



## Teachers' Stressors, Satisfaction, and Support: An Exploration of Work-Related Factors

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** The teachers working in elementary schools in the Philippines have encountered various types of stress that cause significant harm to their well-being and satisfaction with their work. The purpose of this research was to identify the personal and professional stress factors experienced by teachers, the coping skills they implemented, their level of job satisfaction, and the support provided by school administration.

**Materials and methods:** A qualitative instrumental case study design was employed to capture the perspectives of 20 purposively selected elementary teachers from both public and private schools. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using an open-ended guide focused on stress, coping strategies, job satisfaction, and administrative support. Thematic analysis was conducted to generate patterns and insights.

**Results:** Results showed that teachers faced multiple stressors, such as health issues, financial problems, work overload, and student misbehavior. Coping strategies varied, with 65% of participants engaging in wellness activities (e.g., exercise or meditation) and 45% seeking peer support and collaboration. Job satisfaction fluctuated depending on students' progress and recognition, but decreased with increased administrative duties, low wages, and insufficient educational materials. Although 70% of participants reported receiving emotional or technical support from administrators, most noted that these efforts were insufficient.

**Conclusion:** Personal and institutional factors strongly influence teachers' well-being and job satisfaction. The analysis highlights the need to increase emotional support, reduce administrative burdens, and improve access to teaching resources by developing supportive policies and programs. School administrators and curriculum designers can use these findings to establish systems that sustain teacher efficiency and engagement, thereby improving student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Administrative Support, Burnout, Coping Strategies, Teacher Engagement, Qualitative Research

### Introduction

The involvement of a teacher plays an essential role in the educational outcomes of schools within a given region. A teacher's work engagement consists of three main components: emotional, cognitive, and professional. Highly engaged teachers are creative, passionate, and committed—traits essential for fostering a dynamic classroom environment (Huang et al., 2021). Engagement equips teachers with motivation and the ability to withstand challenges like extensive workloads and constant changes in policies. Research indicates that engaged teachers apply more sophisticated social and academic interaction strategies, which in turn improve students' social and academic performance. Burić & Kim, 2020. On the other side, disengagement results in subpar quality of teaching, negative academic outputs from students, and growing burnout for the teachers, which increases the need to address the issue of engagement for learning and growth sustainably.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world of education and prompted teachers to shift towards remote and hybrid models of instruction. Teachers' self-motivation and ability to adapt were challenged due to the increased workload and the need to integrate technology into instruction (Li, 2022). There has been a lack of motivation and self-discipline due to balancing school and personal life,





further complicating the ever-evolving reality of learner expectations. Work-related stress, dissatisfaction, and inadequate administrative support significantly reduce engagement and increase burnout risk. Enabling barriers to engagement consist of burnout, emotional fatigue, heavy workload, and strict organizational policies. Burić and Kim (2020) highlight how high-stakes testing and administrative duties amplify stress and lower job satisfaction. While the pandemic increased employee burnout for teachers, it drastically increased emotional detachment and exhaustion levels for Padmanabhanunni and Pretorius (2023). Autonomy and motivation need to be encouraged without strict guidelines.

Enhancement of teacher well-being is an important supporting issue. Dreer-Goethe (2021) highlights that work emotional support and professional development strengthen resilience and effectiveness in teaching, thus sustaining motivation and engagement, which are vital for effective educational service delivery. Teachers in the Philippines face additional challenges with teaching, including oversized classes, constant changes to the national curriculum, and very low salaries (Manlongat et al., 2021). These harsh economic conditions increase teacher burnout while deepening the need to address systemic barriers (Galanis et al., 2023). Professional development programs are commended because they have successfully increased teacher participation by reducing workload stress and increasing motivation (Padillo et al., 2021).

This study focuses on a highly topical and relevant issue in the field of education: the influence of various stressors, administrative support, and coping strategies on the career satisfaction and well-being of elementary teachers in the Philippines. Teacher engagement and satisfaction are key determinants of educational quality and student achievement, yet these areas remain under-researched in contexts facing financial constraints and shifting teaching modalities. The themes of financial difficulties, workload, and the transition to distance and online education after the pandemic represent important research gaps, offering a multidimensional perspective on educator stressors. The findings of this study will be relevant to school management, policy formulation, teacher-support initiatives, and mental health solutions, adding value to ongoing discussions on teacher sustainability and retention both locally and globally.

