

Navigating work-related stress: Teachers' strategies for effective job stress management

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Received: 28 December 2025

Revised: 03 February 2026

Accepted: 17 February 2026

Available Online: 18 February 2026

Volume I (2026), Issue 1, P-ISSN – 3116-3769; E-ISSN - 3116-3777

<https://doi.org/10.63498/injelps4>

Abstract

Aim: This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos 1 regarding work-related stress and the coping strategies they employ.

Methodology: The study utilized a descriptive phenomenological design. Fifteen purposively selected elementary teachers participated in in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using the Colaizzi method to identify significant themes describing teachers' stress experiences and coping practices.

Findings: Teachers identified workload demands, classroom management challenges, administrative pressures, and limited resources as primary sources of work-related stress. Emotional strain and time constraints further intensified their stress experiences. To manage stress, teachers adopted self-care practices, healthy lifestyle habits, and structured time management. Social and professional support systems, including peer collaboration and administrative assistance, also played a vital role in coping. Participants emphasized that supportive leadership, access to mental health resources, and a positive school climate significantly contribute to reducing stress and sustaining teacher well-being.

Conclusion: Work-related stress among teachers is largely driven by workload, instructional demands, and institutional challenges. Strengthening coping mechanisms and enhancing administrative and psychosocial support systems are essential to promoting teacher resilience, well-being, and professional effectiveness.

Keywords: Education, Work-related stress, Coping mechanisms, Phenomenology, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Work-related stress negatively impacts teachers' performance, motivation, and overall well-being, with major stressors such as heavy workloads, classroom management issues, and lack of administrative support hindering their ability to teach effectively.

Globally, a study conducted by Dos Santos (2020) in South Korea believed that stress is not an isolated situation in a particular region but an international problem at local schools, international schools, universities, private teaching academies, and even community centers. Also, in Singapore, Ng and Meow (2022) elucidated that prolonged exposure to stress among teachers is associated with several undesirable outcomes, including lower job satisfaction and increased motivation to leave the teaching profession. Further, effectively managing stress among teachers requires a combination of institutional support, such as reduced workloads and access to mental health resources, along with professional development and a positive school culture that prioritizes teacher well-being.

In the Philippine arena, a study conducted by Sarabia and Collantes (2020) stated that one of the problems experienced by teachers is work-related stress due to long hours, large class sizes, and limited resources. Also, a study conducted in Manila by Panuelos and Pili (2025) elucidated that it is important to address occupational stress and enhance the working conditions of teachers to improve their quality of life and teachings.

In the province of Davao Occidental, the same problem is manifested among the elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos (JAS) 1, wherein some of the teachers opted to resign because of burnout and stress. Subsequently, there is a notable gap in existing research on work-related stress among teachers, as most studies predominantly utilize quantitative methods and that qualitative research is needed because it seeks to capture the lived experiences, personal narratives, and contextual realities of teachers facing work-related stress. Conducting this study is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying causes, coping mechanisms, and support

systems available to teachers, which can serve as a basis for developing responsive interventions and policies to improve their well-being and retention in the profession.

Subsequently, this study aims to address this gap by adopting a qualitative approach, providing deeper insights into the lived experiences of teachers and the nuanced, personal impact of work-related stress that quantitative data alone may overlook. Thus, this study may explore the work-related stress of teachers to understand the specific challenges they face in their profession.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Work-related stress among teachers has emerged as a critical issue with far-reaching consequences for both educator well-being and instructional quality. Hence, Benevene et al. (2020) identified persistent stressors such as heavy workloads, extended working hours, large class sizes, and intense emotional demands, while Kreuzfeld et al. (2022) emphasized that prolonged exposure to these conditions contributes to burnout, anxiety, depression, and other adverse physical and psychological outcomes. These findings underscore that teacher stress is not merely an individual concern but a systemic issue that directly influences teacher retention, classroom effectiveness, and the overall quality of education.

