

A Phenomenological Inquiry into Sustaining Teachers' Vigor and Passion: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms

LJ Malaya B. Libunao

Doctor of Philosophy (student), Philippine Normal University, Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the minds and futures of learners, and contributing to community progress. Despite their vital contributions, teachers' efforts often go unrecognized, potentially diminishing their passion and vigor for teaching. This study explores the lived experiences of teachers in maintaining their passion and vigor in education using a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. Three participants from the senior high school department of Raniag High School, Division of Isabela, were purposively selected. The researcher conducted data through interviews, and utilized content analysis to identify codes and themes. The findings reveal solutions for burnout and stress, including looking into one's purpose and goals, showing strong commitment and love, and sticking to one's interests. The study suggests that future research investigates motivational factors and its role in addressing teachers' mental health. It also explores curriculum mandates for teachers' mental health protection.

Keywords: Coping mechanism, passion, teaching, vigor

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a pivotal and crucial role in the society, shaping the minds and future of learners. The foundation laid by teachers shapes the future of a generation and contributes to the progress and prosperity of the broader community. Their impact extends beyond the classroom, resonating throughout society as they empower tomorrow's leaders, thinkers, and contributors (Bryan, 2024). They pass knowledge on younger generations which serves as a continuous societal learning and growth cycle. In doing this, teachers have to utilize modern aids in teaching for them to encourage an interactive learning environment. Teachers also help in developing critical thinking skills. As a teacher, developing critical thinking in school involves designing lessons that encourage analytical thinking, incorporating case studies that prompt discussion, and challenging students with open-ended questions. (Bryan, 2024). These are some of the many roles and the significance of a teacher in society. They are essential for the prosperity of a community, fostering critical thinking, contributing to innovation, solving problems effectively, and deepening the understanding of societal issues. This highlights the fact that teachers are indeed an integral part of society. This is related to the study of Van Der Zanden et al. (2020) which stated that most teachers view critical thinking as an imperative skill that students must have since they have to be able to come up with varied ideas themselves. With this, teachers are eager to develop critical thinking and creative thinking becomes important in the students' college and post graduate life because it enables them to differ themselves from others, which might enhance their future career opportunities and contribution to society.

In addition, teachers define their professional identity and consequently, their role through their personality traits, which shows that we must not ignore teachers' personality traits, as they play an important role in teachers' professional development and identity (Makovec, 2018). In the Philippines, it was mentioned by Cayetano in GMA Integrated News, 2023 that by July 2024, DepEd is confident that it would attain its goal to hire 20,000 teachers for the next school year however, it was only 3,352 have been hired, simply because the NOSCA or Notice of Staffing was only released in July. With this, teachers are being bombarded with overloads that may affect their passion in teaching. Despite their crucial contributions, their efforts often go unnoticed and unrecognized, diminishing their vigor and passion for teaching.

In this note, it is clear that because of these factors, teachers may experience mental health issues. In relation to this, an article published in the Manila Bulletin cites that there is no actual or concrete mental health program in the Department of Education (DepEd) as mandated by Republic Act 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act of 2018 (Hernando-Malipot, 2020). Making matters worse is that, much of the attention concerning mental health in schools is directed towards the welfare of the students while neglecting one crucial element of the educational system: the teachers. The irony here is that the role educators are expected to play has evolved over the years in supporting the mental health needs of their students. Part of this is identifying students suffering from psychological issues and referring them to mental health practitioners (Publico, 2020). Nevertheless, how are teachers supposed to deal with the mental health concerns of their students when they are struggling with similar issues? (Publico, 2021). Thus, their mental health is being disregarded and becomes a crisis in return, resulting in reduced vigor and diminished passion for teaching. Shirom (2011) defines vigor as a combination of physical strength, emotional energy, and cognitive liveliness, and it represents a moderate-intensity effect experienced at work. Thus, vigor is an energy that drives someone to pursue and continue. On the other hand, passion is strong preferences, likings, or interests in activities, objects, or ideas (Vallerand, 2010). Importantly, passions usually have a strong emotional component. If you are interested in something but do not feel strongly about it, whether good or bad, then you are probably not passionate about it. This emotional relationship with the object of our passions demonstrates how important we consider it to be (Vallerand, 2010).

