

# A Generational Perspective of the Determinants of Work-Life Balance of Secondary School Teachers in Gingoog City Division: Basis for a Teacher Wellness Initiative

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## ABSTRACT

The education sector is increasingly recognizing the significance of teachers' well-being and the impact of a healthy work-life balance on organizational success. This study focused on identifying factors influencing the quality of Work-Life Balance (WLB) among secondary school teachers in 14 schools in Gingoog City Division. The research employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method approach, gathering both numerical and qualitative data from 283 teachers. The results indicated that millennial educators reported the highest satisfaction, tested at 0.05 level, with their WLB, followed by Generation X, Gen Z, and Boomer teachers. The study identified six key factors influencing WLB, with career progression emerging as a common predictor across all generations. Additionally, financial condition was a significant factor for boomers, autonomy and financial condition for Generation X teachers, financial condition and technological literacy for millennial teachers, and technological literacy, social support, and autonomy for Gen Z teachers. The research also unveiled facilitating factors such as work-life balance principles, workload management strategies, preferences for school support systems, and self-care practices. Conversely, hindering factors included workload pressures and time management challenges, difficulties in the work environment, and frustrations related to DepEd policies. Based on these findings, a Teachers Wellness Program is proposed to be incorporated in the Enhanced School Improvement Plan (ESIP) to promote the WLB of teachers across different generational cohorts.

## KEYWORDS

work-life balance; high school teachers; teachers' wellness program; Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

As the education sector becomes increasingly complex due to 21st-century challenges, the well-being of teachers is gaining more attention. The success of educational institutions now largely depends on maintaining a healthy work-life balance for teachers. This balance has become even more critical in the post-pandemic era, as teachers have had to swiftly adapt to new teaching methods while managing the stress and uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Research indicates that work-life balance is a key factor in job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall productivity. Achieving this balance requires that work and personal life positively complement each other (Prihadini et al., 2021). Work-life balance (WLB) is

defined as providing opportunities for employees to align their work conditions with their personal responsibilities and interests (Pasla et al., 2021). Furthermore, maintaining a healthy balance between work and non-work life is essential (Min, 2022).

The Department of Education underscores the importance of balancing work and personal life for educators through various memoranda and guidelines. These policies include the removal of administrative tasks for teachers (DepEd Order 2, 2024) and the promotion of professional growth opportunities (DepEd Order 42, 2017). The National Economic and Development Authority's (NEDA) Ambisyon Natin 2040 policy, initiated in 2017, emphasizes work-life balance for all Filipinos, aligning with DepEd's MATATAG Curriculum launched in 2023, which supports teachers' ability to teach effectively.

DepEd Region X's Regional Education Development Plan (2023) also aligns with this by focusing on teacher resiliency. Despite these initiatives, specific programs significantly supporting teachers' work-life balance are lacking. DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2023 prohibits teachers from engaging in community service or extracurricular activities during school hours, aiming to enhance teaching focus and reduce non-teaching responsibilities.

Thus, work-life imbalance is prevalent among teachers, leading to burnout, less productivity, lower teaching efficacy, and the increasing teacher attrition rate in the country and teacher migration overseas. Hence, this study sought to identify the determinants of the quality of Work-Life Balance (WLB) among teachers in the post-pandemic transition. This will serve as the basis for a teacher wellness promotion initiative. It will also seek to determine the significant difference in the quality of WLB among the four generational categories that saturate the current teaching force: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z junior and senior high school teachers in the Gingoog City Division.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The presence of multigenerational educators in schools has led to new approaches to achieving Work-Life Balance (WLB), addressing various job demands like workload, time pressure, technological literacy, social support, autonomy, career progression, and financial condition (Handtke et al., 2022; Pudasaini et al., 2022). Considering the generational differences in the teaching workforce is crucial for understanding WLB. Currently, the workforce includes Boomers (born 1946-1964, ages 59-65), Gen X (born 1965-1980, ages 43-58), Millennials (born 1981-1996, ages 27-42), and Gen Z (born 1997-2012, ages 11-26).

### ***Workload and Time Pressure***

Research highlights educators' challenges due to workload and time pressure, affecting their work-life balance. Achieving WLB involves prioritizing based on individual circumstances rather than an equal distribution of time (Villar et al., 2014). Teachers work extra hours in Vietnam, limiting their engagement in innovative practices (Arceta, 2020). Chinese teachers handle large classes, impacting their family life and work quality (Ching et al., 2021). Conversely, Singaporean teachers benefit from policies supporting WLB (Kashyap et al., 2021), and Japanese teachers benefit from clear work-life boundaries supported by cultural norms (Alonge & Osagiobare, 2020). Older generations are more likely to accept heavy workloads, while younger teachers prioritize WLB and personal time (Alexander & Sysko, 2013).

