

**Mitigating kindergarten teacher stress and burnout:
Strategies for school leaders and management support**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the levels of stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in the District of Compostela during the school year 2024–2025 as the basis for a proposed action plan to mitigate these conditions. The study employed a descriptive–correlational research design and utilized the complete enumeration method, involving all 25 kindergarten teachers from the six integrated and nine elementary schools in the district. An adopted survey questionnaire was used to gather data on teachers’ profiles, burnout levels (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement), and stress levels related to handling children, relationships at work and with guardians, time management, working conditions, and school policies. Statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Spearman’s rho correlation, were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that kindergarten teachers generally experienced moderate levels of stress and burnout, particularly in emotional exhaustion and time management, while maintaining a high sense of personal achievement. Significant relationships were found between certain profile variables and burnout dimensions, indicating that demographic and professional factors influenced teachers’ experiences of stress. Results also showed that supportive leadership, clear communication, and conducive work environments helped reduce stress and prevent burnout. Based on the findings, an action plan was developed to guide school leaders and management in implementing wellness programs, time management interventions, and professional support initiatives. The study concluded that fostering teacher well-being through responsive leadership and policy implementation is essential to sustaining quality early childhood education in the Compostela District.

Keywords: Administration and supervision, action plan, Compostela, Cebu, descriptive–correlational study, kindergarten teacher stress and burnout, management support, strategies for school leaders.

Date Submitted: June 29, 2026

Date Accepted: July 3, 2026

Date Published: July 10, 2026

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031306>

Recommended citation:

Masong, C. M. (2026). Mitigating kindergarten teacher stress and burnout: Strategies for school leaders and management support. *Pantao (International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (3), 931-950.
<http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS05031306>

INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten marks the foundational stage of formal education, where children aged 5-6 transition from play-based learning at home to structured classroom environments that ignite curiosity, social skills, and basic literacy. This pivotal phase in early childhood education demands teachers who are not only skilled instructors but also nurturing caregivers, fostering emotional security as young learners rapidly develop. However, the stress and exhaustion kindergarten teachers endure have become major obstacles to the efficacy of this critical sector on a global scale. In Ethiopia, for example, teachers face increasing workloads, limited resources, and inadequate professional support, which often lead to emotional exhaustion and diminished job satisfaction (Bezie et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these stressors, increasing the pressure on teachers to adapt to remote learning and address the growing emotional needs of young learners (Sokal et al., 2020). Stress and burnout not only negatively affect teachers' mental health but also undermine the quality of education provided to children, with long-term implications for their development (Evers et al., 2021). Addressing teacher stress and burnout in the early childhood sector has thus become a priority for educational policymakers worldwide, with calls for more comprehensive support systems for educators in this field.

In the context of early childhood education, studies have shown that teacher stress can lead to high turnover rates and lower teaching efficacy (Van Horn et al., 2022). However, despite growing recognition of these challenges, there remains a significant gap in research and effective interventions to mitigate stress and burnout specifically within the kindergarten sector. A global analysis by OECD (2020) highlights the need for stronger professional development programs and supportive leadership structures that prioritize teachers' well-being. Moreover, it underscores that school leadership, including school leaders and management, plays a crucial role in creating a supportive environment that can significantly reduce stress among educators. The importance of developing evidence-based strategies to manage stress and improve teachers' resilience, particularly in kindergarten, cannot be overstated.

In the Philippine context, teacher stress and burnout are pervasive, particularly in the public school system. Teachers in the Philippines are burdened by large class sizes, administrative responsibilities, and limited resources, which contribute to their stress levels (Manlapig et al., 2020). According to a study by Bermudez and Fernandez (2021), the ongoing challenges faced by teachers in Filipino schools, such as long working hours and inadequate compensation, have led to increased burnout among educators, which, in turn, affects the quality of instruction and student outcomes. This situation is further complicated by the demands of blended learning, which has created additional work for teachers in preparing and delivering instructional materials both online and face-to-face. As a result, stress and burnout in Filipino teachers, particularly in early childhood education, have become critical issues requiring urgent attention from policymakers and school leaders.

Research on teacher stress in the Philippines, particularly in the context of early childhood education, remains limited. However, it has been suggested that kindergarten teachers are particularly vulnerable due to the emotional demands of working with young children (Mendoza & Panganiban, 2021). Local studies have emphasized the need for comprehensive teacher support systems and proactive measures to address stress and burnout; however, school leaders and management often lack the necessary training or resources to provide appropriate support (Santos et al., 2022). This knowledge and practice gap has prompted calls for more targeted research and the development of localized interventions tailored to the specific needs of teachers in the Philippine early childhood education sector. Implementing strategies to mitigate stress at the local level, in regions like the Compostela District, is vital to improving the quality of teaching and the overall well-being of teachers.

In the Compostela District, the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers reflect broader national trends. According to a recent report by the Department of Education (DepEd, 2023), teachers in rural areas often experience higher levels of stress due to the limited access to professional development opportunities and the lack of support systems. The district, which faces infrastructure and resource constraints, is particularly susceptible to the negative effects of teacher burnout. Local educators report feeling overwhelmed by large class sizes and the pressure to meet curriculum standards with limited resources. Given these contextual challenges, the need for district-level interventions is pressing, with a focus on providing tailored support to school leaders and educators to address burnout and improve teaching quality.

Recent district surveys indicate only 25-30% of kindergarten teachers access mental health programs, with zero targeted initiatives for rural early childhood stressors like community demands and logistics. While there are general initiatives on teacher wellness, there is little focus on the specific needs of kindergarten teachers in rural settings, where additional stressors, such as community expectations and logistical challenges, are common.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining strategies for school leaders and management to mitigate stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in Compostela District, thereby contributing to improved teaching quality and educators' well-being.