It is critical that sustained vigor and passion in teaching are essential for a well-motivated teacher. Ma (2022) emphasizes that sustained vigor and passion are essential for a teacher's motivation, shaping their professional identity. According to UNESCO (2016), until recently, there were only limited opportunities for career progression, with the only career advancement that would move the teacher from the classroom into administrative positions. High teacher retention rates meant that competition for these limited roles was intense. This is one of the many factors why teachers shift career path. Thus, motivation really helps in maintaining the profession. In addition, motivation acts as fuel, helping teachers persevere through challenges and fulfill their commitments. Nurturing these qualities through various motivational factors can empower teachers in their current and future endeavors. In the study of Serin (2023), it is mentioned that passion and commitment are at the core of effective teaching. Passionate and committed teachers have a serious impact on student learning outcomes; therefore, these features are important for their potential to make a difference in student learning. Passion and commitment are essential tools for high-quality teaching and significantly contribute to student achievement. It is imperative to take a look at the sustainability of vigor and passion in teaching despite internal and external influences and its strategies and coping mechanisms.

Thus, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of teachers as they navigate the challenges of their profession. By understanding the strategies and coping mechanisms they employ to maintain their enthusiasm and dedication, this article seeks to shed light on the importance of maintaining vigor and passion in the realm of education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sources of Vigor and Passion in Teaching and Its Influences on Teacher

Personal traits and pedagogical skills contribute effectively to teaching. Personal traits are connected to how teachers perceive their careers and their motivation in their field. Passion is a motivating factor; therefore, there is a significant need for high-quality learning and teaching. Passion is seeking the new, and experiencing new ideas. Passion is based on effective teaching. A passion that is indispensable for learning and teaching facilitates learning through the desire and enthusiasm it creates. Passionate teachers who are strongly committed to their work can make a positive difference in student achievement. In addition to being a motivating factor, passion can influence learning and teaching positively by creating excitement and action. Passion and commitment are at the core of effective teaching. Passionate and committed teachers have serious impact on student learning outcomes; therefore, these features are important for their potential to make a difference in student learning. Passion and commitment are essential tools for high quality teaching and make significant contributions to student achievement. However, there are quite a lot of challenges such as burnout, lack of support, and low pay which can affect the teachers' commitment to education. It is, therefore, essential to recognize the importance of teacher-commitment and provide support to help teachers overcome these challenges. It goes without saying that teachers with commitment and passion have great potential for excellent teaching and help their students achieve their goals. Their dedication, creativity, empathy, growth mindset, and positive attitude inspire their students to learn and grow, and their passion for teaching is contagious.

On the other hand, teachers may face serious challenges that can affect their commitment to education. These include: burnout, where teachers become emotionally and physically exhausted, leading to a decline in their commitment to education. Therefore, teachers need to know how to build balance in their lives. Lack of support can lead to frustration and demotivation, affecting their commitment to education. Teachers when needed should ask for support to maintain their energy, enthusiasm, and motivation towards teaching. These challenges can affect teachers' performance negatively. Teacher burnout can impact the quality of education. Teachers by setting realistic expectations for themselves, they can overcome this serious problem (Serin, 2023). It is therefore important to maintain the passion and dedication of teachers through everyone's support since everyone is part and member of the whole society which everyone in the society help and nourishes one another for a better community in general. It is concluded that initial passion or passion for teaching may diminish, either as result of circumstances such as school culture, age factor of teachers and the process itself. However, passion remains at the core of teaching. Based on the inner qualities of teachers, such as motivation, care and courage as they relate to passion, their symbiotic relationships need to be protected, nurtured, developed and sustained for an enduring sense of efficacy. In the study of Ma (2022), motivation plays a pivotal role in teachers' professional identity as it helps alleviate the difficulties and demands of the academy. Thus, the study highlights motivation as a critical factor in shaping teachers' professional identity. Meaning, it plays a big part in teaching. Moreover, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are one of the reasons why teachers continue to pursue their professional commitment amidst the demands and challenge in the realm of education. This

motivation serves as a fuel source, allowing them to preserve through difficulties and fulfill their professional commitments. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the link between motivation and a teacher's career trajectory. A strong motivational foundation shapes a teacher's approach to their work, influencing their teaching philosophy, use of instructional methods, and overall engagement. Highly motivated teachers are more likely to seek professional development opportunities, strive for continuous improvement, and ultimately find greater fulfillment in their careers. In Fathoni's (2021) study, three major factors were identified as having a positive and significant impact on teacher performance: principal leadership, organizational culture, and teacher competence. This study underscores the importance of these independent variables in enhancing teacher effectiveness, suggesting that educational institutions should prioritize these areas to support and improve teacher performance. Commitment is an especially associated notion of teacher professional identity as educators need to maintain their intrinsic motivation to meet academic expectations, learner desires, and individual purposes (Pennington, 2015).