## Objectives

This study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the relationship between specific stressors, including financial and workload-related stress, and the career satisfaction of elementary teachers in the Philippines.
2. To analyze the role of administrative support in influencing teacher well-being and job satisfaction.
3. To identify the coping strategies employed by elementary teachers, particularly those in rural or economically deprived areas.
4. To evaluate the impact of online and hybrid teaching modalities on teachers' stress levels and coping mechanisms after the pandemic.
5. To propose evidence-based solutions and recommendations to enhance teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

## Literature review

Teacher well-being is a multidimensional concept that encompasses various forms of occupational stress. Work-related stress and its impact on well-being "is a problem in the Philippines." Alegre and Labajo (2023) affirm alongside other contributors. Student professionalism and support from school administration are stress factors that lead to emotional burnout and tend to be too much (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). In Cebu and Batangas, research shows that teachers are strained from coping with a lack of supportive administration, which takes an emotional and physical toll (Gudelos & Mabitad, 2025; Compalsivo & Falcunaya, 2020).

Fulfillment and job satisfaction impact teachers' engagement because it is strongly associated with professional life. Self-accomplishment, motivation, and a sense of influence on learners are noted to be sources of self-efficacy, which helps teachers face challenges and remain passionate about work





(Pedler et al., 2020). Engaged teachers also innovate, collaborate more, and transform schools socially (Budiongan & Corpuz, 2024).

Stress is considered to be a common phenomenon in teaching. As Hidajat et al. (2023) report, elementary teachers resort to emotion-focused stress relief techniques like socializing, exercising, and mindfulness, in addition to more active approaches. Teachers report engaging in job crafting strategies involving seeking help and taking on less visible work to exert control over their environment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021): support systems, job demands, and policies impact career satisfaction. According to Ertürk (2021), there is a moderate positive correlation between administrative support and job satisfaction, suggesting that support at leadership levels advances teacher contentment. Professional growth, recognition, and a supportive environment enhance retention and commitment (Smith, 2025).

In the Philippines, teachers experience stress during the pandemic and utilize coping strategies (Tomazar & Tabernilla, 2024). Coping efficiency alongside job satisfaction is influenced by financial literacy and perceptions of health security (Gonzales & Caballes, 2023). Conversely, the perception of administrative support is mixed, which impacts stress and satisfaction levels. Sebulen & Jimenez (2024) discovered that although administrative support does not diminish work-related stress, it dramatically improves job satisfaction and productivity. Effective school leaders who provide teachers with emotional, instructional, and technical resources contribute to a positive working environment.

Regional studies mirror these trends. Financial incentives and amicable relationships contributed to the moderate satisfaction that teachers in Eastern Samar reported (Picardal & Rapada, 2024). Administrative guidance, classroom environment, and professional development were identified as essential to teacher satisfaction by Abdulpatta et al. (2024). Feedback, recognition, and career growth from school administrators are also valued by Batangas teachers, thus positively affecting their job satisfaction (Compalsivo & Falcunaya, 2020).

A highly engaged faculty is a prerequisite for better teaching and active learning in the classroom. Enduring engagement is supported by professional fulfillment, mentorship, and resilience (Dreer-Goethe, 2021; Pedler et al., 2020). However, Filipino teachers confront overwhelming workloads, inadequate compensation, and minimal control, which promotes burnout and dissatisfaction (Manlongat et al., 2021). Enhancing administrative support and professional development and strategically fulfilling career expectations are essential to addressing systemic obstacles.

In short, teacher engagement encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral commitment that influences instructional quality and student achievement. The remote teaching necessitated by the pandemic, coupled with the integration of new technologies, increased stress levels, burnout, and subsequent health issues (Huang et al., 2021; Li, 2022). Underlying systemic challenges, such as inadequate remuneration, excessive workload, and weak support from the administration, undermine motivation, resulting in an increased risk of burnout (Manlongat et al., 2021; Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2023). While self-care strategies and training partially alleviate the situation, enduring changes require consistent support for teacher well-being and robust systems at all levels.

