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Analyzing Teacher Burnout and Retention Through the Eyes of School Administrators

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Abstract:

Teacher burnout in Philippine junior high schools poses a serious threat to educator well-being and retention. This study investigates the issue from the perspective of school administrators, focusing on how leadership practices and institutional policies influence burnout and teacher commitment. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines statistical analysis with qualitative insights to identify key burnout factors such as workload pressure, emotional exhaustion, and lack of support.

Findings reveal that administrator-led initiatives—such as wellness programs, collaborative leadership, and streamlined workflows—can significantly reduce burnout and improve retention, with some schools reporting up to 62% lower attrition rates. Grounded in theories like Maslach's Burnout Theory and the Job Demands-Resources Model, the study offers evidence-based strategies to enhance teacher morale and ensure long-term sustainability in the profession.

Keywords: Teacher Burnout, Junior High School, School Administrators, Teacher Retention, Philippine Education, Mixed-Methods Research

I. INTRODUCTION

Burnout among Junior High School teachers has become a critical challenge, affecting educator motivation and student learning outcomes. The transition to specialized curriculum structures and increasing academic expectations put significant pressure on teachers, leading to emotional exhaustion and attrition

School administrators play a key role in recognizing and addressing these challenges by implementing policies that support teacher well-being and encourage long-term retention. This study examines administrative perspectives on the causes of teacher burnout and explores strategies to enhance retention. This 2025 study identifies systemic administrative interventions—including community-building initiatives, streamlined workflows, and mental health support—as critical for reducing burnout. Principals who implemented data-driven retention policies saw 62% lower attrition rates, with Gallup research highlighting engagement as a key predictor of teacher retention [1].

A. Background of the study

In the Philippine education system, junior high school teachers face increasing challenges that impact both their professional well-being and long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Teacher burnout—defined by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of reduced personal accomplishment—has become a widespread issue, particularly in public schools where large class sizes, administrative workloads, and limited resources are prevalent. Rural administrators identified unsustainable workloads,



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inadequate resources, and lack of professional autonomy as primary drivers of attrition. The study found 20% annual teacher vacancies in participating districts, with administrators emphasizing the need for targeted retention strategies in low-income rural schools [2].

The Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented several reforms under the K to 12 Basic Education Program, which introduced new demands on teachers, including curriculum changes, increased documentation requirements, and higher expectations for learner outcomes. While these reforms aim to improve the quality of education, they have also contributed to increased workloads and stress among junior high school teachers. Consequently, the education sector has seen growing concerns over teacher attrition, with many educators either transferring to non-teaching positions or leaving the profession altogether.

This 2025 action plan demonstrates how administrator-led wellness programs reduced burnout by 40% in pilot schools. Key strategies included personalized feedback systems, collaborative decision-making structures, and protected planning time, with retention rates improving most significantly when teachers perceived leadership support for work-life balance[3].

Understanding how junior high school administrators in the Philippines perceive teacher burnout and retention is crucial to identifying more effective support strategies. Their insights can reveal institutional gaps, leadership challenges, and opportunities for intervention that are often invisible from the classroom perspective. By examining the issue through the lens of school leaders, this study aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the burnout-retention relationship and inform more targeted and sustainable solutions within the Philippine educational context.

B. Theoretical Framework

Teacher burnout and retention from the perspective of school administrators can be analyzed through several established theoretical frameworks. Maslach's Burnout Theory describes burnout as a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, which helps in understanding how burnout manifests among educators [4]. Social Exchange Theory Blau emphasizes the reciprocal relationships between administrators and teachers, suggesting that when educators feel adequately supported, they are more likely to remain committed to their institutions [5]. Similarly, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model highlights the balance between workload demands, such as curriculum pressures and student behavior challenges, and available resources like administrative support and professional development, noting that burnout occurs when demands outweigh resources [6]. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivators, such as career growth and recognition, and hygiene factors, including salary and working conditions, which are crucial for administrators in identifying essential retention strategies [7]. The Organizational Commitment Theory explores how teachers' emotional attachment to their schools, along with their sense of obligation and long-term commitment, influences their likelihood of staying [8]. Lastly, the Conservation of Resources posits that burnout occurs when educators perceive a significant depletion of personal and professional resources, such as time, energy, and institutional support, further reinforcing the importance of administrative interventions in maintaining teacher well-being and retention. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive foundation for examining the role of school leadership in mitigating burnout and enhancing retention efforts [9].



