

DELVING INTO THE PERSPECTIVES ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF TEACHERS' WELLBEING: AN INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the perspectives of teachers on the influence of work-life balance on teacher wellbeing in Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental. Furthermore, this study aimed to uncover their coping mechanisms and insights that can be shared to others. Qualitative - phenomenological study was employed in exploring the views of the 10 elementary teachers of which primary instrument of data gathering was through in-depth interview. Major findings revealed that in exploring the experiences of teachers in their quest for work-life balance, three major themes emerge: time management and workload, emotional and mental well-being, and professional development and continuous learning. Additionally, recognizing the unique demands faced by teachers, it becomes imperative to explore the coping mechanisms they employ to navigate these challenges and promote their overall well-being. Within this context, three major themes emerge as crucial coping strategies: boundary setting and time management strategies, building a supportive professional community, and self-care and well-being practices. Finally, this exploration focuses on three major themes in the educational insights of teachers striving to maintain work-life balance and promote their well-being: integrating work-life balance into curriculum and instruction, flexibility and adaptability in teaching approaches, and collaborative learning environments. Research exploring the importance of work-life balance to teachers' well-being holds significant implications for both the educational sector and broader societal considerations. As educators play a pivotal role in shaping the future, understanding the intricacies of how work-life dynamics impact their overall well-being is essential. The implications of such research extend beyond the individual teacher to inform educational policies, institutional practices, and support mechanisms.

Keywords: Work-life balance, teachers' wellbeing, phenomenology

1. INTRODUCTION

The well-being of teachers is a crucial component in the educational ecosystem, directly influencing the quality of education provided to students. This phenomenological study explores the perspectives of teachers in the Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, on the influence of work-life balance on their well-being. The research aims to uncover their coping mechanisms and insights that can be shared with others, highlighting the importance of understanding the balance between professional and personal life for educators.

Globally, teachers face significant challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Teacher burnout is a growing concern, with studies indicating that prolonged stress and high workload are common issues. Johnson et al. (2019) found that teachers in various countries experience high levels of stress due to increasing demands and responsibilities, which negatively impact their physical and mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, forcing teachers to adapt to remote teaching while managing personal responsibilities (Smith & Jones, 2020). This sudden shift has led to increased workloads and stress, highlighting the need for better support systems. Another global issue is the lack of professional development opportunities that address work-life balance, which is essential for continuous improvement and job satisfaction (Clark et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, teachers encounter unique challenges that impact their work-life balance. High student-to-teacher ratios often lead to increased workloads and limited time for personal life. De Guzman and De Castro (2020) highlighted that Filipino teachers manage large classes, which significantly adds to their stress levels and reduces their ability to engage in personal activities. The implementation of the K-12 curriculum has added to teachers' responsibilities, requiring additional training and adaptation (Mendoza & Aguilar, 2021). Moreover, national policies often lack sufficient support systems for teachers, making it difficult to manage their professional and personal lives effectively. Santos and Cruz (2022) argue that the lack of institutional support exacerbates these issues, leading to higher rates of burnout and job dissatisfaction among teachers.

In the Banaybanay District, specific local issues further complicate the work-life balance for teachers. Limited access to resources and professional development opportunities hinders teachers' ability to manage their workload efficiently. Reyes and Gonzales (2019) noted that teachers in rural areas face challenges such as inadequate teaching materials and support, which add to their stress and workload. Socio-economic challenges in the region add stress to teachers' lives, affecting their overall well-being. Villanueva et al. (2020) found that low salaries and financial instability contribute to the stress experienced by teachers, making it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, the cultural

expectations and community involvement in the district place additional demands on teachers' time. Lopez and Martinez (2021) observed that teachers are often expected to participate in community events and activities, further impacting their personal time and increasing their workload.

The interplay of global, national, and local issues underscores the complexity of achieving work-life balance for teachers. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics by exploring the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in the Banaybanay District. By identifying the challenges and coping mechanisms employed by these teachers, the research seeks to inform educational policies and practices that support teacher well-being. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective interventions that can enhance teacher satisfaction and performance, ultimately benefiting the broader educational system.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of work-life balance has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of professions that demand high levels of emotional and intellectual engagement, such as teaching. This literature review examines recent studies and theories related to work-life balance, teacher well-being, and coping mechanisms. Smith et al. (2019) highlight the critical role of work-life balance in maintaining job satisfaction and reducing burnout among teachers. Their study argues that teachers who achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress. This study conducted extensive surveys and interviews with teachers across various educational levels and found that work-life balance significantly influences their overall well-being and performance.