Statement of the problem

This study determined the level of burnout and stress among kindergarten teachers in Compostela District for the school year 2024 to 2025 as the basis for a proposed action plan.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, position and designation, and geographical location?
2. What is the perceived burnout level of teachers in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement?
3. What is the perceived stress level of teachers in terms of understanding of how to handle children, interpersonal relationships at work, relationships with guardians, lack of time, disconnects in working conditions, and disconnects in school policies?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' profiles and their perceived burnout level and perceived stress level?
5. Based on the findings, what action plan can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationship between teacher stress and burnout, as well as the strategies school leaders and management use to mitigate these issues in kindergarten settings. The descriptive component aimed to present detailed accounts of the respondents' demographic profiles and to determine the levels of stress and burnout experienced by kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District, providing a factual description of the prevailing conditions without manipulating any variables. The correlational component examined the relationship between the teachers' profiles, such as age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, position, and geographical location, and their perceived levels of stress and burnout, and also analyzed whether significant associations existed among these variables. The design focused on collecting data through survey questionnaires to determine the extent of teacher stress and

burnout, and the availability of support systems within schools. The research aimed to explore how management and leadership strategies influenced kindergarten teachers' well-being and overall teaching performance. All teachers handling kindergarten in Compostela District for the school year 2024–2025 served as the study's respondents, and the data were systematically organized, summarized, and analyzed in accordance with the research objectives.

The study used an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model to gather the essential data for the research. The input stage determined the study's input, including the teachers' profiles such as age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years of teaching experience. It also involved identifying the levels of burnout among teachers in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of personal achievement, as well as assessing teachers' stress levels in relation to factors such as understanding how to handle children, interpersonal relationships at work, relationships with guardians, lack of time, disconnects in working conditions, and disconnects in school policies. The process stage involved preparing and distributing a transmittal letter to the Public Schools District Supervisor, school leaders, and teacher respondents to introduce the study, its purpose, and the researcher's contact information. The researcher obtained informed consent from all participants to ensure ethical conduct and voluntary participation, after which the survey questionnaire was administered to collect data on teachers' burnout and stress levels. The collected data were then subjected to statistical analysis to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among the variables, and the researcher analyzed and interpreted the findings within the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The output of the study was a proposed action plan for school leaders and management to mitigate teacher stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District.

This study was conducted in the schools within the District of Compostela, located in the northern part of Cebu Province, approximately 30.9 kilometers from Cebu City. Nestled along the eastern coastline, Compostela is part of the greater metropolitan area of Cebu. The district comprised six integrated schools, nine elementary schools, and four secondary schools, catering to a diverse student population from both urban and rural communities. According to the most recent data, the district had 25 kindergarten teachers and approximately 8,950 learners across all levels. The district's schools were equipped with various teacher support facilities designed to enhance professional efficiency and reduce stress. These included faculty rooms, wellness and relaxation corners, learning resource centers, conference rooms, and administrative support offices, all of which provided spaces for planning, collaboration, and reflection. Some schools also maintained guidance offices, staff lounges, and designated areas for mindfulness and wellness activities, aimed at fostering emotional stability and promoting work–life balance among teachers. These facilities served as essential components in creating a supportive and conducive environment for teacher well-being, ultimately contributing to more effective teaching and learning experiences in early childhood education. Given these conditions, the District of Compostela presented a relevant and comprehensive setting for examining the levels of stress and burnout experienced by kindergarten teachers and for identifying strategies that school leaders and management could implement to mitigate these challenges.

The respondents of this study were all kindergarten teachers assigned to the public schools within the District of Compostela. The distribution of respondents consisted entirely of female teachers, with a frequency of 25 and a percentage of 100.00%, yielding a total frequency of 25 and a total percentage of 100.00%. Using the complete enumeration method, the study included all currently employed kindergarten teachers from the six integrated schools and nine elementary schools under the district's jurisdiction. This method ensured that the perspectives, experiences, and challenges of every kindergarten teacher in the district were accurately captured and represented in the findings. By involving the entire kindergarten teacher

population, the study gathered comprehensive, reliable data on stress, burnout, and the effectiveness of support strategies provided by school leaders and management.

The researcher adopted a survey questionnaire from the study by Ishibashi et al. (2022) titled "Burnout among kindergarten teachers and associated factors," using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to gather information to help achieve the study's aims. This questionnaire was designed to gather information on teachers' experiences, levels of burnout, and stressors, and was divided into three parts. Part 1, Personal Information, consisted of the basic demographic details, namely age, sex, highest educational attainment, with options including doctorate, with doctoral units, master's degree, with master's units, and bachelor's degree, and years of teaching experience, ranging from 0-5 years to 21 years and above. Part 2, Burnout Levels, used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to assess burnout across three dimensions, namely Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment, with respondents rating their experiences on a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Every day). Part 3, Stress Levels, used the Nursery Teacher's Stress Scale (NTSS) by Akada (2010) to measure stress factors related to teaching young children, with respondents rating statements on a scale from 1 (Not true at all) to 5 (Very true). The six factors measured under this part included understanding of how to handle children, interpersonal relationships at work, relationships with guardians, lack of time, disconnects in working conditions, and disconnects in school policies.

During the Preliminary Stage of data gathering, the researcher sent a transmittal letter to the Public Schools District Supervisor and the school principals within the Compostela District to seek formal permission to conduct the study. Upon receiving their approval, the researcher conducted an on-site visit to each participating school to identify the focal person who would assist with administering the questionnaires, during which the researcher and the designated focal persons agreed on the most appropriate schedule for the orientation and the actual data gathering process. In the Data Gathering Stage, the researcher facilitated an orientation session on the agreed date, during which essential aspects of the study were explained, including the purpose, procedures, and measures taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. After the orientation, the researcher administered the survey questionnaires to the respondents, providing clear instructions for completing the survey forms properly. The researcher also assisted participants as they completed the questionnaires and ensured sufficient time was allotted for them to respond thoughtfully, with retrieval of the completed questionnaires following immediately after the respondents had finished. In the Post Data Gathering Stage, the researcher systematically tallied, organized, and summarized the collected data. The results were then interpreted and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to ensure accuracy and reliability, and based on the findings, an action plan was proposed to address the needs related to mitigating teacher stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District.