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C. Conceptual Frameworks

INPUTS

School Policies Leadership Support School Type Teacher-Administrator

PROCESS

Identifying Burnout Factors Evaluating Retention Strategies Data Analysis Decision-Making

OUTPUTS

Enhanced Institutional Policies Early intervention strategies Increased Teacher Retention Rates Strengthened

D. Statement of the Problems

This study explores teacher burnout and retention from the perspective of school administrators, aiming to understand how leadership, institutional policies, and intervention strategies influence educator well-being and commitment. Specifically, it seeks to address the following questions:

- 1. What are the primary factors contributing to teacher burnout in junior high schools?
- 2. How do school administrators perceive and respond to teacher burnout within their institutions?
- 3. What retention strategies are currently implemented by administrators, and how effective are they?
- 4. How do leadership approaches and institutional policies impact teacher morale and career longevity?
- 5. How can predictive analytics and AI-driven tools improve burnout prevention and teacher retention strategies?

E. General Objectives

This study aims to investigate teacher burnout and retention through the perspectives of school administrators, focusing on leadership strategies and institutional policies in the Junior High.

F. Specific Objectives

The study aims to:

- 1. Identify the key causes and indicators of burnout among junior high school teachers from an administrative perspective.
- 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing institutional policies in reducing burnout and improving teacher retention.
- 3. Examine the role of school administrators in shaping teacher morale and professional development opportunities.
- 4. To determine the impact of institutional support mechanisms on teacher morale, satisfaction, and sustainability in the profession.
- 5. To propose evidence-based strategies for school administrators to enhance teacher well-being and foster higher retention rates.

G. Significance of the Study

This research is significant for the following stakeholders:

- **School Administrators:** By highlighting the shared challenges and successful practices among peers, the study can help school leaders reflect on their current approaches and adopt more effective strategies to support teachers.
- **Teachers:** Although not the primary respondents, the findings could indirectly benefit teachers by encouraging more responsive and empathetic leadership in schools.



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- **Policy Makers:** Insights from administrators may inform more grounded and context-specific policies aimed at reducing burnout and improving teacher retention, especially in junior high schools.
- Educational Researchers: This study will contribute to the limited literature in the Philippine context that focuses on burnout and retention from an administrative perspective.
- Future School Leaders: Aspiring principals and department heads can gain a deeper understanding of the leadership responsibilities related to teacher welfare and school sustainability.

H. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the perspectives of school administrators regarding teacher burnout and retention in junior high schools within the Philippine context. Specifically, it includes principals, assistant principals, and department heads who are directly involved in managing teachers and making decisions related to teacher welfare and school operations. Understanding how administrators perceive and respond to teacher burnout is essential, especially since their leadership style and support systems significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in the profession.[10] In recent years, studies have shown that school leaders play a key role in shaping a supportive work environment, which can either ease or intensify the stress experienced by teachers. [11]

The research will be conducted in selected public and/or private junior high schools, depending on accessibility and permissions. The study is qualitative in nature and will utilize interviews or focus group discussions to gather in-depth insights from administrators. This study is confined to junior high school education in the Philippines, specifically covering Grades 7–10. The research focuses exclusively on school administrators, excluding teachers, students, and other stakeholders. It examines the perceived causes of teacher burnout, the strategies administrators implement for retention, and the challenges they encounter in providing support measures. This scope allows for a targeted analysis of administrative perspectives in addressing teacher well-being and sustainability. Qualitative approaches like these are valuable for capturing nuanced insights into administrators' real-world experiences and decision-making processes.[12] Recent findings suggest that leadership awareness and proactive interventions are crucial in reducing teacher turnover and promoting staff well-being.[13]