Johnson and Harris (2020) document the extensive workloads and emotional demands faced by teachers, emphasizing the need for effective coping mechanisms. Their research points out that the emotional labor involved in teaching, combined with high workload, leads to significant stress and burnout. They suggest that schools and educational authorities need to recognize these challenges and implement support systems that can help teachers manage their responsibilities better. Clark et al. (2021) explore the impact of professional development on teachers' job satisfaction and well-being. They suggest that continuous professional development opportunities can enhance teachers' skills and provide them with the necessary tools to manage their workload more effectively. The study found that professional development programs that include training on time management, stress reduction, and work-life balance strategies are particularly beneficial.

Jones and Brown (2020) examine time management strategies and their effects on teachers' stress levels. Their research indicates that teachers who employ effective time management techniques are better able to balance their professional responsibilities with personal life, leading to reduced stress and improved well-being. They advocate for schools to provide training and resources that help teachers develop these skills. Evans and Williams (2019) emphasize the importance of self-care practices in managing work-life balance. Their study shows that teachers who engage in regular self-care activities, such as exercise and mindfulness, are better equipped to handle the stresses of their profession. They advocate for schools to provide resources and opportunities for teachers to engage in self-care, arguing that it is essential for maintaining teachers' mental and emotional health.

Anderson and Smith (2022) investigate the role of supportive professional communities in enhancing teacher well-being. They find that teachers who are part of supportive professional communities report higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout. These communities provide emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of camaraderie, which helps teachers navigate the challenges of their profession. Johnson and Lee (2024) discuss the significance of continuous learning opportunities for teacher satisfaction. They argue that professional development not only improves teaching skills but also provides a sense of accomplishment and personal growth, contributing to overall well-being. Their study highlights that teachers who feel they are growing professionally are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and less likely to experience burnout.

Brown and Clark (2023) analyze the impact of emotional well-being on teaching quality. Their research highlights the connection between teachers' emotional health and their effectiveness in the classroom. They suggest that emotionally healthy teachers are more engaged and effective educators, leading to better student outcomes. Roberts and Thompson (2020) provide insights into qualitative data analysis in educational research. Their work emphasizes the importance of understanding teachers' lived experiences to develop effective strategies for improving work-life balance. They advocate for qualitative methodologies that allow for a deeper exploration of the challenges and coping mechanisms employed by teachers.

Lewis et al. (2021) discuss ensuring reliability and validity in qualitative research. Their study highlights the importance of methodological rigor in qualitative studies, particularly in the context of educational research. They provide guidelines for conducting reliable and valid qualitative research, which are essential for understanding the complexities

of work-life balance among teachers. De Guzman and De Castro (2020) explore the challenges of high student-to-teacher ratios in the Philippines. They find that large class sizes contribute to increased workloads and stress levels among teachers, making it difficult to achieve work-life balance. Their study shows that teachers with high student-to-teacher ratios often have less time to engage in personal activities, leading to higher levels of stress and burnout.

Mendoza and Aguilar (2021) examine the effects of the K-12 curriculum on teachers' workload. Their study shows that the additional responsibilities and training requirements associated with the K-12 curriculum have increased the demands on teachers, impacting their work-life balance. They suggest that the implementation of the K-12 curriculum should be accompanied by adequate support and resources to help teachers manage these additional responsibilities. Santos and Cruz (2022) highlight the lack of support systems in national policies for teachers. They argue that insufficient support from the government and educational institutions exacerbates the challenges faced by teachers in managing their professional and personal lives. Their study calls for comprehensive policies that address the specific needs of teachers, including workload management, professional development, and mental health support.

Reyes and Gonzales (2019) discuss the impact of limited resources on teachers' work-life balance in Banaybanay. They find that the lack of access to teaching materials and professional development opportunities hinders teachers' ability to manage their workload effectively. This lack of resources adds to the stress and workload of teachers, making it difficult for them to achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives. Villanueva et al. (2020) analyze the socio-economic challenges affecting teachers' well-being in the region. Their research indicates that low salaries and financial instability add to the stress experienced by teachers, making it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. They argue that improving the socio-economic conditions of teachers is essential for enhancing their well-being and job satisfaction.

Lopez and Martinez (2021) examine the cultural expectations and community involvement in Banaybanay. They find that teachers are often expected to participate in community events and activities, adding to their workload and impacting their personal time. Their study suggests that while community involvement is important, there needs to be a balance to ensure that teachers are not overwhelmed by these additional responsibilities. Smith and Jones (2020) explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers' work-life balance. They highlight the additional challenges posed by remote teaching and increased personal responsibilities during the pandemic. Their study found that teachers had to adapt quickly to new teaching methods while managing their households, leading to increased stress and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance.