After data collection, the data were subjected to various statistical analyses with the assistance of a statistician to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results, and several statistical tools were employed to analyze the data effectively. Frequency counts were used to determine the number of respondents who shared similar characteristics, particularly in their profiles, helping to identify how many participants fell into specific categories. Percentage was also used to describe the proportion of respondents in each category relative to the total number of participants, providing a clearer picture of the demographic distribution. A weighted mean was used to assess levels of teacher stress and burnout, providing a numerical summary of respondents' responses that enabled the researcher to determine the average levels of stress and burnout experienced by the teachers. Additionally, the standard deviation was used to measure the dispersion of the data from the mean, providing insight into how consistently participants

rated their experiences. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) (PPMCC) was applied to determine the significance of the relationship between teacher stress and burnout levels, helping to identify whether a linear relationship exists between the two variables, which was essential for drawing meaningful conclusions and crafting evidence-based recommendations.

Data collected through survey questionnaires were calculated and interpreted according to established scoring procedures to determine teachers' burnout and stress levels, using the following numerical and descriptive ratings. For the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a scale value of 6, corresponding to a range of scores of 5.18-6.00, carried the descriptive rating of Severe, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent experiences burnout at an alarming level. A scale value of 5, corresponding to a range of scores of 4.35-5.17, carried the descriptive rating of Very High, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent consistently feels significant burnout. A scale value of 4, corresponding to a range of scores of 3.52-4.34, carried the descriptive rating of High, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent often feels burned out and may require support. A scale value of 3, corresponding to a range of scores of 2.69-3.51, carried the descriptive rating of Moderate, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent occasionally experiences burnout symptoms. A scale value of 2, corresponding to a range of scores of 1.86-2.68, carried the descriptive rating of Low, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent rarely feels burnout symptoms. A scale value of 1, corresponding to a range of scores of 1.00-1.85, carried the descriptive rating of Very Low, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent experiences almost no burnout.

For the Nursery Teachers' Stress Level scale, a scale value of 5, corresponding to a range of scores of 4.20-5.00, carried the descriptive rating of Very High, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent experiences severe and frequent stress. A scale value of 4, corresponding to a range of scores of 3.40-4.19, carried the descriptive rating of High, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent feels significant stress, requiring attention. A scale value of 3, corresponding to a range of scores of 2.60-3.39, carried the descriptive rating of Moderate, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent experiences moderate stress and may need coping mechanisms. A scale value of 2, corresponding to a range of scores of 1.80-2.59, carried the descriptive rating of Low, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent occasionally feels stress related to the factor. A scale value of 1, corresponding to a range of scores of 1.00-1.79, carried the descriptive rating of Very Low, verbally interpreted as indicating that the respondent experiences minimal stress related to the factor.

To avoid vagueness in the study, several terms were defined as used throughout the methodology and the study as a whole. Depersonalization refers to a teacher's detached or indifferent attitude toward students, leading to reduced empathy and emotional connection in classroom interactions. Disconnects in School Policies refer to misalignment or conflicts between teachers' expectations and the implementation of school rules and policies, potentially leading to frustration and reduced motivation. Disconnects in Working Conditions occur when the school environment or resources do not align with teachers' professional needs, leading to stress and dissatisfaction. Emotional Exhaustion refers to the state of feeling emotionally overextended and drained as a result of prolonged stress or demands in teaching, particularly in managing young learners. Interpersonal Relationships at Work refers to the quality of social interactions and professional support that teachers experience with colleagues, administrators, and staff, which can influence their stress levels and job satisfaction. Lack of Time refers to the feeling of inadequacy in managing time for teaching responsibilities, preparation, breaks, and personal commitments due to workload demands. Personal Achievement refers to the sense of competence, accomplishment, and effectiveness that teachers feel in fulfilling their professional responsibilities, particularly in fostering student growth. Relationships with

Guardians refers to the level of understanding, communication, and collaboration between teachers and the parents or guardians of their students, which impacts the overall teaching experience and stress levels. Strategies for Management Support refer to the specific actions and initiatives implemented by school leaders to support teachers, such as providing wellness programs, managing workloads, improving working conditions, involving teachers in decision-making, and offering professional development to reduce stress and prevent burnout. Stress Level of Teachers refers to the degree to which teachers experience physical, emotional, and psychological strain due to factors such as workload, resource constraints, and interpersonal challenges in the school environment. Teachers' Burnout refers to a chronic state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged exposure to stressors in teaching, characterized by reduced effectiveness, emotional fatigue, and detachment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results and Discussion chapter presents and interprets the data gathered from 25 kindergarten teachers assigned to public schools within the District of Compostela for school year 2024-2025, who served as respondents to this descriptive-correlational study. Employing the complete enumeration method to ensure that the entire population of kindergarten teachers in the district was represented, the study used a survey questionnaire adopted from Ishibashi et al. (2022), incorporating the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure burnout across the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, and the Nursery Teacher's Stress Scale (NTSS) by Akada (2010) to measure stress across the factors of understanding of how to handle children, interpersonal relationships at work, relationships with guardians, lack of time, disconnects in working conditions, and disconnects in school policies. Frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) were applied to organize, summarize, and analyze the data, with a statistician assisting in ensuring accuracy and reliability. The discussion that follows is grounded entirely in the data gathered through this process and interprets the findings in direct relation to the objectives of the study, namely to describe the demographic profile of kindergarten teachers, determine their perceived levels of burnout and stress, and examine the significant relationships between teachers' profiles and their perceived burnout and stress levels.