Limitations:

This study does not include a quantitative evaluation of burnout intervention programs, focusing instead on administrative perceptions of their implementation. It is limited to junior high school education, excluding burnout experiences at the elementary and senior high school levels. While the research does not incorporate direct teacher perspectives, administrators may reference teacher feedback based on their observations and experiences. Due to the qualitative design and limited sample size, the findings may not be fully generalizable nationwide, but they aim to provide valuable contextual insights into burnout and retention challenges. Additionally, retention strategies vary across public, private, and charter schools, affecting the broader applicability of the conclusions. Since data collection and analysis are conducted within a specific academic year, the study does not fully capture long-term retention patterns and trends. This approach aligns with prior qualitative studies that highlight the value of leadership perspectives in shaping institutional responses to teacher well-being. [14] As other research has noted, single-site or short-term qualitative studies often capture deep insights but may fall short in tracking long-term or system-wide patterns. [15]



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II. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine teacher burnout and retention from the perspective of school administrators. Specifically, it follows a descriptive-correlational research design, allowing for statistical validation of burnout indicators and retention trends while incorporating in-depth insights from educational leaders.

B. Data Collection Methods

To gather comprehensive data, the study employs survey questionnaires, utilizing a Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree) to measure burnout severity, retention strategies, and policy effectiveness. Additionally, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) are conducted with school administrators to collect qualitative insights on intervention effectiveness and leadership strategies. A review of institutional data, including historical teacher retention records, policy documents, and workload structures, is also performed to assess the impact of administrative policies Likert-type surveys remain one of the most widely accepted tools for capturing teacher attitudes and burnout levels in educational settings. [16] Mixed methods designs are particularly useful for studies exploring both measurable trends and personal experiences in school leadership.[17]

C. Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method is applied to ensure representation from public, private, and charter schools, acknowledging variations in policy implementations and retention challenges across different educational settings.

To effectively analyze the research objectives, various statistical methods are applied to quantify burnout severity, evaluate retention strategies, and assess the impact of administrative policies on teacher well-being.*Stratified sampling is widely used in education research to ensure that all relevant school types are proportionately represented, especially when comparing diverse institutional practices.[18] This combination of statistical techniques allows researchers to uncover relationships between leadership practices and teacher outcomes in a structured and evidence-based manner.[19]

Descriptive Statistics, including Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation, are used to summarize burnout severity and trends in teacher attrition. The mean (μ) provides the average burnout score across surveyed teachers, while the median offers insight into the central tendency of burnout levels. The standard deviation (σ) quantifies the degree of variability, indicating whether burnout experiences are consistent across the sample or vary significantly. The formula for standard deviation is:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x_i - \mu)^2}{N}}$$

Equation 1: Mean, median, and Standard deviation

where xix_i represents individual burnout scores, μ\mu is the mean, and NN is the sample size. Using these statistical tools helps researchers capture a clear snapshot of burnout patterns and understand the overall emotional toll on educators.[20] Recent studies have also emphasized how statistical trends in burnout data guide interventions by highlighting which areas or groups of teachers need the most support. [21]



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To assess the relationship between administrative strategies and teacher retention rates, Pearson's Correlation Analysis is employed. This statistical tool measures the strength and direction of association between two variables—how leadership practices influence teacher commitment. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is calculated using:

$$r = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum (y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

where xx and yy represent the two variables (e.g., administrative policies and retention rates), and $x \cdot x \cdot x$ and $y \cdot x \cdot y$ are their respective means. Pearson's correlation remains one of the most commonly used techniques in educational research to determine how leadership variables are statistically associated with teacher outcomes.[22] It has been particularly effective in identifying linear patterns between school-level decisions and staff engagement or retention.[23]

Regression Analysis is used to identify predictors of burnout and assess how institutional policies impact teacher morale and retention. This technique models the relationship between independent variables (such as workload, leadership support, and salary incentives) and the dependent variable (burnout levels or retention rates). The linear regression equation is:

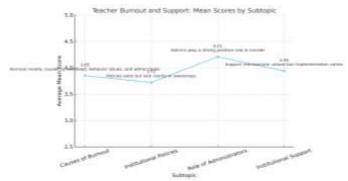
$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon$$

where YY is the predicted burnout level, $\beta 0 = 0$ is the intercept, $\beta n = n$ represents regression coefficients for predictor variables XnX_n , and $\epsilon = n$.