Similarly, global evidence affirms that teachers operate within increasingly complex professional environments characterized by limited resources, accountability pressures, and escalating performance standards (Katsantonis, 2020). Moreover, Montano (2023) further argued that understanding the multifaceted effects of work-related stress is essential to addressing the challenges embedded in the teaching profession. However, while existing studies extensively document the sources and consequences of stress, there remains a notable gap in research that deeply examines how teachers themselves actively manage and navigate these stressors in their specific contexts. Thus, this study takes a strong and necessary position by focusing on teachers' strategies for effective job stress management, contributing context-based, practice-oriented insights that move beyond problem identification toward actionable solutions that support resilience, professional sustainability, and improved educational outcomes (Cook & Babyak, 2019).

Job stress is a significant challenge faced by teachers, impacting their well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness in the classroom (Cropley et al., 2020). They also stated that effective stress management strategies are crucial to mitigating the adverse effects of stress and maintaining teacher well-being. According to Redondo-Flores et al. (2020), engaging in physical exercise, maintaining a balanced diet, and prioritizing sleep are foundational elements of stress management for teachers. Moreover, physical well-being directly impacts mental health, with regular physical activity shown to reduce stress and anxiety levels (Rogowska et al., 2020). They also stated that teachers who prioritize self-care report feeling more energized and better equipped to manage their professional responsibilities. In line with these findings, this study seeks to examine teachers' strategies for effective job stress management to better understand the practical approaches they employ in sustaining their well-being and professional effectiveness.

Synthesis

The reviewed literature consistently positions teaching as a highly demanding profession characterized by substantial work-related stress. Moreover, Elomaa et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers regularly confront excessive workloads, time pressures, challenging student behavior, and limited administrative support wherein conditions that not only heighten daily strain but also contribute to burnout, absenteeism, and attrition. Although Ghasemi (2022) noted an increasing scholarly interest in how educators cope with these stressors, much of the existing research remains concentrated on identifying stressors and documenting their negative consequences rather than critically examining how teachers actively and strategically manage stress within their specific professional contexts. This imbalance reveals a clear research gap: there is insufficient in-depth, context-based exploration of the coping strategies teachers employ to sustain their well-being and effectiveness. Consequently, investigating teachers' strategies for effective job stress management is not only relevant but necessary, as it advances the discourse from problem identification to solution-oriented understanding, generating practical insights that can inform targeted interventions, institutional support systems, and policies aimed at strengthening teacher resilience and long-term professional sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

This study was viewed through the lens of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TSC) of Folkman and Lazarus (1986), which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the individual and their environment, suggesting that stress results from a transaction between a person and their surroundings. In this study, this theory offered a valuable framework for understanding how teachers experience and manage stress. Moreover, through examining how teachers appraise stressful situations and the coping resources they use, teachers can develop targeted strategies to reduce stress and promote well-being. Moreover, effective stress management involves improving teachers' coping resources, fostering a supportive work environment, and training teachers to reframe challenges as manageable (Hayes, 2021). Further, the TSC model underscores the importance of both individual and collective efforts in managing stress, ensuring that teachers can remain healthy, motivated, and effective in their teaching roles.

Guided by the TSC, this research specifically explores how teachers cognitively appraise work-related stressors and the problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies they employ in response, thereby aligning the theoretical framework with the study's objective of examining teachers' strategies for effective job stress management. Through applying this model, the study systematically analyzes the interaction between environmental demands and personal coping resources, enabling a deeper understanding of how these processes inform the development of practical interventions and evidence-based recommendations to enhance teachers' well-being and professional sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

Work-related stress has become a growing concern in the teaching profession due to its adverse effects on educators' well-being, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness. Teachers are frequently exposed to heavy workloads, complex classroom environments, and increasing administrative demands, which contribute to emotional exhaustion and burnout. While numerous studies have examined teacher stress, many have relied primarily on quantitative methods that measure stress levels without fully capturing teachers' lived experiences and the personal meanings they attach to their challenges.

In the Philippine context, teachers continue to face resource limitations, large class sizes, and evolving institutional expectations that intensify occupational stress. However, there remains limited qualitative research exploring how elementary teachers in specific local settings experience and cope with work-related stress. Without an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences, interventions and support systems may fail to address the realities teachers encounter daily.