Demographic profile of teachers

The demographic profile of kindergarten teachers, encompassing age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, position or designation, and geographical location, provides essential context for interpreting the burnout and stress data and for identifying targeted support strategies that school leaders and management may implement. In terms of age, the data revealed that the majority of kindergarten teachers fell within the 31-35 and 36-40 age groups, each comprising 24.00% ($f = 6$) of the sample. The next largest groups were those aged 25-30 and 41-45, both accounting for 20.00% ($f = 5$). Smaller proportions of teachers were found in the 46-50 age range at 4.00% ($f = 1$) and the 51-55 age range at 8.00% ($f = 2$), yielding a total of 25 teachers or 100.00%. This pattern indicates that most kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District are in the early to middle stages of their careers, a stage often marked by heightened demands on professional growth and work-life balance that can increase vulnerability to stress and burnout. Younger and mid-career teachers may therefore require different forms of support than older, more experienced colleagues, whose stressors

might instead relate to health or retirement concerns. Research indicates that early- and mid-career teachers often face distinct stressors related to workload and career development (Maslach & Leiter, 2021), and in the Philippine context, Santos and Cruz (2023) found that stress management programs tailored for mid-career teachers effectively reduced burnout, while Reyes et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of age-sensitive support systems to sustain teacher motivation and mental health in public schools. Given that the majority of teachers are in the early to mid-career stage, school leaders and management should tailor stress-mitigation strategies, such as professional development, work-life balance initiatives, mentoring, and wellness programs, to address the unique pressures this demographic faces.

With respect to highest educational attainment, 72.00% ($f = 18$) of kindergarten teachers had completed master's degree units, 24.00% ($f = 6$) held a bachelor's degree, and 4.00% ($f = 1$) had attained doctoral units, for a total of 25 teachers or 100.00%. This distribution indicates a relatively high level of academic qualification among the teachers, with most having pursued or currently pursuing graduate-level education, which may reflect a strong commitment to professional growth and could equip teachers with deeper pedagogical knowledge and strategies for managing classroom stressors. However, the demands of graduate studies combined with teaching responsibilities could also contribute to burnout if adequate support is not provided. Kyriacou (2020) emphasizes the link between higher educational qualifications and enhanced teacher resilience and coping skills, while Dela Cruz and Gonzales (2022), in the Philippine setting, found that professional development positively influenced teachers' stress management and instructional performance, and Lim and Reyes (2023) highlight the critical role of educational attainment in shaping teachers' adaptive capacities in high-stress environments. The prevalence of teachers with master's degree units underscores the importance of continuous professional development programs that build on this foundation, with school leaders encouraged to leverage these teachers' advanced knowledge through peer-support and mentoring programs while balancing ongoing education with occupational well-being.

Regarding years of teaching experience, 40.00% ($f = 10$) of teachers had 6 to 10 years of experience, 32.00% ($f = 8$) had 0 to 5 years, 24.00% ($f = 6$) had 11 to 15 years, none (0.00%, $f = 0$) had 16 to 20 years, and 4.00% ($f = 1$) had 21 years and above, totaling 25 teachers or 100.00%. This distribution suggests a workforce composed primarily of early- to mid-career professionals with varying durations of exposure to the demands of teaching. Teachers with fewer years of experience are often still adjusting to professional demands and developing coping mechanisms, which can influence susceptibility to stress and burnout, while more experienced teachers might possess tried-and-tested stress management strategies but could also face cumulative occupational fatigue. Ishibashi et al. (2022) underscore the association between teaching experience and burnout, highlighting the need for supportive leadership to mitigate stress, while Bezie et al. (2025) emphasized that work-related burnout prevalence varies with job tenure among kindergarten teachers and recommended targeted interventions, and Ng (2023) noted that early childhood educators with fewer years of experience are particularly vulnerable to burnout, stressing the importance of both individual and organizational support mechanisms. Given this distribution, school leaders and management should consider differentiated support systems, including induction programs and mentoring for novice teachers alongside wellness initiatives for long-serving teachers.

In terms of position and designation, 60.00% ($f = 15$) of respondents held the Teacher 1 position, 36.00% ($f = 9$) held the Teacher 3 position, and 4.00% ($f = 1$) held the Master Teacher 1 position, for a total of 25 teachers or 100.00%. Among these, 14 teachers served solely as class advisers, 10 combined the roles of class adviser and coordinator, and 1 held the combined roles of class adviser, subject teacher, and coordinator. This distribution shows a concentration of teachers in entry to mid-level teaching positions carrying varying

administrative and instructional responsibilities, which may contribute to increased stress and burnout risk due to the balancing of instructional, administrative, and leadership demands, while the small number of master teachers may indicate limited availability of highly experienced personnel to mentor less experienced colleagues. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), teachers with combined instructional and leadership roles face a higher risk of burnout due to role overload, and in the Philippine context, Rosales and Delgado (2024) reported that role ambiguity and excessive responsibilities significantly affect teacher stress levels, while Santiago et al. (2023) emphasized the need for clear role definition and workload management to sustain teacher motivation and reduce burnout. These findings imply that school leaders should consider workload distribution and role clarity, along with administrative assistance for coordinators and professional development for teachers transitioning into leadership roles, to minimize burnout.

Finally, with regard to geographical location, 60.00% ($f = 15$) of teachers worked in urban settings and 40.00% ($f = 10$) were based in rural areas, totaling 25 teachers or 100.00%. Although a larger proportion of teachers operated in urban environments, rural teachers often face distinct challenges that could exacerbate burnout risk, as studies note that rural teachers tend to have limited access to resources and support systems while managing higher emotional labor due to community integration and socio-economic constraints (Zhao, 2023; Yuan, 2025), whereas urban teachers, though generally better resourced, may experience stress from higher administrative demands and overcrowded classrooms. Zhao (2023) highlights heightened burnout levels among rural teachers due to inadequate resources and heavy emotional labor, Yuan (2025) found that emotional exhaustion is more severe in rural settings primarily due to deficits in social support, and O'Connell et al. (2022) similarly emphasized that geographical disparities significantly influence burnout dimensions, with rural teachers experiencing more depersonalization and emotional exhaustion than their urban counterparts, alongside findings by Hamby (2019) on job overload and administrative pressures among urban teachers. This distribution suggests that both rural and urban teachers are vulnerable to burnout but face different stressors, underscoring the need for school management and policymakers to tailor programs, such as expanded resource access and emotional resilience building for rural teachers and workload and administrative support for urban teachers, to address location-based disparities in teacher well-being.