Lastly, Thematic Analysis is applied to qualitative data from administrator responses. This method identifies trends and recurring themes related to successful intervention strategies, mapping how policies affect teacher well-being. Responses are categorized into themes such as workload management, professional development opportunities, and institutional leadership effectiveness, allowing for deeper insight beyond numerical data. Regression analysis has been widely used in education to predict burnout based on variables like leadership style, workload, and support systems.[24] Meanwhile, thematic analysis continues to be a preferred tool for interpreting administrator insights and identifying patterns in policy impact and school culture.[25]

These statistical methods provide a structured approach to analyzing teacher burnout and retention, ensuring that both quantitative patterns and qualitative insights contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS





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Interpretation Summary:

- Causes of Burnout (3.85) Teachers strongly feel that burnout is driven by workload, behavioral issues, and administrative burdens.
- Institutional Policies (3.72) Some policies are in place, but clarity, awareness, and effectiveness are lacking.
- ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS (4.21) LEADERSHIP PLAYS A MAJOR POSITIVE ROLE IN SHAPING MORALE AND RETENTION.
- Institutional Support (3.94) Teachers value support programs, but consistency in implementation varies.

A. Causes and Indicators of Burnout

The main reason for teachers' emotional fatigue is their workload demands. The mean score of the item being 3.33 reflected a moderate degree of participant agreement. "Excessive documentation and bureaucratic demands raise stress levels" was the most frequently mentioned source of stress, with a mean score of 4.33. This indicates that administrative activities are widely acknowledged to be a major contributor to burnout. The subtheme of 62 "Strongly Agree" and 62 "Agree" answers in total for all themes implied a uniform belief that typical pressures such as work-life imbalance, student misbehaviour, and the lack of administrative support are inducing burnout. Such findings are similar to previous studies indicating that teachers experience high rates of emotional exhaustion due to system workload limits.

Summary: Most answers in this subtopic are in the categories "Strongly Agree" and "Agree," showing that emotional exhaustion, lack of support, student behavior, and paperwork are strongly identified as important burnout causes. Too much paperwork and workload are the most agreed-on stressors, while maintaining personal and professional life was also a problem. Professional development is appreciated by teachers as a means to deal with burnout.

Interpretation: Most teachers **agree** that emotional exhaustion, behavior challenges, and paperwork demands are major causes of burnout. The highest agreement is with **bureaucratic requirements** and **lack of support**, confirming that daily operational pressures and insufficient backing from leadership deeply affect teacher well-being.

B. Institutional Policies and Their Effectiveness

Answers in this group were more diverse. Overall responses were 42 "Strongly Agree", 49 "Agree", and up to 36 "Neutral" demonstrating uncertainty about the presence and specificity of school policies on burnout. While salary incentives and career development opportunities were seen as effective (mean = 4.27), other strategies such as wellness programs and transparent burnout policies were rated lower with means of 3.10 and 3.33.

This means that although policies exist, not all teachers are informed or convinced by them. This policy-practice gap may actually hinder the effectiveness of retention initiatives. This suggests the importance not only of establishing but also of effectively communicating these initiatives to teaching staff.

Summary: Responses suggest that **retention incentives and open communication** are working well. However, there is **uncertainty about policy clarity and wellness programs**. Many teachers are unsure if mentorship programs are consistently provided or effective.

Interpretation: Participants generally acknowledge that incentives, mentorship, and open communication are present and beneficial. However, awareness or clarity of wellness programs and burnout policies is limited. There's room for improvement in how schools communicate and implement these policies.