Moreover, there is a big factor of external and internal motivation of teachers in teaching. It has proven from the study of Börü (2018) that there were internal motivation resources such as immaterial aims, success, and personal characteristics and external motivation sources under the first theme, four subthemes were found: students, national education policies, school principal, and colleagues. Thus, the most basic source of motivation for the teachers is their desire to be successful and their immaterial feelings. However, school policies and students', school principals, colleagues' attitude and behavior influence being successful in the teaching profession. It was also discussed from one of the studies that teachers choose teaching for a variety of reasons, including altruistic motives (desire to help others), intrinsic motives (desire for personal satisfaction), or extrinsic motives (e.g., job security, benefits). It was also revealed that personal traits are connected to how teachers view their careers and their level of motivation. This means that the traits teacher has play a significant role in their professional career. On the other hand, motivation and performance go together hand-in-hand. This simply mean that if a teacher is motivated, they will perform well in teaching. As it was stated in one of the studies, teacher performance is affected by factors such as principal leadership, organizational culture, and teacher competence. These factors can influence a teacher's motivation and ability to perform effectively. Performing effectively is strongly related to being passionate teacher, and passionate teachers are strongly committed to their work and can make a positive difference in student achievement. It has been proven that passion can positively influence teaching and learning by creating excitement and enthusiasm. However, teacher's initial passion for teaching may diminish over time due to factors such as school culture, age, and the challenges of the job itself. Despite this, it is argued that passion remains an essential core element of effective teaching.

Strategies for Sustaining Passion and Vigor in the realm of Teaching and Its effect on Educational Outcomes

One of the most effective ways to sustain passion and motivate teachers is through praise and honor. Showing appreciation for their dedication and hard work makes them feel valued. When teachers receive recognition from the school administration, it reassures them that their skills are acknowledged and their contributions are recognized. Everyone needs praise and affirmation occasionally, regardless of how self-confident they may seem. This is especially important for teachers who often work in isolation, face challenging students and parents, and may sometimes doubt their own abilities. It's essential to acknowledge teachers who exceed expectations. Recognizing teachers' perspectives fosters encouragement and lets them know their voices are heard, contributing to a collaborative and trusting work environment. Acknowledge when teachers make good points and take the time to fully explain how

new initiatives will enhance student growth or simplify their tasks. Orji and Oko (2015) also recommended that teachers' salaries should be comparable to those in other professions requiring similar levels of qualifications and responsibility.

In Muturi's (2022) study, it was found that teachers benefit significantly from both monetary and non-monetary motivators. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that external motivational factors play a crucial role in sustaining teachers' passion and commitment to their profession. In Twumasi's (2024) study, it was revealed that low teacher performance at senior high schools in the Kumasi metropolis is primarily due to low motivation. The analysis of the research sample highlighted specific performance factors, including the absence of praise for work well done, lack of public recognition, and insufficient job training and development. Twumasi's findings align with previous research, emphasizing the critical role of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in enhancing teacher performance. The study affirms that motivational factors such as recognition, praise, training, and performance appraisal are pivotal in influencing teacher performance in Ghana, providing a valuable framework for educational stakeholders to enhance teacher motivation and performance.

Furthermore, praise and recognition play a significant role in boosting teachers' performance. The importance of administrative support in motivating teachers is also emphasized. Administrators should assist teachers in discovering effective strategies and reflecting on their successes, recognizing that a "one-size-fits-all" approach is ineffective. Encouraging teachers' autonomy and leveraging their individual strengths is essential for the success of both teachers and students.

