse career aspirations; and
   1.2 contemplate on student support mechanisms including scholarships, grants, and financial aid specifically targeted at promising LIS candidates as a way to address economic barriers to enrollment.

2. For BLIS Department that they may:
   2.1 reflect on redesigning promotional materials to showcase the diverse career pathways and specializations available within the LIS field, potentially moving beyond traditional librarianship representations;
   2.2 evaluate the potential benefits of developing a strategic social media presence to highlight student success stories, program achievements, and emerging trends in information science might increase visibility among digital-native prospective students;
   2.3 consider establishing a mentorship program pairing senior high school students interested in LIS with current students or recent graduates, potentially fostering personal connections to the field; and
   2.4 contemplate establishing a mentorship program pairing senior high school students interested in LIS with current students or recent graduates, potentially fostering personal connections to the field.

3. For Library Educators, that they may:
   3.1 reflect on workshops for senior high schools that showcase information literacy skills and emerging technologies in librarianship as potential means to generate interest and address outdated perceptions;
   3.2 collaborate with school guidance counselors to provide accurate information about LIS career opportunities, salary prospects, and professional growth trajectories; and
   3.3 consider integrating innovative teaching methodologies and real-world applications into curriculum discussions during recruitment events, which may demonstrate the dynamic nature of LIS education.

4. For Future Researchers that they may:

    4.1   explore the possibility of conducting longitudinal studies tracking how enrollment intentions translate to actual enrollment and eventual career choices, potentially identifying critical decision points and influencing factors;

    4.2   consider as a research direction the impact of socioeconomic backgrounds on students' perceptions of and access to LIS education to give information for more inclusive recruitment strategies; and conduct comparative analyses between regions or institutions with high versus low LIS enrollment seems worthy of attention, as this might identify transferable best practices in program promotion and student recruitment.

VII. CONCLUSION

Library paraprofessionals in Region X are continually facing high levels of personal and professional work-life challenges. Economic pressure and financial issues emerge as the top personal problems, indicating that economic pressure heavily impacts their daily quality of life. While their personal stress does contribute to their work, it is evidenced to be regulated by coping techniques or helpful work environments. Professionally, the biggest challenge is adjusting to constant changes in procedure and policy, which mirrors pressures of a changing and dynamic library system. Although job security issues exist, they are considered less disruptive than procedural adaptation and workload demands. Together, these problems make up the work life of paraprofessionals and define their resilience and capacity for well-executed performance functions.

Furthermore, paraprofessionals consistently exhibit high levels of interpersonal skills in their interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and patrons. Teamwork and collaboration with colleagues are high, reinforcing a collaborative work environment, although reciprocal help during peak periods may at times be limited by workload demands. Relationships with supervisors are characterized by being accessible and communicating openly, further enhancing a good and positive environment, although positive acknowledgment for accomplishment is less adequate to better maximize morale. In relation with patrons, paraprofessionals exhibit great interpersonal competence in generating good and active experiences, though there exists a bit of

opportunity to make it more routine in satisfying multiple needs and providing feedback. Generally, such robust interpersonal skills are a critical aspect of their professional competence and play an important role in their workplace resilience.

In addition, library paraprofessionals have high work resilience denoting that they have high commitment and flexibility when faced with adversity in the workplace. Paraprofessionals can turn to flexibility and remain motivated during adversity times, an indication of a committed workforce as well as a survivor work force that can survive changing demands. While they generally recover well from adversity, the slightly lower emotional recovery rating suggests that some would benefit from other support structures to enhance coping and well-being. In general, paraprofessionals demonstrate a high foundation of resilience that enables them to withstand and function well despite stress related to their work.

Interpersonal skills are highly important in influencing the work resilience of library paraprofessionals. Although work-life issues exert a moderate impact, the nature of the relationship between interpersonal skills and resilience is considerably strong. Positive interactions among the paraprofessional, patrons, supervisors, and coworkers significantly help a paraprofessional be responsive, dedicated, and resilient in managing workplace pressures. This means closes personal relationships that not only help with daily teamwork and communication but also serve as a core system of support in enhancing emotional and professional endurance. Overall, setting up and strengthening interpersonal skills play a key part in creating an enduring and highly performing library staff.

The findings highlight that both personal and professional challenges, along with interpersonal skills, significantly impact on the work resilience of library paraprofessionals. Although work-life difficulties have fairly weak effects on resilience, the findings suggest that coping with such stressors, particularly financial, emotional, and procedural, is still likely to contribute to the development of resilience through adaptive coping. More significantly, the results indicate that excellent interpersonal skills are a key predictor of resilience. Positive interpersonal connections with patrons, supervisors, and coworkers are necessary support systems that foster motivation, emotional control, and recovery from adversity. These social relationships are emerging as a central component in the maintenance of

resilience against the demands of the workplace. Generally, it is obstacles that trigger the building of resilience, but it is the quality of interpersonal skills that best maintains it.

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