## Conceptual Framework

The study was based on Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (1985). This theory helped me understand teacher engagement's complex nature and how it affects teaching practices. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

In the context of teacher engagement, SDT highlighted how teachers who feel empowered to make decisions, recognize their professional growth, and experience meaningful connections with peers and students are more likely to be engaged. This theory explains how intrinsic motivation fosters creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment in teaching, essential for adopting innovative practices and achieving positive student outcomes.

The fulfillment of these needs enhances teachers' sense of purpose and drives their dedication to their roles. In the context of this study, SDT explained how engaged teachers were more likely to embrace innovative teaching methods and actively seek professional growth, as they derived satisfaction from their sense of competence and personal fulfillment. The theory framed teacher



engagement as a dynamic process driven by fulfilling these psychological needs, which enhanced their teaching practices and student outcomes.

## Methodology

*Research Design.* This study employed a qualitative instrumental case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of work-related stressors, coping strategies, job satisfaction, and administrative support among elementary school teachers. This design was appropriate because it allowed the exploration of teachers' lived experiences within their specific teaching contexts, providing rich, contextualized insights beyond what quantitative measures could capture. The study was anchored on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and Teacher Burnout Theory (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), which explain how high demands and insufficient resources contribute to stress and burnout, while adequate support enhances engagement and satisfaction.

*Research Environment.* The study was conducted in the Lala South District, Division of Lanao del Norte, Philippines, a rural setting characterized by large class sizes, limited resources, and diverse student populations. These conditions, combined with societal and cultural expectations of teachers, created unique stressors and provided a meaningful backdrop for examining teacher burnout and coping strategies.

*Research Participants.* Ten elementary teachers who were identified as experiencing burnout were selected through purposive sampling, guided by the Teacher Burnout Scale (TBS). Participants represented varied demographics:

- Five senior female teachers (aged 30+, with 10+ years of service) experiencing emotional and physical exhaustion.
- Two younger female teachers are facing financial and behavioral classroom challenges.
- One mid-career teacher is balancing career advancement struggles.
- Two near-retirement teachers dealing with health-related stress.
- Teachers with no signs of burnout on the TBS were excluded to maintain focus on relevant cases.

*Research Instruments.* The primary instrument was the researcher, consistent with qualitative case study methodology (Merriam, 1998). Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide based on prior burnout and coping literature and validated by two educational experts. Key areas included:

- Types and sources of stressors (e.g., workload, financial, behavioral issues).
- Coping strategies (e.g., wellness practices, peer support).
- Career satisfaction indicators.
- Administrative and institutional support mechanisms.

Interviews lasted 45–60 minutes and were audio-recorded with consent.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Approval was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and school principals. Informed consent was secured from all participants. Interviews were conducted individually in private settings to ensure confidentiality. Teachers were encouraged to share narratives freely, with probing questions used to clarify and deepen responses.

### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach: familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting. Interview transcripts were read multiple times, and open coding was performed to identify recurring concepts. Codes were grouped into categories reflecting stressors, coping mechanisms, job satisfaction factors, and support systems. Themes were cross-validated by an independent coder to enhance reliability.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were upheld throughout the study. Participants were informed of their rights, including voluntary participation and the option to withdraw at any time. Identities were kept confidential, and pseudonyms were used in reporting. Sensitive information regarding burnout and





mental health was handled with care, and participants were provided with information on available support services.

## Results

### Primary Work-Related Stressors Experienced by Elementary School Teachers

Some of elementary teachers' most prominent work-related stressors include health, emotions, finances, and professionalism (Merriam, 1998; Madigan et al., 2023). Health Related Stressors. Health-related stressors involve physical and mental challenges that impact a teacher's life professionally and personally. The participants said:

*"I now have hypertension and have been experiencing it for many years."*— TP1.

*"My number one personal stressor is my health because I'm currently experiencing an illness."* — TP6.

*"Even if I'm eager to teach, because of my illness, I can't continue"*— TP6

*"If I raise my voice or get firm, I feel weak and tired afterward."* — TP6

*"Another stressor for me is my health. I was getting sick during that time—my head swelled whenever I got stressed."* — TP10

The analysis of participants' statements indicates that an array of physical health problems, from chronic ones such as hypertension to stress-related issues like burnout, seriously undermine their professional productivity, psychological health, and quality of life.