The research highlights several gaps in the existing literature regarding motivation among senior high school teachers in public schools. While previous studies have addressed sources of motivation and the role of passion, they have not examined vigor as a variable alongside passion in the context of senior high school teachers in public schools. Additionally, the influence of passion and vigor as motivational factors during the pre-and post-pandemic educational periods remains unexplored. Furthermore, localized strategies for sustaining passion and vigor in teaching within public senior high schools require further development and analysis. The studies also indicate a need to investigate teachers' strategies for navigating external influences in teaching, as well as their coping strategies for maintaining mental, physical, and social well-being in the public-school teaching environment. These gaps suggest areas for future research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that sustain teacher motivation and well-being in public senior high schools.

Research Questions

The major goal of the study is to explore the lived experiences of teachers in maintaining their passion and vigor for teaching. Specifically, it answers the following questions:

1. What are the intrinsic motivational factors that contribute to sustaining teacher vigor and passion in the face of internal challenges: (a) burnout, and (b) stress;
2. How do teachers perceive and navigate external influences such as: (a) administrative policies/support, (b) societal expectations, and (c) classroom dynamics to maintain their enthusiasm and dedication to teaching?
3. What specific strategies and coping mechanisms do experienced teachers employ to sustain their passion and enthusiasm for teaching over time, despite encountering a variety of internal and external obstacles in terms of (a) mental well-being, (b) physical well-being; and social well-being?

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a qualitative design, specifically a phenomenological type of qualitative design, since the main objective of the study was to determine the lived experiences of teachers in sustaining their passion and vigor in teaching.

Participants (sampling procedure and ethical considerations)

The study involved three tenured teachers from the Senior High School Department of Raniag High School, selected through purposive sampling. Selection criteria included the teachers' length of service and their adherence to the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers. The length of service considered was 15 years and above, currently working and not retired yet.

Moreover, ethical considerations were meticulously observed, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were provided with a consent form to sign, granting their permission to partake in the study. Additionally, participants were assured that all collected data would be handled anonymously and confidentially.

Instruments

The instruments for this study included guide questions for interviews and an audio recorder. Additionally, the researcher used a questionnaire, consisting of a series of written questions to be answered by the participants. The crafted questions were paralleled with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was validated and assessed by a research expert, a language expert, and a tenured educator with more than fifteen years of teaching experience.

Data Collection

Initially, data collection was to be conducted through interviews featuring open-ended questions aligned with the specific objectives of the study. However, the participants requested to provide written answers instead of participating in verbal interviews. They mentioned that they were more comfortable responding in written form rather than in an oral interview. Thus, data collection was conducted by giving the participants the questions and having them answer in writing. It was done on the month of June 2024 during the school year 2023-2024.

The questionnaire also stated that one follow-up question was included. Based on the participants' responses, the study was still considered a narrative inquiry approach since the answers were rooted in their lived experiences and was just narrated in written form. After the questionnaires were returned to the researcher, an informal oral interview was conducted. This interview was not exactly formal but focused on determining how many years the participants had been in service, both in private and public institutions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved Qualitative Content Analysis and narrative analysis. Content Analysis was utilized to identify codes from participants' answers and align them with themes created by the researcher. The diverse data available in sentence codes based on the systematic flow of guide questions provided will be linked to the group of ideas or categories. After categorization, the researcher develops a theme. The themes will evolve based on analytic reflections from the codes and categories. Finally, Narrative Analysis was employed to categorize the participants' stories and experiences into established themes. It captures the lived experiences of the participants and its center of gravity is their story. Narrative analysis is an umbrella term for a family of methods that share a focus on stories (Riessman, 2008).

Ethical considerations

Participants were given a consent form, which they had to sign before answering the questions. The rese-

archer explained that the collected data would be used solely for the study, ensuring that their personal information would be kept anonymous.

Findings

This section presents the results and discussions and is divided into three sections, each addressing the specific objectives of the study.

Table 1: Intrinsic Motivational Factors to Sustain Vigor and Passion

Codes/Response	Categories	Theme/s	Description of Themes
I always challenge myself to become better everyday. I always see to it that I am motivated to work. Internal challenges such as: a. burnout – just always look on the beauty of my purpose and goals.	Solutions for burnout and stress in teaching: 1. Look into your purpose and goals; 2. Show strong commitment and love; and 3. Stick to your interests.	Intrinsic motivational factors in sustaining vigor and passion in teaching	This theme shows the specific motivational factor of intrinsic motivation on how teachers sustain their vigor and passion for teaching despite burnout and stress as internal challenges.
Include a deep love for the subject, commitment to student success, and personal growth.			
The two intrinsic motivational factors that sustain my passion and vigor in teaching despite of challenges/problems include: a. purpose, career, and b. interest.			