This study therefore sought to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos 1 regarding work-related stress and the coping strategies they employ. By examining their personal perspectives and support needs, the study aimed to provide context-specific insights that may inform school leadership practices, teacher support programs, and policy initiatives designed to promote teacher well-being.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos 1 regarding work-related stress and their coping strategies.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the most pervasive sources of work-related stress among elementary teachers.
2. To examine the coping strategies teachers use to manage work-related stress.
3. To determine the types of institutional and social support teachers need in addressing work-related stress.
4. To describe the insights teachers can share with the academe regarding stress management and professional well-being.

Research Questions

1. What are the most pervasive sources of work-related stress among elementary teachers?
2. How do elementary teachers manage work-related stress, and which coping strategies do they find most effective?
3. What forms of support do teachers perceive as necessary in addressing work-related stress?

4. What insights can elementary teachers share with the academe regarding stress management and teacher well-being?

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos 1 who were experiencing work-related stress and to examine the coping strategies they employed to improve their work-life balance in the academe. This design was utilized as work-related stress is a deeply personal and subjective phenomenon, and phenomenology allows for an in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive, interpret, and respond to their experiences. Through focusing on participants' firsthand accounts, the study captured meaningful insights into their strategies for effective job stress management within their specific educational context.

Population and Sampling and Other Sources of Data

The study was conducted at the division of Davao Occidental particularly the elementary teachers in JAS 1 district.

Sampling Technique. Purposive sampling was employed to deliberately select participants who could provide rich and relevant insights into the phenomenon under study. This technique was used because it allows the researcher to focus on individuals with specific experiences and characteristics that are most relevant to addressing the research questions.

Participants. There were 15 purposively chosen elementary teachers teaching in the JAS 1 district to participate in the study. In Subedi (2021), it was recommended and suggested that anywhere from 5 to 50 participants are adequate. The participants were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: they held teaching positions within the school, had at least five years of service in the Department of Education (DepEd), and were responsible for advisory classes. Participants excluded from the study included elementary teachers who were part of non-teaching personnel, teachers from other districts, and volunteer or temporary teachers.

Instruments

The primary instruments for data collection were semi-structured interview guides used for in-depth interviews (IDIs). The guides contained open-ended and probing questions designed to elicit detailed narratives about participants' experiences.

Validation. The instruments underwent 3 expert validation which evaluated the guides for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives. Feedback from the validators which were experts in education, management and qualitative research were incorporated to refine and improve the instruments prior to actual data collection.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with fifteen purposively selected elementary teachers from Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Davao Occidental. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participants' respective schools at mutually agreed schedules during the designated data collection period. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. To ensure participants' comfort and clarity of expression, the interviews were conducted using a combination of English and the participants' preferred local language.

A semi-structured interview guide with open-ended and probing questions was used to elicit detailed narratives about teachers' experiences of work-related stress, coping strategies, and perceived support systems. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual observations. Data collection continued until information saturation was achieved, that is, when no new significant insights emerged from subsequent interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted following Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method, ensuring a systematic and rigorous examination of participants' lived experiences. The analysis proceeded through the following clearly defined steps:

1. All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were reviewed alongside field notes to ensure accuracy and completeness.

2. Significant statements directly related to teachers' experiences of work-related stress and coping strategies were identified and extracted from each transcript.
3. Meanings were formulated from these significant statements through careful interpretation while remaining faithful to the participants' original expressions.
4. The formulated meanings were organized and clustered into theme categories, capturing shared patterns across participants' experiences.
5. An exhaustive description of the phenomenon was developed by integrating all identified themes into a coherent and comprehensive narrative of teachers' stress experiences and coping mechanisms.
6. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was then articulated to clearly represent the essence of teachers' lived experiences.
7. Finally, member checking was conducted by returning the summarized findings to selected participants to validate the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

This systematic process ensured methodological rigor, transparency, and alignment with the phenomenological orientation of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to established ethical standards to protect participants' rights and maintain research integrity. Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with a written informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, procedures, duration, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time or to decline answering any question without penalty. Written consent was obtained before conducting and audio-recording the interviews.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and any personally identifiable information was removed from transcripts and research reports. All audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents were securely stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researchers, while printed materials were kept in a locked and secure location. Collected data will be permanently deleted and properly disposed of after the completion of the study in accordance with institutional guidelines.