*Emotional Stressors.* It relates to anxiety, frustration, burnout, or emotional exhaustion resulting from a teacher's work setting, relationships with students or other staff, or personal life difficulties. The participants said:

*"One of my personal stressors is my child's schooling because he can't cope with his studies."* — TP4

*"Sometimes I feel ashamed because I can't bring my child to school, I can't motivate him, and I feel ashamed of myself because I can't even advise him properly."*— TP4.

*"My personal stressor was when my husband died. I was extremely stressed at that time—I was really down. But I told myself I needed to survive because I still have children."*— TP9

These stories demonstrate how personal emotional challenges, such as parenting difficulties and grief, intersect with teachers' professional responsibilities.

*Financial Stressors.* Financial stressors denote the many difficulties teachers face that affect their financial stability and overall well-being. Participants said:

*"In teaching pupils, one of my personal stressors is financial because I have children to support in their studies."* — TP5

*"My number one personal stressor is my health... but one thing that holds me back is my debt and the fact that I'm still sending my children to school."* — TP6

*"My financial stress is that my salary goes not only to my family but also to my students."* — TP7

These financial stressors, often coupled with the responsibility of supporting students, create an overwhelming strain, further deepening teachers' emotional and physical exhaustion.

*Professional Stressors.* These are described as the stress generated from the workload, administrative responsibilities, teaching expectations, as well as the lack of control over professional tasks. Participants said:

*"Pupils' behavior, a lot of DepEd reports, and multitasking. Supposed to be a teacher must focus on teaching."*— TP2

*"I get flustered and tired because of many interventions, like paperwork. Then, the students can hardly absorb the lessons because we get interrupted."* — TP2

*"I really feel the stress, especially in Grade 1. As part of the older generation, we need to adapt to them. If we don't lower ourselves to their level, we'll lose our minds."*

— TP3

*"My professional stressor is disciplining the pupils."* – TP4  
*"A professional stressor is when pupils misbehave during class."* – TP5  
*"Among the professional stressors, it's frustrating when you have your lesson planned, but the students' behavior wears you down. They are very unruly, don't listen, and it's hard to discipline them because many laws protect the children."* – TP6  
*"As for professional stressors, I struggle with thinking whether my students actually learned anything. I feel no fulfillment on days when only a few score well or can read."* – TP7  
*"My professional stressor is the attitude of my learners."* – TP10  
Participants expressed profound concern about learner misbehavior, particularly in the primary grades, citing it as emotionally draining and professionally demoralizing.

### **Coping Techniques as Identified by Elementary Teachers**

Stress in the teaching profession is a universally acknowledged 'given,' so coping strategies critical for personal health and continued interest in their work have been implemented. Merriam (1998) identified four primary categories of coping strategies: personal wellness and self-care, support systems and collaboration, task management and planning, and attributing personal meaning. *Personal Wellness and Self-Care Strategies*. This involves activities and practices outside the professional obligations of a teacher, focused on maintaining and improving their physical, mental, and emotional health. Participants said:

*"After I finish doing the laundry in the morning, I really sleep, sometimes I watch movies... just smiling."* – TP4  
*"During weekdays, I go jogging, I attend Zumba... I feel more energized, especially when it's Monday again."* – TP9.  
*"I make myself look pretty and I divert my attention so I won't get stressed... we clean our house."* – TP8.

The categories demonstrated how teachers frequently use mental, emotional, and physical coping methods to deal with the demands of their line of work.

*Support Systems and Collaboration*. This focuses on stress management resources provided to teachers externally. This incorporates emotional, practical, and professional support from coworkers, family, administrators, and friends. Participants said:

*"My co-teachers, they also help, especially when I'm really having a hard time."* – TP1  
*"Support from colleagues, from parents, and the community."* – TP3  
*"Ever since, my family has been supportive, that's why I really have a positive outlook on my work."* – TP8

In this instance, the value teachers appreciate about their colleagues, caregivers, and community illustrates how professional well-being is intertwined with relational aspects. *Task Management and Planning as Stress Buffers*. The term task management as a stress buffer pertains to the cognitive strategies teachers use to cope with stress through orderly completion of their tasks. Participants said:

*"Time management, and then I do my job ahead of time... every Saturday."* – TP5  
*"Time management and I ask my colleagues what to do... I have plans ahead of time."* – TP10  
*"When it comes to work, I prepare myself."* – TP3

Following Merriam's case study approach, the "Task Management and Planning as Stress Buffers" category illustrates how teachers formulate practical, anticipatory plans to address professional challenges.