Table 1 shows the experiences of the participants in terms of their intrinsic motivational factors in sustaining vigor and passion in teaching where they presented ways/solutions for burnout and stress in teaching. It shows that having a positive outlook in life has greatly affect their profession which pave the way in maintaining equilibrium in terms of mental and professional efficacy. Moreover, it also implies that having a strong sense of well-being helps teachers in navigating their career and sustaining their passion and vigor.

Table 2: External Influences to Passion and Vigor

Codes/Response	Categories	Theme/s	Description of Themes
administrative policies/support –supported and guided by policies makes me believe that I am guided enough; societal expectations – these judgments/expectations given should not	Perceptions of teachers from the external influences:	Teachers’ perception on handling external influences in maintaining	The theme shows the views of teachers on how they handle external influences

<p>hinder/ do not hinder me to perform well; and classroom dynamics – achievement and goals of my learners which are achieved made me think that I have done great.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. administrative policies serve as guidance and support; 2. societal expectations should be acknowledged and serve as a guide, but personal values should remain paramount; and 3. the achievement of students inspires teachers to improve. 	<p>enthusiasm in teaching.</p>	<p>in maintaining enthusiasm in teaching. These external influences are categorized into three which are the following: (a) administrative policies/ support, (b) societal expectations, and (c) classroom dynamics</p>
<p>I view administrative policies as guidelines, leveraging support when aligning with student needs. Societal expectations are acknowledged but not dictating my approach, focusing instead on student growth. Classroom dynamics are opportunities for fostering inclusivity and collaboration.</p>			
<p>Administrative support – these allow teachers to be guided, thus, making these mentors become more efficient and effective. Classroom dynamics – makes the learning environment more engaging, thus, achieving better learning-teaching experiences. Societal expectations – though it is beneficial since it serves as guide sometimes, it becomes detrimental if too much expectations are experienced.</p>			

Table 2 shows the perceptions of participants in terms of external influences in maintaining passion and vigor. Based on their responses it confirms that there are ideological influences of administration, society, and classroom dynamics depending on how the teacher handles and manages it. Thus, it is clearly seen that navigating such external influences depend on how teachers’ view and perceive it on their professional career and growth.

Table 3: Strategies and Coping Mechanisms

Codes/Response	Categories	Theme/s	Description of Themes
<p>As for my mental well-being, As a teacher, I always develop in me a mind with understanding, patience, and kindness. Physical well-being – having a positive and optimistic vision about life is what makes me physically healthy.</p>	<p>Strategies/coping mechanisms: a. Positive attitude, mental self-care (watch movie, drink coffee, walk)</p>	<p>Strategies and coping mechanisms of teachers in sustaining passion and vigor</p>	<p>This theme shows strategies and coping mechanisms teachers employ in sustaining their passion and</p>

<p>Social well-being – I always see to it that I always have a good relationship with the people around me.</p>	<p>b. healthy balanced diet</p>		<p>vigor in terms of</p>
<p>To maintain my passion for teaching mathematics, I prioritize self-care. Mentally, I practice mindfulness and seek support from my colleagues and friends. Physically, I adhere to a balanced diet and exercise routine, ensuring vitality. Socially, I cultivate relationships with fellow educators and participate in community/church activities.</p>	<p>c. avoidance to people who gives stress</p>		<p>a. mental well-being; b. physical well-being; c. social well-being.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping mechanism: stop and go out to relax, have a coffee break, and movie watching • Coping mechanism: avoidance for some time (to the people who gives you stress), pray and talk to these people in private. 			

Table 3 shows the different strategies and coping mechanism of the participants. Based on their answers, it was revealed that one of the most important aspects of taking one’s mental health is through the practice of mind settling. This approach increases self-compassion and personal values, which in turn enhances overall well-being. With this such kind of frame of mind, teachers are more inclined to accept challenges with a positive outlook and continuously searching for the silver lining in every situation.