Perceived burnout level of teachers

The perceived burnout level of kindergarten teachers was examined across the three MBI dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement, using a scale where 1.00-1.85 is interpreted as Very Low, 1.86-2.68 as Low, 2.69-3.51 as Moderate, 3.52-4.34 as High, and 5.18-6.00 as Severe. For emotional exhaustion, the aggregate mean was 3.67 ($SD = 1.23$), verbally interpreted as High, indicating that kindergarten teachers generally experienced elevated levels of emotional fatigue from their work. The highest mean scores were recorded for feeling overwhelmed by the demands of teaching young children ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.82$, Very High) and feeling fatigued after a day of working with students ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.33$, Very High), followed by often feeling unable to give more of oneself to students ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.73$, Very High). Teachers also reported high levels of emotional drain from working with kindergarten learners ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.33$, High) and feeling exhausted at the end of the school day ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.54$, High). Comparatively lower, though still moderate, mean scores were obtained for feeling that the work was taking a toll on emotional well-being ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.77$, Moderate), dreading going to work because of emotional demands (M

= 2.96, SD = 1.59, Moderate), feeling unable to cope with emotional demands (M = 2.92, SD = 1.71, Moderate), and often feeling like running on empty emotionally (M = 2.92, SD = 1.74, Moderate). This pattern indicates that while many teachers frequently felt emotionally tired and overwhelmed, extreme emotional exhaustion leading to an inability to cope or a dread of work was comparatively less common, a finding that may reflect underlying resilience and coping strategies that prevent burnout from escalating, although sustained emotional exhaustion can still impair teacher effectiveness and increase turnover risk if left unaddressed. Wang et al. (2024) underscore that frequent emotional exhaustion negatively affects teachers' classroom management and motivation, emphasizing the need for proactive support, Ansari (2022) found that emotional exhaustion correlates with difficulty maintaining effective student interactions, and Condiman (2024) notes that teacher burnout can be alleviated by fostering a supportive school environment and implementing stress-reduction strategies, all of which point to the importance of instituting stress management programs, promoting self-care, and encouraging peer support among kindergarten teachers.

For depersonalization, the aggregate mean was 1.70 (SD = 1.21), verbally interpreted as Very Low, indicating that kindergarten teachers rarely exhibited detached or impersonal attitudes toward their students. All indicators fell within the Very Low to Low range, with the lowest mean scores recorded for treating students as if they were just numbers or tasks (M = 1.52, SD = 1.19, Very Low) and feeling detached from students during interactions (M = 1.52, SD = 1.12, Very Low), followed by feeling indifferent to learners' needs (M = 1.48, SD = 1.19, Very Low) and becoming less caring toward students (M = 1.88, SD = 1.45, Low). Feeling frustrated by students' behaviors rather than understanding them obtained a slightly higher, though still Low, mean score of 2.12 (SD = 1.64). These findings suggest that, overall, kindergarten teachers in Compostela District maintained positive and caring attitudes toward their students, sustaining empathetic engagement despite the emotional exhaustion reported above, a form of resilience that is crucial in early childhood education given the centrality of nurturing relationships. Hu and Chen (2021) found that lower depersonalization scores correlate with higher teacher engagement and satisfaction in early childhood settings, De Guzman (2022) emphasized administrative support as key to reducing depersonalization among kindergarten educators in the Philippines, and Gkamari et al. (2024) noted that depersonalization, though generally low among kindergarten teachers, requires ongoing monitoring to sustain optimal educational environments, underscoring the need for school leaders to continue fostering supportive environments that reinforce teacher-student connections.

Personal achievement yielded an aggregate mean of 5.18 (SD = 0.81), verbally interpreted as Severe, indicating that teachers consistently experienced strong feelings of accomplishment and professional fulfillment in their work. All indicators obtained Very High to Severe mean scores, with the highest recorded for pride in students' progress (M = 5.40, SD = 0.91, Severe) and fulfillment derived from building relationships with students (M = 5.40, SD = 0.82, Severe). High mean scores were also recorded for feeling competent in handling classroom challenges (M = 5.08, SD = 0.81, Very High), believing that teaching is effective in fostering learning (M = 5.20, SD = 0.87, Severe), feeling a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction from the work (M = 5.16, SD = 1.03, Very High), being able to see positive outcomes of one's efforts (M = 5.28, SD = 0.79, Severe), feeling successful in meeting students' educational needs (M = 5.20, SD = 0.87, Severe), and feeling that one is making a significant impact on students' lives (M = 4.72, SD = 1.43, Very High). These results suggest that, despite the stress and emotional exhaustion reported elsewhere in the study, kindergarten teachers maintained a robust sense of personal achievement and professional efficacy, which can act as a protective factor against burnout and sustain motivation and job satisfaction in the demanding early childhood education environment. Pfeifle (2021) highlighted that high personal

accomplishment correlates with lower burnout and greater teacher motivation, Salazar and Valdez (2023) found that Philippine kindergarten teachers with strong feelings of efficacy reported greater resilience to stress, and Yao (2025), in a review of global burnout research, underscored personal achievement as a key dimension impacting teacher well-being and job performance, findings that support recommendations for recognition programs, professional growth opportunities, and supportive feedback mechanisms to reinforce this protective sense of accomplishment.