### ***Technological Literacy***

Technological literacy, the ability to effectively use technology, significantly impacts teachers' WLB. Proficiency in technology aids in managing tasks and professional

development (Özkaya & Alakurt, 2022; Al-Jenaibi, 2015; Nam, 2014). Millennials and Gen Zs, more comfortable with technology, integrate it seamlessly into their work, unlike Boomers and Gen Xs, who may need more training (Alexander & Sysko, 2013; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

### **Social Support**

Social support from family, friends, colleagues, and supervisors is crucial for teachers' WLB. Adequate support reduces stress and enhances job satisfaction (Ferguson et al., 2017; Avolio et al., 2023; Najam et al., 2020). Boomers and Gen X teachers prefer in-person interactions, which impacts their WLB (Rodríguez, 2022).

### **Autonomy at Work**

Autonomy, the independence to make job-related decisions, positively impacts teachers' WLB and well-being (García-Salirrosas et al., 2023; Johari et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2020; Yap, 2021; Simon & Salanga, 2021). Younger teachers value job autonomy more, linking it to their emotional well-being and job satisfaction (Yap, 2021).

### **Career Progression**

Career progression, growth, and advancement in one's career influence WLB. Clear career paths improve WLB (Lupu and Ruiz-Castro, 2021). In the Philippines, policies outline criteria for teacher promotions, but constraints like limited promotion opportunities and a hierarchical system pose challenges (Balasabas, 2022). Generational differences affect career progression priorities, with younger teachers more eager for advancement (Najam et al., 2020; Noble-Nkrumah et al., 2022; Rodríguez, 2022).

### **Financial Condition**

Financial stability is crucial for WLB. Better financial conditions correlate with improved WLB [(Mukhtar et al., 2022)]. Filipino teachers' financial conditions affect their WLB, with financial stability leading to greater satisfaction (Lear & Nabo, 2023; Arceta, 2020). Younger teachers face more financial challenges, while older teachers focus on retirement and healthcare expenses (Arceta, 2020; Ridwan et al., 2022; Meuris & Leana, 2015). In conclusion, achieving satisfactory WLB is essential for educators' well-being and productivity. Policymakers and organizations must prioritize WLB through evidence-based policies and programs.

The concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB) is supported by various theories from the early 19th to the 21st century, evolving with changes in work environment demands. WLB's deep roots in the Philippines' legal system emphasize the dignity of the human person by ensuring quality of life and well-being. The Philippine Constitution imbued with humanistic principles (Philippine Constitution, 1987), lays the groundwork for a dignified standard of living for its citizens. This emphasis on human rights guarantees fundamental necessities like security, shelter, and access to food and healthcare (Article III), providing the foundation for well-being. The Constitution's commitment to egalitarianism also fosters greater social mobility and resource access through equality before the law (Article II). Given this strong emphasis on the total well-being of Filipinos, particularly teachers and the changing work environment, this study is anchored on two popular theories: Work-Life Spillover and Integration.

The Work-Life Spillover theory posits that attitudes, emotions, skills, and behaviors produced in one domain (work or personal life) flow into the other (Pradhan, 2016; Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Zedeck et al., 1990). Meanwhile, the Integration theory suggests that flexible boundaries between work and family/personal life encourage the inclusion of community life, redesigning traditional work-life models. This allows employers, workers, and communities to be active partners with equal voices in formulating a holistic and attainable paradigm of work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Mason, 2002; Googins, 1997).

This study sought to identify the determinants of the quality of Work-Life Balance (WLB) among teachers, which will serve as the basis for a teacher wellness promotion initiative. It will also determine the significant difference in the quality of WLB among the four generational categories that saturate the current teaching force, to wit: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and the Gen Z junior and senior high school teachers of the division of Gingoog City.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research utilized a sequential explanatory mixed method approach, starting with collecting and analyzing quantitative data, followed by qualitative data collection. The subsequent qualitative data complemented the initial quantitative findings and together formed the basis for the study's conclusions. With this research design, data was gathered using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Initially, numerical data was collected from a sample of 283 teachers, chosen through purposive sampling, from the 14 secondary schools in the Gingoog City division. Two sets of questionnaires were given to the research participants to assess various factors associated with work-life balance. The first questionnaire is standardized to establish baseline information on the teachers' work-life balance status. This was followed by a researcher-developed questionnaire that categorized generations and evaluated the extent of work-life balance concerning workload and time pressure, technological proficiency, social support, job autonomy extended at work, career advancement opportunities, and financial conditions. Subsequently, the obtained results were subject to descriptive and inferential analyses. In the next stage of the study, qualitative data was gathered through in-person interviews and focus group discussions with a subset of participants. This aimed at providing additional insights into the quantitative results that require further elaboration. During this phase, open-ended questions were used to understand better the factors influencing work-life balance among different generations of secondary school teachers. The interviews and focus group discussions aimed to explore in depth the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by teachers in achieving work-life balance while considering determinants and generational cohorts. The findings underwent thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns. The two sets of data were analyzed separately and then integrated during the interpretation phase of the research.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***What is the profile of the high school teachers considering the generational categories: Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z?***

The study included 283 high school teachers from fourteen secondary schools in Gingoog City division, DepEd Region X, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The majority were millennial teachers (48.4%), followed by Gen X teachers (22.6%) and Gen Z teachers (16.6%). Boomer teachers had the smallest representation (12.4%).