Discussion

Theme 1: Intrinsic motivational factors in sustaining vigor and passion in teaching

The participants had very similar responses, believing that the solutions for burnout and stress in teaching are as follows: (1) look into your purpose and goals; (2) show strong commitment and love; and (3) stick to your interests. These responses were derived from the codes, categorized accordingly, and arranged based on the internal challenges of burnout and stress. The result of the study proves that knowing ones’ purpose and goal is one of the solutions in dealing internal challenges such as burnout and stress. This is similar to the study of Sutin, et.al (20 24), which mentioned that knowing ones’ purpose and goal in life has been associated with better regulation of stress. It is highly noted from its result that greater purpose in life was associated with less subjective stress. Less subjective stress may be one mechanism through which purpose contributes to better mental and physical health.

In addition, having a strong commitment, love, and interest are factors that greatly impact sustaining vigor and passion. As participants mentioned, these include “*a deep love for the subject, commitment to student success, and personal growth. The joy of witnessing student progress, fostering curiosity, and fulfillment from meaningful connection with students help combat burnout and stress*”, “*...purpose, and career, love..motivational factors maintain the ‘fire’ inside me.*”, “*I always see to it that this would not be the*

reason of me giving up my profession. Just look into the faces of my learners and seeing them have the drive to learn more, is what truly matters and motivates me to perform well and do better.” Based on the study of Mart (2018), Passionate teachers are those who make great changes in our lives. Their beliefs and vigorous actions make us realize our inner values and bewitch us. Passion contributes to teacher’s motivation and performance. Passionate teachers have an effect on student achievement. There is a strong correlation between passionate teaching and successful student learning. Commitment, a sense of adherence, is a key factor that influences learning process of students.

Thus, to sustain vigor and passion, one must have a strong sense of purpose to remain focused and continue despite internal challenges. It is also imperative to have a strong desire for commitment and a love of teaching, as these will strengthen one's passion. Finally, focusing on things that spark personal interest is crucial, as these act as navigators for sustaining vigor and passion.

Theme 2: Teachers’ perception on handling external influences in maintaining enthusiasm in teaching.

When asked about the participants' perceptions on handling external influences such as (a) administrative policies/support, (b) societal expectations, and (c) classroom dynamics, and how they navigate these to maintain enthusiasm in teaching, the responses consistently emphasized the importance of a holistic approach. External influences must be interpreted positively, leading to the following conclusions: (1) administrative policies serve as guidance and support; (2) societal expectations should be acknowledged and serve as a guide, but personal values should remain paramount; and (3) the achievement of students inspires teachers to improve.

This implies that, to maintain enthusiasm in teaching, one must perceive external influences as supportive guidance rather than obstacles. One participant mentioned that external influences “... *serve as a guide sometimes, but can become detrimental if expectations are too high.*” Thus, while they serve as a guide, there must be a balance to prevent them from becoming detrimental to the teacher's well-being. Another participant referred to external influences as “... *spices of life that I have in my career. These challenges motivate me to perform well in my duties as a teacher. Without these expectations, I would not be the excellent teacher I am today.*” This means that a teacher should navigate external influences as the spices of life, acknowledging their integral role in life and their significant effect on teacher enthusiasm.

Positively handling external influences is crucial for maintaining enthusiasm in teaching. Enthusiasm in this context goes beyond merely enjoying the act of teaching; it involves a deeper, more engaged state of being. In the study of Burić and Moè (2020), it is mentioned that experienced enthusiasm encompasses positive feelings and excitement toward teaching and interacting with students and has often been contrasted with teaching-related enjoyment (Frenzel, Becker-Kurz, Pekrun, Goetz, & Lüdtke, 2018; Frenzel et al., 2009; Keller et al., 2016). While enthusiasm implies enjoyment, it is more than simply enjoying teaching. For instance, while enthusiasm and enjoyment are perceived as similar emotional terms (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O’Connor, 1987) and are frequently experienced in educational contexts (Rowe, Fitness, & Wood, 2014), enthusiasm has a higher activation level than enjoyment (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O’Connor, 1987) and includes other aspects such as involvement and pleasure (Kunter et al., 2011).