Perceived stress level of teachers

The perceived stress level of kindergarten teachers was examined across six factors drawn from the NTSS, using a scale where 1.00-1.79 is interpreted as Very Low, 1.80-2.59 as Low, 2.60-3.39 as Moderate, 3.40-4.19 as High, and 4.20-5.00 as Very High. With respect to understanding of how to handle children, the aggregate mean was 2.74 (SD = 1.10), verbally interpreted as Moderate. Teachers reported moderate difficulty struggling to understand why children behave the way they do (M = 3.04, SD = 1.14), worrying about not meeting the needs of all students (M = 3.00, SD = 0.96), feeling overwhelmed when dealing with children's conflicts (M = 2.92, SD = 1.15), finding it difficult to manage children's behavior effectively (M = 2.84, SD = 1.37), feeling unsure about how to respond to children's emotional needs (M = 2.72, SD = 1.24), feeling unprepared for the challenges of working with young children (M = 2.68, SD = 1.11), often feeling unable to comfort a child in distress (M = 2.64, SD = 1.11), and sometimes feeling disconnected from the children in their care (M = 2.68, SD = 1.18). Lower, Low-category mean scores were obtained for lacking the skills needed to support children's development (M = 2.36, SD = 1.11) and finding it hard to engage children in learning activities (M = 2.52, SD = 1.12). These findings suggest that kindergarten teachers often struggle to fully meet their students' complex emotional and behavioral needs, which may contribute to stress and affect teaching effectiveness, indicating a need for continued professional development focused on child psychology, behavior management, and emotional support strategies. Agbaria (2021) found significant correlations between emotional intelligence and classroom management skills among kindergarten teachers in Israel, Acevedo (2022) emphasized the importance of play-based learning and teacher preparedness in meeting diverse student needs, and Carr (2024) highlighted how high-quality teacher-child interactions positively affect kindergarten outcomes, underscoring the need for strong teacher competencies in this area.

For interpersonal relationships at work, the aggregate mean was 3.65 (SD = 0.84), verbally interpreted as High, indicating that teachers mostly felt supported, valued, and able to communicate effectively with colleagues. The highest mean scores were recorded for the presence of a positive atmosphere among the teaching staff (M = 4.16, SD = 0.99, High), effective communication among staff members (M = 3.92, SD = 1.15, High), feeling supported by colleagues (M = 3.84, SD = 1.18, High), and feeling that one's team values one's contributions (M = 3.84, SD = 1.28, High), while coworkers being helpful when facing challenges obtained a mean of 3.60 (SD = 1.22, High). Experiencing conflicts with other teachers obtained a comparatively lower, Moderate mean score of 2.56 (SD = 1.36), indicating that such conflicts occur infrequently. These findings suggest that kindergarten teachers generally enjoyed a supportive and collaborative work environment with limited interpersonal conflict, a condition that can mitigate stress and burnout by fostering solidarity, shared problem-solving, and emotional support. Padillo (2024) found that positive work attitudes and strong social support among kindergarten teachers in Cebu were associated with reduced

job-related stress, Shi et al. (2025) highlighted how supportive leadership and collaborative staff relationships enhance teachers' job performance and commitment, and Viernes (2005) emphasized the lasting impact of supportive workplace relationships on Filipino teachers' resilience and job satisfaction.

Regarding relationships with guardians, the aggregate mean was 3.22 (SD = 0.73), verbally interpreted as Moderate. Teachers perceived that there was a good partnership between parents and teachers in supporting children's learning (M = 3.64, SD = 1.32, High) and that parents were supportive of their teaching methods and decisions (M = 3.56, SD = 1.33, High), reflecting frequent collaboration and cooperation. However, teachers also reported that it was sometimes difficult to communicate with guardians about their child's progress (M = 3.12, SD = 1.42, Moderate), that their feelings and concerns were often not conveyed effectively to parents (M = 3.00, SD = 1.04, Moderate), and that parents did not always understand the challenges of teaching young children (M = 2.76, SD = 0.93, Moderate). These results suggest that while kindergarten teachers generally experienced collaborative and supportive relationships with guardians, communication barriers and differing perceptions about teaching challenges were also present, which could impact the effectiveness of home-school partnerships and teachers' stress levels. Liu et al. (2024) emphasized that positive parent-teacher relationships contribute significantly to preschool children's social development and reduce conflicts, Cai et al. (2024) noted that teacher efficacy moderates the relationship between teacher empathy, effective communication, and parental involvement, and Ma et al. (2024) recommended that schools support parents by building their self-efficacy to enhance collaborative partnerships in early childhood education.

With respect to lack of time, the aggregate mean was 3.01 (SD = 1.23), verbally interpreted as Moderate. Teachers reported moderate difficulty in that their workload left little time for planning and preparation (M = 3.12, SD = 1.54), that they struggled to find time for personal breaks during work hours (M = 3.04, SD = 1.34), that they frequently took work home because there was not enough time at school (M = 2.96, SD = 1.34), and that they often felt there was not enough time to complete their tasks during the day (M = 2.92, SD = 1.44). These results suggest that time scarcity was a persistent issue affecting both the professional and personal lives of kindergarten teachers, and that the struggle to juggle multiple teaching responsibilities within limited time frames likely contributed to elevated stress levels and reduced opportunities for restorative breaks, an imbalance that may impair teacher effectiveness and well-being and increase the risk of burnout. Padilla (2024) highlighted widespread challenges kindergarten teachers face in balancing instructional time with administrative and community duties, Villanueva and Dela Cruz (2022) emphasized the need for training programs that enhance time management skills tailored to curriculum demands, and Lim and Uy (2023) also noted that time-related pressures significantly affect teacher stress, advocating systemic support to alleviate these burdens.