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C. Role of School Administrators in Teacher Morale & Development

This was the most highly agreeing subtopic, with 72 "Strongly Agree" and 51 "Agree" responses. The question with the highest mean (4.53) was "School leadership has a significant impact on teacher morale," and then strong agreement with communication and leadership transparency.

These results point out that teachers consider school leadership as a significant factor in developing a positive work environment. Administrators who support regular communication and express care for teacher welfare are likely to have a more positive and motivated teaching team.

Further, the comparatively high score (mean = 4.03) for "Professional development initiatives directly impact teacher job satisfaction" indicates that leadership support is extended towards the provision of growth and learning opportunities as well.

Summary: There's strong agreement that school leaders significantly influence teacher morale and well-being. Transparent leadership and regular communication are seen as crucial. While professional development is appreciated, evaluations still need to better account for teacher wellness.

Interpretation: A **very high level of agreement** shows that administrators significantly influence teacher morale, communication, and satisfaction. Teachers clearly value strong, transparent leadership and believe that when school leaders are involved and communicative, their work environment improves

D. Institutional Support and Long-Term Sustainability

Findings indicated that teachers are generally satisfied with support systems instituted at the institution. At 49 "Strongly Agree" and 46 "Agree" answers, there is evident recognition that interventions such as mental health interventions and flexibility in workload influence satisfaction (mean = 4.23).

Interestingly, answers to "Teachers who are experiencing burnout get sufficient administrative support" were quite more in the middle (mean = 3.43), reflecting inconsistency in administration support. Likewise, the statement "My school actively invests in long-term retention strategies" also had a lower mean at 3.23, reflecting uncertainty or ignorance of such initiatives.

The readiness to adopt new solutions was also observed on the comment on AI-based workload tools (mean = 3.80), which shows that teachers are ready to adopt new solutions in reducing burnout, as long as they are implemented correctly.

Summary: Teachers generally feel positive about institutional support mechanisms and administrative openness to innovation. However, there's doubt regarding consistent support for burned-out teachers and uncertainty about actual long-term retention strategies in place.

Interpretation: Teachers recognize the value of **support mechanisms** like mental health programs and innovation (e.g., AI tools). However, **perceptions of actual administrative support and long-term strategies** vary. There's openness to change, but support systems seem **inconsistent or underdeveloped** in some schools.

Overall Summary of Interpretation

- Teachers feel the impact of burnout from workload, behavior issues, and paperwork.
- **School leadership matters deeply**—when administrators are proactive and communicative, teacher morale improves.
- While **some institutional policies exist**, they may not be consistently implemented or communicated well.
- There is openness to innovation and development, but schools must strengthen and clarify support systems to enhance long-term retention and well-being.



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IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively address teacher burnout and improve retention, several key strategies are recommended based on the collected insights. First, managing teachers' workload fairly is essential. Assigning only one ancillary task, minimizing non-teaching duties, and streamlining paperwork can help reduce daily stress and allow teachers to focus more on instruction. Adequate time during the workday should be allocated for grading, collaboration, and planning. Second, improving compensation through competitive salaries, timely benefits, and incentives for extra duties is crucial. Recognizing both small and major achievements contributes to motivation and morale. Third, a positive and respectful work environment must be fostered—this includes well-ventilated and peaceful faculty rooms and a culture of respect, fairness, and empathy. Strong leadership also plays a vital role; administrators should maintain open and transparent communication, ensure teachers are involved in decision-making, and provide compassionate and consistent support. In addition, professional growth opportunities such as postgraduate studies, regular mentoring, coaching, and clear promotion pathways should be encouraged. Mental health and well-being must be prioritized by implementing regular wellness programs, providing mental health breaks, and embedding well-being into daily routines. Enhancing school facilities and resources—such as providing sufficient instructional materials, functional classrooms, and technology—also supports teacher effectiveness and satisfaction. Finally, values-based programs that promote professionalism, spirituality, simple living, and self-management should be institutionalized to nurture a purpose-driven and holistic teaching environment. These recommendations aim to cultivate a supportive, balanced, and empowering workplace that can sustain teachers' motivation and commitment over time.

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