Furthermore, the study complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring that all personal information was lawfully, ethically, and responsibly collected, processed, stored, and disposed of.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presented the data on the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Jose Abad Santos 1 regarding the work-related stress they encountered and how they cope with it. These findings provide valuable insights into the challenges teachers face and the strategies they employ to maintain their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom.

1. The Most Pervasive Sources of Work-Related Stress Among Teachers

Theme

Diverse Teacher Challenges Driven by Workload, Classroom Complexity, and Resource Gaps

1.1 Diverse Teacher Challenges Driven by Workload, Classroom Complexity, and Resource Gaps

Teachers described workload demands, classroom complexity, and limited resources as major contributors to work-related stress. Participants reported that overlapping instructional duties and administrative reporting created persistent time pressure and physical exhaustion. These accounts indicate that stress stemmed not only from teaching responsibilities but also from institutional requirements that extended beyond classroom instruction. This finding suggests that work-related stress among teachers is multidimensional, involving both pedagogical and organizational factors. The experiences shared by participants reflect how excessive workload and administrative demands reduce opportunities for rest and recovery, thereby increasing emotional and mental strain. Similar patterns were observed by Kreuzfeld et al. (2022), who noted that sustained workload pressure contributes significantly to teacher burnout. The present findings reinforce the need to view teacher stress as a systemic issue rather than solely an individual challenge.

Participant 1: “*Lisod kaayo kung magdungan ang klase ug ang daghang reports. Magsugod pa lang sa buntag, kapoy na dayon kay magtindog pirmi, magtudlo, unya mag-check pa sa mga papel sa gabii. Mura’g walay katapusan ang trabaho.*”

(It’s very stressful when classes and numerous reports coincide. From early morning, I already feel tired because of standing all day, teaching, and checking papers at night. The workload seems endless.)

Participant 2: “*Ang pagdala sa klase ug maghimo ug lesson plan kada adlaw makapapakoy. Dili na ma-manage ang oras sa pamilya.*”

(Managing the class and making daily lesson plans is tiring. It’s hard to manage time with family.)

Participant 3: “*Ang pinaka-lisod nako nga experience kay kung magbaha sa workload during year-end reports. Murag wala na’y katapusan ang papel.*”

(My hardest experience is during the flood of workload in year-end reporting. The paperwork feels endless.)

The abovementioned scenarios indicate that teachers face complex interplay of challenges that stem from heavy workloads, demanding classroom environments, and insufficient resources and support. More so, these factors collectively contribute to physical fatigue, emotional strain, and mental stress, which can compromise both teaching effectiveness and personal well-being. The experiences shared by the teachers illustrate how overlapping administrative responsibilities, performance pressures, and limited materials exacerbate stress and reduce the capacity for instructional focus.

2. Coping Mechanisms

Themes

Prioritizing Self-Care and Enhancing Well-Being and Effective Time Management Building Strong Social and Professional Support Networks

2.1 Prioritizing Self-Care and Enhancing Well-Being and Effective Time Management

This theme highlights the coping strategies elementary teachers in JAS 1 professed that managing work-related stress involved prioritizing self-care, enhancing personal well-being, and practicing effective time management. In fact, during the in-depth interview (IDI), teachers emphasized the importance of these strategies in coping with the demands of teaching. The following are samples of transcription:

Participant 1: “*Usahay mag-exercise ko sa buntag before mag-klase, kay makatabang gyud nga ma-refresh akong mind. Mag-walking ko sa school grounds para mawala ang tension.*”

(Sometimes I exercise in the morning before class because it helps refresh my mind. I walk around the school grounds to release tension.)

Participant 2: “*Tulog ug saktong pagkaon. Dili ko magpugos kung kapoy na.*”

(I prioritize sleep and eating properly. I don’t force myself to work when I’m already exhausted.)

Participant 3: “*Ako gyud gina-set ang oras sa gabi-i para magpahuway. Nakatabang gyud nga dili ko dali masuko sa klase.*”

(I make sure to set aside time at night to rest. It helps me become less irritable in class.)

The statements suggest that teachers intentionally adopt structured time management strategies such as scheduling dedicated rest periods, organizing daily tasks, and designating non-work days, as a deliberate response to the persistent demands of their profession. This pattern likely emerges because teaching is characterized by overlapping responsibilities, blurred work-home boundaries, and continuous emotional engagement, which, if unmanaged, can accelerate fatigue and emotional exhaustion. By proactively setting boundaries and planning their schedules, teachers attempt to regain a sense of control over their workload, thereby reducing the intensity and spillover effects of occupational stress.