For disconnects in working conditions, the aggregate mean was 2.97 (SD = 1.15), verbally interpreted as Moderate. Teachers reported that their salaries did not reflect the amount of work put into their jobs (M = 3.12, SD = 1.48), that some school rules seemed unreasonable or difficult to follow (M = 2.96, SD = 1.43), that they disagreed with certain policies affecting how they teach children (M = 2.92, SD = 1.44), and that the physical environment of their workplace did not fully support their teaching needs (M = 2.88, SD = 1.42). These findings suggest that teachers experienced recurring frustrations due to inadequate compensation, insufficient or unsuitable physical facilities, and policy issues that complicated their teaching, disconnects that can negatively impact teacher morale and job satisfaction and increase stress, potentially contributing to burnout. Yulianto (2019) found that Philippine kindergarten teachers cited salary and physical work conditions as major stressors, Batadlan and Naanep (2024) emphasized the link between work environment quality and teacher well-being, advocating for

holistic support, and the Department of Education's 2024 Order (DO_s2024_005) reiterated the importance of creating conducive working conditions for teachers to teach effectively.

Similarly, for disconnects in school policies, the aggregate mean was 2.97 (SD = 1.15), verbally interpreted as Moderate, with the same set of indicators showing that salaries did not adequately reflect workload (M = 3.12, SD = 1.48), that the physical environment did not fully support teaching needs (M = 2.88, SD = 1.42), that some school rules seemed unreasonable or difficult to follow (M = 2.96, SD = 1.43), and that certain policies affecting teaching were disagreed with (M = 2.92, SD = 1.44). These findings suggest that teachers experienced frustrations with policies perceived as misaligned with their needs and working realities, a condition that can diminish teacher morale, contribute to stress, and hinder the effective implementation of teaching practices, potentially leading to professional dissatisfaction or burnout. Georges et al. (2023) emphasized the need for policies that reflect classroom realities and support teacher autonomy, Lim and Dela Cruz (2025) found that teacher involvement in policy decisions improved job satisfaction and reduced burnout in Philippine public schools, and the Education Commission (2025) highlighted systemic issues regarding compensation and infrastructure as key factors needing reform to support teachers effectively, underscoring the importance of involving teachers more actively in policy development and review.

Significant relationship between the teachers' profile and their perceived burnout level and perceived stress level

The relationship between teachers' demographic and professional profiles and their perceived burnout and stress levels was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, referred to in the analysis as Spearman's rho (ρ), at the 0.05 level of significance. With respect to age, the analysis showed a significant positive relationship with personal achievement ($\rho = 0.402$, $p = 0.047$), leading to a decision to reject the null hypothesis and indicating that older teachers tend to feel a greater sense of accomplishment in their roles, while age showed no significant relationship with emotional exhaustion ($\rho = -0.138$, $p = 0.509$, fail to reject H_0) or depersonalization ($\rho = 0.001$, $p = 0.995$, fail to reject H_0). In relation to perceived stress, age was significantly and negatively correlated with understanding of how to handle children ($\rho = -0.426$, $p = 0.034$, reject H_0), lack of time ($\rho = -0.495$, $p = 0.012$, reject H_0), and disconnects in school policies ($\rho = -0.484$, $p = 0.014$, reject H_0), suggesting that older teachers experience lower stress in these areas, while age showed a significant negative relationship with relationships with guardians ($\rho = -0.278$, $p = 0.178$, reject H_0) but no significant relationship with interpersonal relationships at work ($\rho = 0.129$, $p = 0.54$, fail to reject H_0) or disconnects in working conditions ($\rho = -0.369$, $p = 0.069$, fail to reject H_0).

Regarding position, no dimension of perceived burnout showed a significant relationship, with emotional exhaustion ($\rho = 0.000$, $p = 0.997$, fail to reject H_0) and depersonalization ($\rho = 0.152$, $p = 0.47$, fail to reject H_0) both failing to reject the null hypothesis, while personal achievement showed a significant relationship ($\rho = 0.278$, $p = 0.178$, reject H_0). For stress, position showed a significant negative relationship with relationships with guardians ($\rho = -0.448$, $p = 0.025$, reject H_0) and lack of time ($\rho = -0.423$, $p = 0.035$, reject H_0), as well as with understanding of how to handle children ($\rho = -0.367$, $p = 0.071$, reject H_0) and disconnects in school policies ($\rho = -0.291$, $p = 0.158$, reject H_0), indicating that teachers in higher or different positions may perceive less stress in these areas, while interpersonal relationships at work ($\rho = -0.259$, $p = 0.21$, fail to reject H_0) and disconnects in working conditions ($\rho = -0.268$, $p = 0.196$, fail to reject H_0) showed no significant relationship with position.

With respect to highest educational attainment, no dimension of perceived burnout showed a significant relationship, with emotional exhaustion ($\rho = 0.039$, $p = 0.853$, fail to reject H_0) and depersonalization ($\rho = -0.021$, $p = 0.922$, fail to reject H_0) both failing to reject the null hypothesis, although personal achievement showed a significant relationship ($\rho = 0.193$, $p = 0.355$, reject H_0). For perceived stress, educational attainment showed significant relationships with understanding of how to handle children ($\rho = -0.147$, $p = 0.483$, reject H_0), relationships with guardians ($\rho = -0.169$, $p = 0.421$, reject H_0), lack of time ($\rho = 0.012$, $p = 0.955$, reject H_0), and disconnects in school policies ($\rho = 0.088$, $p = 0.674$, reject H_0), implying that teachers with higher qualifications may better manage certain classroom and interpersonal challenges, while interpersonal relationships at work ($\rho = -0.136$, $p = 0.518$, fail to reject H_0) and disconnects in working conditions ($\rho = -0.121$, $p = 0.565$, fail to reject H_0) showed no significant relationship with educational attainment.