*Meaning-Making*. It is defined as the stage where educators redefine and extract meaning from their life experiences, especially those perceived as stressful. Participants said:

*"One thing that really motivates me to persevere in teaching children is the fear of bad karma... I really work hard so I can pay my debts."* – TP6  
*"I take it as a challenge... because we are paid by the government, so we really have*



*responsibilities to fulfill.*” – TP4

Teachers were not incentivized solely by pay or enforced targets from higher authorities. Instead, there was a sense of obligation towards the students, society, and their moral beliefs.

### **Elementary Teachers' Career Satisfaction and Influencing Factors**

Teacher career satisfaction is sequential, profoundly emotional, and responsive to factors such as student growth, quality of teaching, personal and professional wellness, and professional identity (Merriam, 1998).

*Satisfaction Rooted in Student Growth and Impact.* This subcategory pertains to the educator's sense of achievement and contentment in relation to their students' academic, emotional, and personal development as a result of the teacher's effort and input. Participants said:

*"I feel satisfied when I receive positive comments about my teaching. Especially when my Grade 1 students learn how to read."* – TP3

*"I feel satisfied when I see improvement in my students—from knowing nothing to learning."* – TP9

*"I feel good when my students praise me, especially since I'm a new teacher... when I see they learned something in my Science class."* – TP10.

Most participating teachers reported that their excellent satisfaction comes from meaningfully noticing their learners' progress.

*Teacher Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction in Teaching.* This subcategory captures satisfaction from teachers focusing exclusively on students' essential educational needs, such as lesson delivery, student engagement, and individual student problem management. Participants said:

*"I feel unsatisfied as a teacher when I can't teach my students because of many reports."* – TP2

*"I feel dissatisfied when I want to give students tasks but can't because I have reports to finish for the school."* – TP4.

*"We can do it, but being an ICT coordinator feels like being an adviser too."* – TP10.

Satisfaction was not about abdicating responsibility. Instead, it was about wishing for greater alignment between what one seeks to achieve professionally and the support provided by the institution.

*Career Satisfaction Closely Tied to Personal Well-Being.* This subcategory captures satisfaction from teachers focusing exclusively on students' essential educational needs, such as lesson delivery, student engagement, and individual student problem management. Participants said:

*"My salary isn't enough, but I have no choice... I just go on because I have no other option."* – TP5

*"Sometimes I don't get enough sleep, and it's affecting my health."* – TP5

*"Sometimes I get tired making instructional materials... but it's important for the students' learning."* – TP8

Teachers found fulfillment in their profession, but it was constrained when their basic needs and health were compromised.

*Professional Identity and Passion as Sustaining Forces.* The subcategory reflects the self-image of the teacher as an educator. Their satisfaction often stems from internal motivation rather than external rewards. Participants said:

*"Teaching is my first choice, and it is my passion to teach my children."* – TP7

*"I truly feel fulfilled because teaching supports my family... I was able to send my children to school."* – TP5.

Merriam analyzed participants' lived experiences from the context of case studies, paying special attention to the meanings ascribed to them.



### Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support

Systems thinkers approach teachers' comments and designate four types of administrative support: emotional encouragement, professional development/feedback, material/instructional resources, and technical guidance and flexibility.

*Emotional Support as a Source of Encouragement.* Emotional support aids in the care of teachers and navigates the complexities of their professional lives. Participants said:

*"Even a little praise has a big impact on me and keeps me going in teaching."* – TP1

*"I have nothing negative to say; they give emotional support and encouragement."*

–TP3

*"Our head is considerate and listens, especially when I have personal problems."*

– TP10

The concept illustrated that simple gestures, such as listening to someone and offering praise and recognition, are important for teachers.

*Technical Guidance and Flexibility for Classroom Management.* Flexibility and technical guidance are defined as the autonomy and bounded freedom offered by school authorities and fellow educators, which allows teachers to set their teaching strategies and practically manage their classrooms.