In essence, by positively handling external influences, teachers can maintain a higher level of enthusiasm. This involves seeing challenges as opportunities for growth, finding pleasure in involvement, and balancing external expectations with personal values. This proactive and positive mindset not only

enhances teaching performance but also contributes to long-term job satisfaction and resilience against burnout.

Theme 3: Strategies and coping mechanisms of teachers in sustaining passion and vigor.

It is evident from the participants' weighty narratives that the strategies and coping mechanisms for sustaining passion and vigor in teaching are based on three key areas: (a) mental well-being, (b) physical well-being, and (c) social well-being. These areas correspond to the following strategies: (1) positive attitude, mental self-care (watch movie, drink coffee, walk); (2) healthy balanced diet; (3) avoidance to people who gives stress. These findings underscore that well-being extends beyond physical health to include mental and social aspects. The participants' strategies align with the study by Mingoa (2017), which identified various coping mechanisms teachers use to relieve stress, such as watching television (64%), window shopping (57%), watching sports (43%), going to movies (38%), and doing deep breathing and relaxation exercises (34%). The study also recommended both environmental and mental attitude changes for stress relief, including having enough workspace, summer vacations, avoiding conflicts, daily prayer, encouraging words, and maintaining a clean and orderly environment.

Similarly, the study by Jimenez (2021) highlighted that teachers generally maintain a positive mental health outlook, experience stress occasionally, and have trouble sleeping less than once a week. The study recommended maintaining a healthy wellness lifestyle, particularly getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep, to support mental and physical health. Engaging in wellness programs such as yoga and Zumba was also suggested to improve mental attitudes towards work.

Thus, sustaining passion and vigor in teaching involves a comprehensive approach to well-being that addresses mental, physical, and social health. By adopting these strategies and coping mechanisms, teachers can better manage stress, maintain their passion and vigor, and continue to thrive in their profession.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study explored the lived experiences of teachers in sustaining their passion and vigor in the realm of education. The main goal was to unveil the strategies and coping mechanisms teachers employ to maintain their enthusiasm despite internal and external challenges. The findings are crucial as they provide additional insights and practical approaches that can inform future research and contribute to the existing literature on teacher well-being. By highlighting the importance of mental, physical, and social well-being, this study fills significant gaps in understanding how teachers can sustain their passion and vigor, ultimately supporting their long-term effectiveness and satisfaction in their profession. Based on the findings, it was drawn to the conclusion that (1) teachers sustain their passion and vigor in the face of burnout and stress by focusing on three main strategies: knowing their purpose and goals, showing strong commitment and love for teaching, and sticking to their interests. (2) they maintain their enthusiasm in teaching by positively looking into the silver lining in handling external influences such as administrative policies, societal expectations, and classroom dynamics. Participants emphasized the importance of viewing these influences as supportive guidance rather than obstacles. This positive approach aligns with the concept of experienced enthusiasm, which involves a deeper, more engaged state of being beyond mere enjoyment. Thus, cultivating a mindset that views external challenges as opportunities for growth and sources of motivation can enhance teaching performance, job satisfaction, and resilience against burnout; (3) sustaining passion and vigor in teaching requires a comprehensive approach to well-being that encompasses mental, physical, and social health. Key strategies include maintaining a positive attitude

and practicing mental self-care, following a healthy balanced diet, and avoiding stressful people. Teachers' well-being extends beyond physical health and includes mental and social aspects, stressing the need for supportive educational environments and policies that promote a holistic approach to teacher well-being. This approach not only helps manage stress but also enhances teachers' overall performance, job satisfaction, and resilience against burnout.

Limitations of the study include its focus solely on determining the sustained vigor and passion of the senior high school teachers through identifying their strategies and coping mechanisms, without rigorously exploring the potential causes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in the plight of teachers' mental backgrounds and issues.

Additionally, the study did not examine the teacher education curriculum in relation to mandates and protections for teachers' mental health and its impact on their teaching. Future research should delve into these areas for a more comprehensive understanding.

