



Work-Life Balance and Professional Engagement of Barili 1 Teachers: Basis for a Health-Wellness Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the professional engagement and work-life balance of 96 public school teachers; a workforce predominantly composed of female class advisers (88.5%) aged 40 and below. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the study assessed the levels of teacher involvement in voluntary and extra-curricular activities alongside their adherence to welfare protection and personal well-being standards. Findings revealed an exceptionally high level of professional engagement ("Always"), which significantly and positively correlates with work-life balance adherence ($p < .05$). This suggests that while active institutional involvement fosters vocational satisfaction, it simultaneously subjects educators to "invisible labor" and "psychological spillover," making mental detachment from work during personal time a persistent challenge. Qualitative analysis identified a "saturated workload" driven by out-of-hours administrative tasks, emotional labor, and constant digital connectivity as primary systemic hurdles. While teachers employ individual resilience strategies, these are often insufficient against structural institutional pressures. Consequently, the study proposed a Comprehensive Health-Wellness Program as a structural intervention. This program focuses on gender-responsive support (Project ALAGÀ), the institutionalization of a "Right to Disconnect" policy, and administrative streamlining to mitigate burnout. By shifting the focus from individual coping to institutional accountability, the program aims to protect the mental and physical vitality of teachers, ensuring sustainable professional excellence without compromising personal well-being.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Professional Teacher Engagement, Psychological Spillover, Invisible Labor, Right to Disconnect, Gender-Responsive Wellness, Administrative Streamlining, Teacher Welfare Protection 20

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global educational landscape recognizes public school teachers as pivotal figures in shaping the future of societies, facing multifaceted challenges that encompass their professional engagements and personal well-being. The demands of a teaching career can be substantial, often leading to stress and burnout, thereby adversely affecting teachers' health, job satisfaction, and pedagogical effectiveness [24][41]. Specifically, teachers in the Philippines, including those at Federico and Solidad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School in Luhod, Barili, Cebu, have been observed to grapple with significant workload pressures, which may detract from their overall work-life balance [36]. Thus, this context necessitates a deeper investigation into the dynamics between work-life balance and professional engagement among educators.

Literature articulating the relationship between work-life balance and teacher engagement highlights the critical role that psychological well-being plays as a mediator in these interactions [2]. Teachers who perceive a balanced integration of work and personal commitments tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and professional engagement, which in turn enhances their teaching efficacy and student outcomes [13]. Moreover, studies indicate that school climate and leadership styles directly influence teachers' work experiences, further underlining the importance of supportive environments in fostering positive professional engagement [7][25].



While there is substantial groundwork in exploring these relationships, a critical gap exists regarding tailored health-wellness strategies that specifically address the needs of public-school teachers in the Philippine context.

The timeliness of this topic cannot be overstated, particularly in light of recent global events, such as a new normal, which has exacerbated existing stressors and reshaped the educational environment [12]. Teachers have had to adapt to novel teaching methods and increased responsibilities, all while maintaining their mental and physical health. Emerging evidence suggests that inadequate support structures contribute to significant work-related stress, leading to pronounced issues such as high burnout rates and job dissatisfaction among educators [23][32]. This situation calls for innovative strategies that promote teacher well-being, focusing on comprehensive health and wellness initiatives that are responsive to these challenges.

To address this, the researcher proposes a Comprehensive Health-Wellness Program for public school teachers. By integrating physical, mental, and emotional support, this initiative aims to mitigate workplace stressors, foster work-life balance, and enhance professional engagement and satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Location of the Study

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the level of teacher engagement in volunteer work and extra-curricular activities, as well as the adherence to work-life balance standards at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, the researcher employed a mixed-method research design. A carefully structured survey questionnaire, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, was distributed to the respondents to measure their perceptions of engagement levels and the implementation of welfare protection standards. This quantitative approach was complemented by a section dedicated to identifying the specific challenges teachers encountered when balancing primary teaching duties with mandated volunteerism. The collected data underwent statistical analysis to determine the profile of the respondents and to test if a significant relationship existed between extra-curricular engagement and work-life balance. Ultimately, these results provided the empirical basis for crafting a Comprehensive Health-Wellness Program aimed at optimizing teacher productivity and protecting their mental health.