Participants said:

*"So far, the administrative support has given much help in guiding me on what to do as a teacher."* – TP2

*"With my administrators, I am happy enough that they guide as...give technical assistance if the problem arises."* – TP5.

*"With my administrators, I am happy enough that they guide as...give technical assistance if the problem arises."* – TP9.

These replies demonstrated that emotional support was only one part of the problem. What was also needed was structural clarity and systematic guidance with set frameworks to ensure teachers remain engaged.

*Administrative Support in Terms of Material and Instructional Resources.* Support related to instructional and material resources includes providing adequate teaching aids, technological devices, and other resources required for effective lesson delivery and classroom control. Participants said:

*"There are teaching materials provided by the administration, but they are not enough for learning."* – TP6

*"So the administration should improve in giving support through materials for us teachers."*

– TP6

*"If possible, the administration should also be able to provide things like books."*

– TP3

Support from administrators, through the eyes of the teacher participants, was appreciated most when it was practically provided, such as in the consistent delivery of instructional aids and class materials.

*Administrative Support in Professional Development and Instructional Feedback.* Administrative Support in Professional Development encompasses all the activities a school leader enables teachers to participate in self-improvement about their teaching, including giving appropriate feedback and guidance. Participants said:

*"I want to learn how I should teach."* – TP1

*"I hope to be given technical assistance in teaching... someone who will give feedback."* – TP9

*"Specific improvements... new strategies from the principal to help improve my teaching."* – TP5

Several teachers voiced a desire for more instructional observation, feedback, and learning opportunities, which they viewed as essential for growth and increased confidence in teaching practices.





## Discussion

Health-related stressors encompass an array of illnesses and chronic conditions that affect teachers personally and professionally. Chronic conditions in teachers, such as hypertension, sleep disorders, and exhaustion, tend to be prevalent and lower productivity and well-being (Peck, 2025). Participants shared how many illnesses fundamentally incapacitated them from teaching despite their efforts... indicating a disparity between professional willingness and physiologic capability (TP1, TP6, TP10). Following Merriam's constructivist approach, coping with health challenges seems to correlate with professional identity for teachers in their careers. These experiences exemplify how these chronic ailments alter teachers' perception of being resilient to vulnerable, limiting their ability to manage classrooms effectively and prolonging their careers (Agyapong, 2022). There is considerable evidence that stress associated with occupational demands can result in physical illness, contributing to burnout and absenteeism.

Emotional stressors involve anxiety, frustration, burnout, and emotional exhaustion resulting from both professional and personal challenges. Teachers shared emotional struggles related to parenting, grief, and the high emotional toll of teaching (TP4, TP9). Emotional stress can hinder resilience and engagement and is associated with lowered effectiveness (Wang et al., 2024). There is wide variation in the prevalence of burnout among teachers, with emotional exhaustion being a key concern, diminishing job satisfaction, and increasing turnover intention (Agyapong et al., 2022).

Financial stressors include low salaries and difficulty financially supporting a family while attending to educational responsibilities. Teachers often report spending their money on classroom materials and feel obligated to assist students financially, increasing their burden (TP5, TP6, TP7). In the Philippines, low salaries and the absence of basic benefits like healthcare and retirement funds worsen financial stress while diminishing job satisfaction (Moore et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2022; Katnik et al., 2024). Compounding these problems is the lack of financial literacy, creating a greater urgency for institutional financial and educational support.

Professional Stressors encompass unmanageable workloads, administrative tasks, updates in the curriculum, handling students' behavioral issues, and a lack of freedom. Teachers express dissatisfaction with policies involving heavy documentation interfering with teaching, affecting lesson delivery, and overall satisfaction (TP2, TP3, TP6, TP7). The exacerbating behavioral issues, coupled with the legislative safeguards of the students, further complicate as well as enhance classroom control problems, adding to the woes of teachers (Yıldırım & Şenel, 2023). These stressors endanger the quality of teaching, instructional practice, and retention of teachers, requiring policy changes to reduce administrative workload and enhance support for teachers in the classroom.