Furthermore, it is imperative to dig and explore the teacher education curriculum to include directives and protections for teachers' mental health and examine its connection to their teaching practices. Including a broader range of participants within the field of education would also offer a wider perspective and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

References

1. Alibang, E. F. (2023). Dealing the Challenges in Philippine Education: A Teacher's perspective. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@elenitafalibang/dealing-the-challenges-in-philippine-education-a-teachers-perspective-a96800d2db7c>
2. Börü, N. (2018). The factors affecting Teacher-Motivation. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(4), 761–776. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11448a>
3. Bryan. (2024, January 7). 12 Reasons why teachers play a Crucial role in Society 2024. *Teachers of Tomorrow*. <https://www.teachersoftomorrow.org/blog/insights/reasons-why-teachers-play-a-crucial-role-in-society/>
4. Burić, I., & Moè, A. (2020). What makes teachers enthusiastic: The interplay of positive affect, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 89, 103008. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.103008>
5. Generelao, I. N., Ducanes, G., Yee, K. M., & David, C. (2022). Teacher education in the Philippines: Are we meeting the demand for quality? *Philippine Journal of Public Policy (UPCIDS-Online)/Philippine Journal of Public Policy (UPCIDS-Print)*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.54096/iene4805>
6. Hollenstein, L., & Brühwiler, C. (2024). The importance of teachers' pedagogical-psychological teaching knowledge for successful teaching and learning. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2024.2328042>
7. La Velle, L. (2020). Teacher education approaching crisis: external and internal factors. *JET. Journal of Education For Teaching/Journal of Education For Teaching*, 46(3), 259–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2020.1768692>
8. Lacaba, T. V. G., Lacaba, A. B., & Caliwan, M. A. (2020). TEACHERS' RESILIENCE: a CHALLENGE OF COMMITMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS. *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, 8(4), 79–88. <https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v8.i4.2020.10>
9. Ma, D. (2022). The role of motivation and commitment in teachers' professional identity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.910747>

10. Publico, M. (2021). Mental health and the teaching profession. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360167131_Mental_Health_and_the_Teaching_Profession
11. Mart, C. T. (2018). A passionate teacher: Teacher commitment and dedication to student learning. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329155635_A_passionate_teacher_Teacher_commitment_and_dedication_to_student_learning
12. Muturi, J. (2022). Effects of teachers' motivation on students performance in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya. *www.academia.edu*. https://www.academia.edu/88904546/Effects_of_teachers_motivation_on_students_performance_in_public_secondary_schools_in_Kikuyu_District_Kenya?rhid=28216434234&swp=rr-rw-wc-26555826
13. Nalla, R. (2022). Lived Experiences, challenges, and coping Mechanisms of Teachers on the current paradigm Shift in Education: a phenomenological study. *Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research)*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6833377>
14. *ORCID*. (n.d.). <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6876-7935>
15. Orji, F. O., PhD, & Oko, O. (2015). IMPACT OF TEACHER MOTIVATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS. *Jude*. https://www.academia.edu/10448304/IMPACT_OF_TEACHER_MOTIVATION_ON_ACADEMIC_PERFORMANCE_OF_STUDENTS
16. *Passion: Definition, Examples, & projects*. (n.d.). The Berkeley Well-Being Institute. <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/passion.html>
17. Raba, A. a. a. M. (2017). THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES ON PRODUCING FAST AND GOOD LEARNING OUTCOMES. *Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research)*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.259563>
18. Serin, H. (2023). Effective teaching: passion and commitment. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v10i3p60>
19. Shirom, A. (2011). Vigor as a Positive Affect at Work: Conceptualizing Vigor, Its Relations with Related Constructs, and Its Antecedents and Consequences. *Review of General Psychology*, 15(1), 50–64. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021853>
20. Snow, J. L., Dismuke, C., Carter, H., Larson, A., & Holloway, S. (2023). The emotional work of being a teacher educator and persisting through a pandemic. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 127, 104098. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104098>
21. Sutin, A. R., Luchetti, M., Stephan, Y., Sesker, A. A., & Terracciano, A. (2024). Purpose in life and stress: An individual-participant meta-analysis of 16 samples. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 345, 378–385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.10.149>
22. Twumasi, M. A. (2024). The unique motivational factors affecting teachers performance among senior high schools in Kumasi Metropolis. *Sicau*. https://www.academia.edu/51777929/The_Unique_Motivational_Factors_Affecting_Teachers_Performance_Among_Senior_High_Schools_in_Kumasi_Metropolis?rhid=28216453127&swp=rr-rw-wc-88904546