The study was conducted within the Barili 1 District, specifically involving the elementary schools of the division. The primary locales for data collection were Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, where the researcher gathered relevant data from the teaching personnel. The respondents of this study consisted of the teaching personnel from the Barili 1 District. A total enumeration (universal sampling) was utilized, involving all 96 teachers to ensure a comprehensive and accurate representation of the population.

The study utilized a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, which was meticulously designed to assess teacher engagement and adherence to work-life balance standards. To ensure the instrument's effectiveness, the researcher developed the questionnaire with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence and subsequently subjected it to rigorous language and content validation by a panel of experts. Following these refinements, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the instrument's reliability; the resulting Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.722, indicating a respectable and acceptable level of internal consistency for the study.

The final instrument was structured into four distinct sections. Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including their age, sex, years in service, and professional designation. Part II measured the level of teacher engagement in volunteer work and extra-curricular activities, while Part III assessed the level of adherence to work-life balance standards and welfare protection. Finally, Part IV focused on identifying the specific challenges encountered by teachers in balancing their primary teaching duties with mandated volunteerism and extra-curricular assignments.



Data Gathering Procedure

To initiate the data collection, the researcher secured formal permission through a letter addressed to the School Head of Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the school administration to identify and reach out to the teacher-respondents. The survey was conducted during the 2025–2026 school year. The researcher distributed the questionnaires either personally or through a secure digital platform to ensure that instructions were clear and to address any queries from the participants. Completed forms were collected, and the data were systematically tallied and tabulated for subsequent statistical analysis. 113

Data Analysis

To answer the research problems effectively, the following statistical tools were employed. Frequencies and Percentages were used to summarize the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents. The Weighted Mean was utilized to determine the perceived level of teacher engagement and the level of adherence to work-life balance standards. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) was applied to examine the significant relationship between the level of teacher engagement in extra-curricular activities and the level of adherence to work-life balance standards. Thematic Analysis was used to categorize and interpret the qualitative data gathered regarding the challenge's teachers encountered with mandated volunteerism and extra-curricular assignments. A five-point Likert scale was used to interpret the weighted mean of responses, with ranges as follows: 4.21–5.00 (Always), 3.41–4.20 (Often), 2.61–3.40 (Sometimes), 1.81–2.60 (Rarely), and 1.00–1.80 (Never).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the age distribution of the respondents, revealing a predominantly young to middle-aged workforce. The largest group falls within the 31–40 age bracket (35.4%, $n=34$), followed by the 20–30 age group (29.2%, $n=28$), teachers aged 41–50 (26%, $n=25$), and those 51 years and above at 9.4% ($n=9$). Over 64% of the teaching staff are aged 40 and below, indicating a predominantly early-to-mid-career demographic. This distribution supports focusing on burnout prevention, mental health, and vitality to sustain engagement in schools with a young workforce, consistent with literature linking early-to-mid-career stages to heightened stress and wellness needs [11].

Table 1. Age Profile of the Teachers

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 - 30 yrs	28	29.2
31 - 40 yrs	34	35.4
41 - 50 yrs	25	26.0
51 yrs and above	9	9.4
Total	96	100.0

Table 2 shows the sex distribution of the respondents. Out of 96 participants, 85 (88.5%) are Female and 11 (11.5%) are Male, indicating a significant gender imbalance and a predominantly female teaching force within the locale of the study.