This finding aligns with McCarthy (2019), who emphasized that effective time management reduces stress levels and enhances emotional regulation and work performance. Consistent with related studies highlighting the protective role of self-regulation and structured coping, the present findings reinforce the view that time management is not merely an organizational skill but a psychological strategy for sustaining resilience. The implication is clear: schools should not assume that stress management rests solely on individual initiative; instead, institutional policies that support reasonable workloads, protected planning time, and clear work-life boundaries are essential to complement teachers' personal coping efforts and promote long-term professional sustainability.

2.2 Building Strong Social and Professional Support Networks

The theme highlights when elementary teachers in JAS 1 were asked on their work-related stress management was building strong social and professional support networks. Further, teachers rely on the support of colleagues, mentors, family, and friends to share experiences, seek advice, and gain encouragement, which helps them navigate the emotional and professional demands of teaching. The following are samples of the transcription:

Participant 1: "Oo, mag-share ko sa akong mentor kung naa koy problema. Makatabang nga naa kay giingnan ug gihatagan ka ug advice."

(Yes, I share my problems with my mentor. It helps to have someone who listens and gives advice.)

Participant 2: "Ang among school naga-provide ug stress management seminar ug team-building. Maka-relax ug makapalig-on sa teamwork."

(Our school provides stress management seminars and team-building activities. It's relaxing and strengthens teamwork.)

Participant 3: "Ang school naga-provide ug peer coaching sessions kada quarter."

(The school provides peer coaching sessions every quarter.)

The findings indicate that structured administrative support such as peer coaching, mentoring, and recognition programs which play a critical role in strengthening teachers' professional growth, motivation, and sense of belonging within the school community. This occurs because supportive leadership and collegial collaboration reduce feelings of isolation, clarify professional expectations, and provide teachers with both emotional reassurance and practical guidance in navigating workplace challenges. When teachers perceive that their efforts are acknowledged and that assistance is readily available, their stress appraisal shifts from viewing demands as overwhelming to perceiving them as manageable and shared responsibilities.

This interpretation is consistent with Toropova et al. (2021), who found that mentoring and recognition significantly enhance teacher resilience, commitment, and performance. Similar studies on organizational support further emphasize that positive school climates and collaborative cultures buffer the negative effects of occupational stress and reduce turnover intentions. The implication of these findings is substantial as stress management should not be framed solely as an individual responsibility but as an institutional priority. Moreover, schools that intentionally embed structured support systems into their organizational practices are more likely to cultivate resilient, satisfied, and professionally engaged teachers, thereby promoting both teacher retention and improved educational outcomes.

3. Teachers' Support Needs in Addressing Work-Related Stress

Themes

Strengthened Administrative Support and Responsive School Climate

3.1 Strengthened Administrative Support and Responsive School Climate

A supportive and responsive school environment is critical for helping teachers manage work-related stress effectively. Subsequently, strengthened administrative support and a positive school climate provide teachers with the guidance, resources, and emotional reassurance necessary to navigate professional challenges. Some of the teachers believed that their school was supportive and responsive. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

Participant 1: "Ang akong principal kay aware kung unsa ka-stressful ang trabaho, labi na karon nga daghan programs."

(My principal is aware of how stressful teaching is, especially now with many programs.)

Participant 2: “Ang among intervention kay team sharing ug prayer sessions kada Friday.”

(Our intervention is team sharing and prayer sessions every Friday.)

Participant 3: “They organize wellness programs like zumba or laughter therapy.”

(Nagahimo sila ug wellness programs parehas sa zumba ug laughter therapy.)

These findings suggest that access to counseling and mental health support is essential for helping teachers manage stress, maintain emotional balance, and sustain professional effectiveness. This need arises because teaching involves high emotional labor, constant interpersonal demands, and ongoing performance pressures, which can accumulate over time and lead to burnout if not properly addressed. Moreover, through providing structured mental health resources, such as counseling services, open-door policies, and wellness programs, schools equip teachers with practical coping tools and emotional guidance, allowing them to navigate challenges more effectively and maintain long-term well-being.