Such stressors may be analyzed through Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) alongside Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). About the latter, SDT draws attention to the chronic health, financial, and work-related complications that stem from stress, along with autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core psychological drivers that provide motivation, all of which are undercut due to exhaustion. SET draws attention to teachers' inequity regarding the disproportionate stimuli received for personal efforts provided in their work, which leads to disenchantment and burnout.

Taking care of yourself physically, mentally, or emotionally falls under Personal Wellness and Self-Care. It also includes meditation, exercise, hobbies, and other relaxing activities. Reported stress management methods and personal rejuvenation from teachers include yoga, jogging, watching movies, and personal grooming (TP4, TP8, TP9). These activities and others help teachers motivate themselves and balance their lives and work, helping them cope with systemic challenges (Braun & Hooper, 2024; Zito et al., 2024).

Support Systems and Collaboration cover the emotional and practical support available to teachers from colleagues, family, administrators, and community members. Teachers noted collegial support, family motivation, and sharing professional roles as moments of stress mitigation (TP1, TP3, TP8). Through the coping lens, Merriam's framework emphasizes the beneficial dimension of relationships that alleviate social loneliness and promote motivation (Toropova et al., 2020; Broughton,





2022). These supportive structures highlight the importance of collaborative school cultures and mentoring for resilience and job satisfaction.

Task management and planning encompass professional demand scheduling, goal setting, and prioritization of work, as well as time management and delegation. Teachers pointed out the organization and advancement of lesson preparations and task management among peers as effective stressors (TP3, TP5, TP10). Such planning enhances autonomy and control, thus diminishing emotional distress (Wilson et al., 2021; Squires et al., 2022). It is suggested that schools provide time management skills training and refine workload allocation to enhance teacher well-being.

Making Meaning is the learning process through which teachers seek to reinterpret stressors as opportunities for improvement and strengthen commitment through ethical and spiritual dimensions. Teachers derive strength from their responsibilities, sense of honor, and the difference they make in pupils' lives, encouraging perseverance even in the most challenging circumstances (TP4, TP6). This motivation resonates well with Merriam's concepts of adult education relating to self-meaning and purposefulness (Gao, 2021; Kahveci, 2021). Understanding teaching as a calling maintains effort well after extrinsic incentives (Li et al., 2022; Okerefu, 2023).

Teacher career satisfaction is sequential, profoundly emotional, and responsive to factors such as student growth, quality of teaching, personal and professional wellness, and professional identity (Merriam, 1998).

Satisfaction Based on Student Growth and Impact is satisfaction rooted in students' recognition of academic and social achievements. Positive reinforcement and tangible progress foster professional identity and motivation (TP3, TP9, TP10). Research validates that student performance positively impacts teacher resilience and satisfaction (Ibrahim & Aljneibi, 2022; Bachler et al., 2020).

Satisfaction Based on Teaching Effectiveness arises from the possibility of concentrating on instructional responsibilities without the hindrance of overwhelming administrative workloads. Excessive clerical work undermines this, inducing dissatisfaction alongside burnout (TP2, TP4). Teachers believe there is a disconnect between organizational support and professional goals at work (Viac & Fraser, 2022).

Career satisfaction is linked to personal well-being, which has an impact when employees feel financially secure and physically healthy. Due to low wages and chronic fatigue, teachers feel they have no options (TP5, TP8). OECD confirms that insecurity and exhaustion negatively affect job satisfaction worldwide (Viac & Fraser, 2022).

Professional Identity and Passion as Sustaining Forces involve a teacher's internal drive and self-image as a person who cares about learners and strives to assist them despite many difficulties related to the system. Sustained engagement is driven by passion and moral purpose (TP5, TP7). This allows educators to withstand much adversity to sustain commitment (Merriam, 1998; Li et al., 2022; Okerefu, 2023).

Satisfaction Based on Student Growth and Impact is satisfaction rooted in students' recognition of academic and social achievements. Positive reinforcement and tangible progress foster professional identity and motivation (TP3, TP9, TP10). Research validates that student performance has a positive impact on teacher resilience and satisfaction (Ibrahim & Aljneibi, 2022; Bachler et al., 2020).

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allows educators to withstand adversity to sustain commitment (Merriam, 1998; Li et al., 2022; Okerefu, 2023).