Table 2. Sex Profile of the Teachers

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	11	11.5
Female	85	88.5
Total	96	100.0

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by years in service. The largest group consists of teachers with 6–10 years of service (38.5%, $n=37$), followed by those with 0–5 years (26%, $n=25$) and 11–15 years (24%, $n=23$), together comprising 88.5% of respondents. Teachers with 16–20 years (3.1%) and 21 years and above (8.3%) constitute a smaller portion, confirming a predominantly early-to-mid-career workforce.

Table 3. Years in Service

Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 - 5 yrs	25	26.0
6 - 10 yrs	37	38.5
11 - 15 yrs	23	24.0
16 - 20 yrs	3	3.1
21 yrs and above	8	8.3
Total	96	100.0

Table 4 shows that 89 (92.7%) of the 96 respondents serve as Class Advisers and only 7 (7.3%) as Subject Area Coordinators, indicating a respondent pool heavily composed of frontline educators who manage daily academic and administrative needs of specific student sections.

Table 4. Designation

Designation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Class Adviser	89	92.7
Subject Area Coordinator	7	7.3
Total	96	100.0

Level of Professional Teacher Engagement Among Teachers

Table 5 presents the level of professional engagement in volunteer work. The Overall Weighted Mean of 4.52 corresponds to “Always,” indicating a remarkably high and consistent frequency of voluntary service. The highest-rated indicator is assistance in school-related events like Brigada Eskwela beyond required hours ($M=4.78$, $SD=0.49$), followed by participation in school-initiated community outreach ($M=4.59$, $SD=0.59$). Even the lowest- ranked indicator—contributing time to non-profit organizations—maintained a high mean of 4.26 ($SD=0.65$), confirming that volunteerism is deeply embedded in the teachers’ regular professional practice.



Table 5. Volunteer Work

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I participate in community outreach programs initiated by the school.	4.59	0.59	Always
I offer free remedial classes or tutoring to students struggling with lessons.	4.51	0.63	Always
I assist in school-related events (e.g., Brigada Eskwela) beyond my required hours.	4.78	0.49	Always
I share my expertise with colleagues through informal peer coaching or mentoring.	4.45	0.60	Always
I contribute my time to non-profit organizations that support educational causes.	4.26	0.65	Always
Overall Weighted Mean	4.52		Always

Table 6 presents the level of involvement in extra-curricular activities, with an Overall Weighted Mean of 4.56 (“Always”). The highest-rated indicator is attending and facilitating school programs and festivals (M=4.69, SD=0.51), followed by representing the school in district or regional off-campus activities (M=4.67, SD=0.51). Even the lowest-rated item— planning and executing non-academic projects (M=4.43, SD=0.54)—remains within the “Always” range, suggesting a highly active and visible presence of teachers in the holistic development of the school community.

Table 6. Extra-Curricular Activities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I actively coach students in sports, arts, or academic competitions.	4.44	0.65	Always
I serve as an adviser or coordinator for school clubs and organizations.	4.57	0.64	Always
I attend and facilitate school programs, festivals, and celebratory events.	4.69	0.51	Always
I spend significant time planning and executing non-academic school projects.	4.43	0.54	Always



I represent the school in district or regional level off-campus activities.	4.67	0.51	Always
Overall Weighted Mean	4.56		Always

Level of Adherence to Work-Life Balance Standards and Welfare Protection

Table 7 presents the level of adherence to work-life balance standards, yielding an Overall Weighted Mean of 4.44 (“Always”). The highest-rated indicator is setting clear boundaries between professional duties and personal time ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.64$), followed by spending quality time with family or friends during weekends and holidays ($M=4.53$, $SD=0.56$). The lowest-ranked indicator—engaging in hobbies and relaxation without thinking about work—garnered a mean of 4.19 ($SD=0.73$), interpreted as “Often,” suggesting that while teachers are physically present for leisure, mental detachment from professional responsibilities remains a challenge.