This aligns with the findings of Seibt and Kreuzfeld (2021), who argued that access to mental health resources combined with administrative support significantly reduces teacher stress and burnout. Further, comparative studies further demonstrate that proactive organizational mental health initiatives not only buffer the negative effects of occupational stress but also enhance job satisfaction, teacher engagement, and overall professional resilience. The implication is clear and schools must integrate mental health support as a core component of teacher development and workplace culture, recognizing that fostering psychological well-being is critical for sustaining teacher performance, retention, and a positive learning environment.

4. Insights From Elementary Teachers in Addressing Work-Related Stress

Themes

Promote Teacher Well-Being Through Stress Awareness, Coping Strategies, and Resilience-Building

4.1 Promote Teacher Well-Being Through Stress Awareness, Coping Strategies, and Resilience-Building

Promoting teacher well-being is essential for sustaining both professional effectiveness and personal health in the face of the demanding nature of the teaching profession. More so, fostering stress awareness, equipping teachers with effective coping strategies, and supporting resilience-building, schools can help educators navigate work-related challenges more effectively. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

Participant 1: “Worth sharing ni kay makapa-realize sa uban nga teachers nga normal ang stress, pero dapat kabalo magpahuway ug mangayo ug tabang.”

(It’s worth sharing to remind others that stress is normal, but teachers should know when to rest and ask for help.)

Participant 2: “Nakat-on ko nga ang pagpasensya ug dedication mao gyud ang backbone sa teaching. Dili tanan adlaw maayo, pero kung consistent ka sa imong purpose, molahutay ka.”

(I learned that patience and dedication are the backbone of teaching. Not every day is perfect, but if you stay true to your purpose, you’ll endure.)

Participant 3: “Naka-experience ko nga kapoy na, maghilak na lang kay wala nay tulog. Pero pag-makita nimo nga daghan na kaayong nakat-on ang mga bata, mawala tanan stress.”

(I’ve cried from exhaustion before, but seeing my students learn makes all the stress go away.)

The statements above suggest that teachers derive motivation and resilience from meaningful connections with their students, recognition of small achievements, and appreciation from parents. This occurs because teaching is an inherently relational profession, where daily interactions and feedback significantly influence emotional energy, professional identity, and the perception of personal efficacy. Positive interpersonal relationships and social reinforcement provide teachers with emotional validation and a sense of purpose, helping them navigate challenges, sustain commitment, and maintain a constructive outlook despite the high demands and pressures of the profession.

These findings align with Salimzadeh et al. (2021), who reported that teacher motivation and resilience are significantly enhanced through supportive relationships and acknowledgment of their efforts. Moreover, studies further highlight that social support, whether from students, parents, or colleagues, acts as a protective factor

against occupational stress and burnout. The implication is that fostering strong, appreciative, and collaborative relationships within the school community is not only beneficial for teacher well-being but also essential for sustaining instructional quality, engagement, and long-term professional effectiveness.

Conclusions

This study showed that elementary teachers in JAS 1 experienced work-related stress primarily due to workload pressures, classroom challenges, and limited institutional resources. Teachers managed stress through self-care practices, time management, and social support, while also expressing the need for stronger administrative and mental health support systems. These findings highlight that teacher well-being is influenced by both personal coping strategies and the quality of the school environment.

Recommendations

This study provides practical insights into the lived experiences of elementary teachers in JAS 1, particularly regarding the work-related stress they face and the coping strategies they employ. Based on the findings, school administrators and DepEd officials may implement targeted interventions such as reducing non-instructional administrative tasks, streamlining reporting requirements, and providing dedicated planning or rest periods to alleviate workload pressures. Additionally, introducing digital tools for lesson planning and reporting, as well as allocating resources for teaching materials, may help minimize stress while maintaining instructional quality. Professional development programs may focus on enhancing teachers' coping skills, resilience, and time management, complemented by structured training on stress management, mindfulness, and work-life balance specifically tailored to the challenges of remote or isolated school contexts. Finally, periodic monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives, possibly through follow-up surveys or focus group discussions, may provide evidence-based feedback to refine support systems and ensure their effectiveness in reducing teacher stress.

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