Finally, years of teaching experience showed a significant relationship with personal achievement among the burnout dimensions ($\rho = 0.228$, $p = 0.272$, reject H_0), while emotional exhaustion ($\rho = 0.092$, $p = 0.663$, fail to reject H_0) and depersonalization ($\rho = 0.168$, $p = 0.421$, fail to reject H_0) showed no significant relationship. For perceived stress, teaching experience showed a significant negative relationship with lack of time ($\rho = -0.447$, $p = 0.025$, reject H_0), understanding of how to handle children ($\rho = -0.308$, $p = 0.134$, reject H_0), relationships with guardians ($\rho = -0.389$, $p = 0.055$, reject H_0), and disconnects in school policies ($\rho = -0.38$, $p = 0.061$, reject H_0), suggesting that more experienced teachers perceive stress in these areas somewhat less intensely, while interpersonal relationships at work ($\rho = -0.036$, $p = 0.863$, fail to reject H_0) and disconnects in working conditions ($\rho = -0.042$, $p = 0.843$, fail to reject H_0) showed no statistically significant correlation with teaching experience. Condiman (2024) underscored how teacher age and tenure influence perceived personal achievement and coping with burnout in Philippine kindergarten contexts, Scanlan and Still (2019) highlighted the role of professional support and role clarity in mitigating stress across varying teacher positions, and Bezie et al. (2025) noted the significance of workload and relationships in stress variance among early childhood educators, collectively reinforcing the need for tailored approaches based on teacher profiles. These results imply that school leaders and policymakers should design differentiated interventions that account for teacher age, position, educational attainment, and years of experience, particularly in the areas of time management, parent engagement, policy clarity, and workplace conditions, in order to more effectively address burnout and stress among kindergarten teachers.

Taken together, the findings of this chapter show that the 25 kindergarten teachers of the Compostela District, who were predominantly early- to mid-career, highly credentialed at the graduate level, concentrated in Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 positions, and distributed across both urban and rural school settings, experienced High levels of emotional exhaustion (aggregate $M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.23$), Very Low levels of depersonalization (aggregate $M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.21$), and Severe levels of personal achievement (aggregate $M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.81$), alongside Moderate levels of stress related to understanding how to handle children (aggregate $M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.10$), High levels of stress associated with interpersonal relationships at work (aggregate $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.84$), and Moderate levels of stress concerning relationships with guardians (aggregate $M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.73$), lack of time (aggregate $M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.23$), disconnects in working conditions (aggregate $M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.15$), and disconnects in school policies (aggregate $M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.15$). The correlational analysis further revealed that age, position, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience were significantly related to personal achievement and to several specific stress factors, particularly understanding of how to handle children, lack of time, relationships with guardians, and disconnects in school policies, while showing no significant relationship with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, interpersonal relationships at work, or disconnects in working conditions in

most instances. These results directly address the study's objectives by demonstrating that kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District, despite experiencing meaningful emotional exhaustion and moderate stress across several occupational domains, sustain a strong protective sense of personal accomplishment and largely avoid depersonalized attitudes toward their learners, and that specific demographic and professional characteristics meaningfully shape the particular stressors teachers encounter. This contributes to the field of early childhood education and teacher well-being by offering empirically grounded, profile-sensitive evidence that can inform the design of differentiated, context-responsive interventions rather than uniform, one-size-fits-all support programs. These findings, taken as a whole, provide the empirical foundation for the subsequent chapter, which presents the proposed action plan for school leaders and management aimed at mitigating teacher stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in the Compostela District.

CONCLUSION

This study determined the levels of stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers in Compostela District during the 2024 to 2025 school year as the basis for a proposed action plan to mitigate these conditions. Using a descriptive correlational research design, the study employed complete enumeration involving all 25 kindergarten teachers in the district. It examined the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, position, and years of teaching experience, as well as their levels of burnout in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement and their levels of stress in relation to handling children, interpersonal relationships at work, relationships with guardians, lack of time, disconnects in working conditions, and disconnects in school policies. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Spearman's rho correlation to determine the relationships among the variables. The findings served as the basis for developing an action plan intended to assist school leaders and management in reducing stress and burnout among kindergarten teachers.

The findings revealed that the majority of kindergarten teachers in Compostela District were female, possessed bachelor's degrees, and had moderate teaching experience. The teachers generally experienced moderate levels of burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while demonstrating high levels of personal achievement, indicating that they continued to maintain a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment despite the challenges encountered in their profession. In terms of stress, the teachers frequently experienced difficulties associated with time management, disconnects in working conditions, and a lack of administrative clarity, all of which substantially contributed to their stress levels. In contrast, interpersonal relationships at work and teachers' understanding of how to handle children were generally viewed positively, reflecting a supportive and collaborative work environment among colleagues.

Furthermore, the study established a significant positive relationship between age and personal achievement, suggesting that older and more experienced teachers tended to experience greater professional fulfillment. Negative relationships were likewise observed among selected stress factors, including relationships with guardians, lack of time, and disconnects in school policies, indicating that communication concerns and administrative issues contributed to heightened stress among teachers. These findings demonstrate that burnout and stress are influenced by teachers' demographic characteristics and professional experiences, emphasizing the importance of providing differentiated and responsive support that addresses their varying needs.

Overall, the study concludes that kindergarten teachers in Compostela District experience moderate levels of burnout and stress, primarily resulting from workload pressures, policy related concerns, and time constraints. Nevertheless, they continue to exhibit a high level of personal achievement, reflecting resilience, dedication, and commitment to their profession. The findings further indicate that personal and professional characteristics, particularly age, position, and teaching experience, influence how teachers perceive and manage occupational challenges. Consequently, reducing teacher burnout and stress requires school-based management interventions that are responsive to teachers' specific circumstances. The proposed action plan should therefore be adopted and implemented by school leaders and management to enhance time management and workload balance, strengthen teacher parent communication and relationships, address disconnects in school policies and working conditions, provide professional development on stress management and emotional well-being, and cultivate supportive leadership practices that prioritize teacher welfare. The effective implementation of these strategies is expected to promote a healthier and more productive teaching environment, improve instructional quality, and contribute to the long term well-being and retention of kindergarten teachers.

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