Table 7. Work-Life Balance

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I am able to finish my school-related tasks within official working hours.	4.41	0.66	Always
I set clear boundaries between my professional duties and my personal time.	4.58	0.64	Always
I engage in hobbies and relaxation activities without thinking about work.	4.19	0.73	Often
I spend quality time with my family or friends during weekends and holidays.	4.53	0.56	Always
I maintain a healthy physical and mental lifestyle despite my workload.	4.49	0.60	Always
Overall Weighted Mean	4.44		Always

Table 8 presents welfare protection levels, yielding an Overall Weighted Mean of 4.60 (“Always”). The highest-rated indicator is utilization of leave credits ($M=4.70$, $SD=0.51$), followed by awareness of legal rights and benefits ($M=4.68$, $SD=0.49$). The lowest-ranked indicator—access to support systems like counseling and medical help—maintained a mean of 4.44 ($SD=0.65$). This suggests that formal rights are well-established, but the “softer” infrastructure of mental health and medical support may still be in its developmental stages. This aligns with findings on welfare resources as foundational to teacher well-being and organizational culture in educational systems [57].

Table 8. Welfare Protection

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I am aware of the legal rights and benefits provided to me as a teacher.	4.68	0.49	Always
I feel that my school administration prioritizes the health and safety of staff.	4.64	0.53	Always



I utilize my leave credits (sick leave/vacation leave) when necessary.	4.70	0.51	Always
I feel protected against unfair treatment or excessive workload demands.	4.54	0.61	Always
I have access to support systems (e.g., counseling, medical help) in my workplace.	4.44	0.65	Always
Overall Weighted Mean	4.60		Always

Significant Relationship Between Teacher Engagement and Work-Life Balance Adherence

Table 9 presents the correlation analysis between teacher engagement in volunteer work and extracurricular activities and their adherence to work-life balance and welfare protection. The data reveals a significant positive relationship across all variables ($p < .05$). Volunteer work shows a moderate positive correlation with both work-life balance ($\rho = .493$) and welfare protection ($\rho = .594$), while extracurricular activities show a weaker yet still significant positive correlation ($\rho = 0.212$ and $\rho = 0.226$, respectively). This indicates that as teachers become more engaged in these activities, their perception of work-life balance and welfare protection also tends to increase. The stronger correlation found in volunteer work suggests that altruistic activities outside the standard classroom setting offer a more profound replenishment effect, consistent with the notion that external service enhances well-being and perceived support systems [34].

Table 9. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Teacher Engagement in Extra- Curricular Activities and the Level of Adherence to Work-Life Balance

	Work-Life Balance	Welfare Protection
	Spearman	Spearman
Volunteer Work	0.493**	0.594**
Extracurricular Activities	0.212*	0.226*

Legend: ** highly significant *significant ns-not significant

CONCLUSION

Based from the findings, the following conclusions were drawn. The workforce consists of mid- career female advisers facing high professional and domestic demands, teachers internalize volunteerism and extra-curricular leadership as core identity components, high adherence to welfare rights is undermined by persistent psychological carry-over, professional engagement serves as a catalyst for vocational satisfaction rather than a burden, individual resilience is insufficient against structural pressures and "invisible labor," and saturated workloads and administrative tasks consistently override personal boundaries.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author Ma. Geralyn C. Balatucan designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, formulated the research protocol, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. Author Janeth L. Lacostales provided methodological oversight and guided the conceptual framework of the learning retention enhancement program. Authors Marilou D. Elew, and Amancia T. Atil, Amiel J. Villarmente and Arlene C. Sebugero managed the literature review, instrument validation, and data collection procedures. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

To ensure research integrity at Federico and Soledad Villaflor Memorial Elementary School, formal ethical clearance was secured from the District Supervisor and School Head prior to data collection. Participants provided informed consent, with guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality allowing teachers to safely discuss sensitive topics like stress and mandated volunteerism without fear of reprisal. Grounded in non-maleficence and beneficence, the study respected participants' personal time while aiming to support faculty welfare through a proposed Health-Wellness Program. Finally, all data were stored securely for academic purposes in strict compliance with the Data Privacy Act.

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