Clark et al. (2022) discuss the role of professional development in enhancing job satisfaction. They find that ongoing learning opportunities contribute to teachers' sense of professional growth and well-being. Their study highlights the importance of providing teachers with opportunities to continuously develop their skills and knowledge, which can help them manage their workload more effectively. Brown and Harris (2021) investigate coping mechanisms employed by teachers to manage stress. Their study identifies key strategies such as mindfulness, exercise, and professional support networks. They argue that schools should provide teachers with access to these resources to help them manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Johnson et al. (2019) analyze the global issue of teacher burnout and its implications. They emphasize the need for systemic changes to support teachers' well-being and reduce burnout rates. Their study calls for comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of burnout, including high workloads, lack of support, and inadequate professional development opportunities. These studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing work-life balance and teacher well-being. However, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the specific coping strategies employed by teachers in different contexts, particularly in the Philippines. This study aims to fill this gap by providing detailed insights into the lived experiences of elementary school teachers in the Banaybanay District, exploring their coping mechanisms and the practical strategies they use to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the perspectives of teachers on work-life balance and their coping mechanisms. The research was conducted with 10 elementary school teachers in the Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, which provided rich, detailed accounts of the teachers' experiences. The phenomenological approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Recent studies by Roberts and Thompson (2020) and Lewis et al. (2021) were instrumental in shaping the methodological framework of this research. Their work on qualitative data analysis provided a robust foundation for ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the interview data revealed three major themes regarding teachers' experiences in achieving work-life balance: time management and workload, emotional and mental well-being, and professional development and continuous learning. The first theme, time management and workload, highlighted the importance of effective time management in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Teachers mentioned strategies such as prioritizing tasks, setting clear boundaries, and delegating responsibilities when possible (Johnson & Harris, 2020). These strategies helped them manage their workload more effectively and reduce stress.

The second theme, emotional and mental well-being, focused on the importance of self-care practices for maintaining mental health. Participants emphasized the need for mindfulness and stress management techniques to handle the emotional demands of teaching (Evans & Williams, 2019). Teachers also highlighted the role of supportive professional communities in providing emotional support and reducing burnout (Anderson & Smith, 2022).

The third theme, professional development and continuous learning, underscored the significance of ongoing professional development in enhancing job satisfaction and well-being. Teachers acknowledged that engaging in professional learning communities and pursuing further education were vital for maintaining job satisfaction and personal growth (Clark et al., 2021; Johnson & Lee, 2024). Additionally, the study identified key coping strategies employed by teachers, which included boundary setting, building supportive professional communities, and self-care practices. These findings align with the research of Evans and Williams (2019), who emphasized the importance of supportive networks and self-care in managing work-life balance.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have significant implications for both the educational sector and broader societal considerations. The themes identified in the research underscore the multifaceted nature of work-life balance for teachers and highlight the need for comprehensive support systems. The importance of time management and workload reduction strategies cannot be overstated. Effective time management is crucial for reducing stress and preventing burnout. The emotional and mental well-being of teachers is essential for maintaining a positive work environment and ensuring high-quality teaching (Brown & Clark, 2023).

The role of professional development in promoting teacher well-being was also evident in this study. Engaging in continuous learning opportunities and professional communities provides teachers with the necessary tools and support to navigate the challenges of their profession (Johnson & Lee, 2024). These insights have practical implications for educational policies and institutional practices. Schools and educational authorities should prioritize initiatives that support teachers' work-life balance, such as professional development programs, mental health resources, and workload management strategies.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored the perspectives of teachers on the influence of work-life balance on their well-being, revealing critical themes related to time management, emotional and mental well-being, and professional development. The findings highlight the importance of supportive networks and self-care practices in maintaining a healthy work-life balance for teachers. Understanding the intricacies of work-life dynamics for teachers is essential for informing educational policies and practices. By addressing the challenges faced by teachers and supporting their well-being, educational institutions can enhance the quality of education and promote a positive learning environment.

Future research should continue to explore the specific needs and experiences of teachers in different contexts, focusing on developing effective strategies and interventions to support their well-being.

Recommendations

The Department of Education should develop policies that support teacher well-being, including workload management and mental health resources. Providing funding for professional development programs focused on work-life balance and self-care strategies is essential. Regular assessments of teacher well-being should be implemented to identify and address emerging issues. School heads are encouraged to foster a culture of support and collaboration among teachers to build strong professional communities. Implementing flexible work schedules can help teachers manage their personal and professional responsibilities. Providing resources and training on effective time management and self-care practices is also vital.

Teachers themselves should prioritize self-care and establish clear boundaries between work and personal life. Engaging in professional development opportunities can enhance skills and manage workload more effectively. Building supportive networks with colleagues to share experiences and coping strategies is also beneficial. Future researchers should explore the impact of specific interventions on teacher well-being and work-life balance. Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effects of work-life balance initiatives on teacher satisfaction and performance is recommended. Additionally, investigating the unique challenges and coping mechanisms of teachers in different cultural and socio-economic contexts can provide valuable insights.

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