Emotional Support consists of recognition, empathy, praise, and all other forms that lower stress and increase motivation (TP1, TP3, TP10). With such awe-inspiring Support, teachers change their mindset from merely surviving to thriving (Leithwood et al., 2019; Bjorklund et al., 2020).

Technical Guidance and Flexibility include needing to be provided clear instructions, curriculum support, and freedom to manage their classes, which boosts their confidence and satisfaction in the job (TP2, TP5, TP9). Fostering teacher learning and empowerment correlates with effective leadership (Karadağ & Sertel, 2025; Daniels et al., 2019).

Material and Instructional Resources include the provision of teaching aids and, for technology, required teaching aids. Teachers indicated that resources are inadequate and often bear the costs, compromising their effectiveness and satisfaction (TP3, TP6). As emphasized, adequate resourcing must be provided to experience professional fulfillment (Kasalak & Dagyar, 2020).

Professional Development and Instructional Feedback integrates training, coaching, and evaluation for learning purposes. Teachers wanted reasons to be given to them about why they should have the opportunity to learn to improve their teaching quality (TP1, TP5, TP9). Collaborative professional development positively impacts teacher identity and teaching practice (Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2024; Olson, 2021). Support in these domains collectively applies Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), focusing on autonomy, competence, and relatedness, alongside Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which states reciprocal support affirms motivation. Lack of administrative support may lead to an erosion of trust, burnout, and, in the worst-case scenario, a deep sense of hopelessness.

## Knowledge Contribution

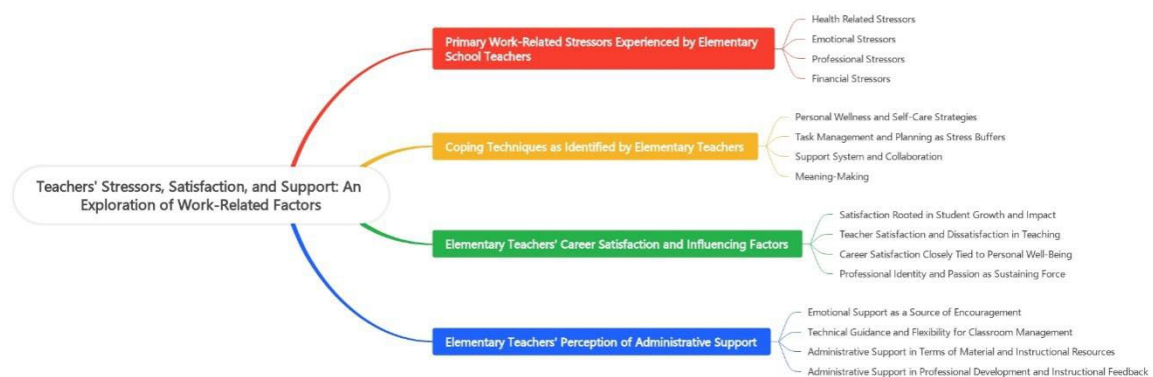


Figure 1: Exploring Teachers' Stressors, Satisfaction, Support, and Work-Related Factors

Figure 1 illustrates the key findings of the study. Teachers faced significant personal and professional stressors, including health issues, financial problems, excessive workload, and student behavioral challenges. Coping strategies ranged from personal wellness activities like exercise to collaborative support with colleagues. Career satisfaction was closely tied to students' emotional and academic progress, while dissatisfaction stemmed from high administrative duties, low compensation, and lack of resources. Administrative support, particularly emotional and technical guidance, was appreciated but often insufficient in providing necessary teaching materials. Both personal and institutional factors heavily influence teachers' well-being. The study highlighted the importance of addressing teachers' emotional and material needs to foster greater job satisfaction and professional effectiveness.



## Recommendation

It is recommended that the school administrators offer wellness checkups, counseling, stress workshops, and financial literacy programs with psychiatric support to help teachers manage stress and family-related burdens. Additionally, school leaders may reduce administrative tasks to enhance instructional focus and create supportive work cultures that include peer support groups, reflection sessions, and emotional regulation training. Policymakers may recognize teacher efforts through promotions, awards, and thank-you messages while improving pay, reducing class sizes, and increasing access to teaching resources. Lastly, school administrators may actively seek teacher input and apply instructional leadership training to respond empathetically to their needs.

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