***What is the level of quality of work-life balance among the high school teachers in the following areas: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)?***

The study found that millennial teachers have the highest WIPL rating at 4.10, followed by Gen Z teachers at 3.13, while boomers have the lowest at 2.06. Across all generations, teachers experience a moderate level of PLIW. Regarding WPLE, the average score is 3.57 out of 5, with millennials scoring the highest at 4.02 and Gen X teachers scoring the lowest at 3.18.

***Is there a significant difference in the quality of work-life balance among the generational group of teachers?***

The research study identified a statistically significant variance in the quality of work-life balance across generational groups of teachers (p-value = 0.0391).

***To what extent are the following factors of work-life balance manifested among boomer, Gen X, millennial, and Gen Z high school teachers?***

The overall mean of 3.44 indicates a moderate work-life balance across the six factors as perceived by the respondents. Among the different age groups, millennial educators showed the highest satisfaction with their work-life balance, scoring an average mean rating of 3.57. This was followed by Gen X and Gen Z teachers, who rated their work-life balance moderately positively, with averages of 3.54 and 3.46, respectively. In contrast, boomers indicated the least favorable work-life balance, with an average mean rating of 3.23.

***Is there a significant difference in the manifestation of the factors among the generational group of teachers?***

Significant differences were noted among technological literacy, social support, autonomy at work, career progression, financial condition, and work-life balance in the four generational cohorts of teachers ( $p < .05$ ,  $F > 1$ ). Conversely, workload and time pressure posit no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ,  $F < 1$ ).

***Is there a significant relationship between the independent variables and the quality of work-life balance?***

For teachers belonging to the boomer generation, career progression ( $r = -0.978$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and financial condition ( $r = 0.752$ ,  $p < .05$ ), are significantly correlated with work-life balance. For the Gen X teachers, career advancement ( $r = 0.989$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and financial condition ( $r = 0.819$ ,  $p < .05$ ) are strongly associated with a more favorable work-life balance. Among millennial teachers, the results show a strong correlation between technological literacy ( $r = 0.876$ ,  $p < .05$ ), career advancement ( $r = 0.990$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and financial status ( $r = -0.997$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Lastly, for Gen Z teachers, the data shows statistically significant relationships between the quality of work-life balance, social support ( $r = -0.751$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and career progression ( $r = 0.980$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

***Which among the variables, singly or in combination, best predicts work-life balance?***

***Boomer Teachers***

The work-life balance of boomer teachers is affected by two main factors: career progression ( $\beta = 0.981$ ,  $t = 1.643$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and financial condition ( $\beta = 0.380$ ,  $t = 2.656$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### **Gen X Teachers**

The work-life balance of teachers is influenced by three key factors: career progression ( $\beta = 0.991$ ,  $t = 1.843$ ,  $p < .05$ ), autonomy at work ( $\beta = 0.728$ ,  $t = .820$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and financial condition ( $\beta = 0.712$ ,  $t = .626$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### **Millennial Teachers**

The work-life balance of teachers is influenced by three factors: career progression ( $\beta = 0.782$ ,  $t = .905$ ,  $p < .05$ ), technological literacy ( $\beta = 0.506$ ,  $t = 1.51$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and financial condition ( $\beta = 0.433$ ,  $t = 1.443$ ,  $p < .05$ ). For every increase in career progression, there is a 73.8% rise in teachers' work-life balance, suggesting that as careers advance, so does their work-life balance.

### **Gen Z Teachers**

The work-life balance of teachers is influenced by four predictors: social support ( $\beta = 4.714$ ,  $t = 2.378$ ,  $p < .05$ ), career progression ( $\beta = 2.805$ ,  $t = 2.698$ ,  $p < .05$ ), autonomy at work ( $\beta = 2.034$ ,  $t = 1.369$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and technological literacy ( $\beta = 1.552$ ,  $t = 0.781$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### **What are the facilitating and hindering factors in the current state of the quality of work-life balance as experienced by the teachers?**

#### a. Facilitating Factors

- Theme 1: Work-Life Balance Principles
- Theme 2: Workload Management Strategies
- Theme 3: School Support System Preferences
- Theme 4: Self-Care Practices

#### b. Hindering Factors

- Theme 1: Workload Pressures and Time Management Challenges
- Theme 2: Work Environment Challenges
- Theme 3: Frustration Points on DepEd Policies

### **Based on the findings, what programs, projects, and activities can be proposed to improve the quality of work-life balance among the four-generational high school teachers?**

According to DepEd Order 44, s. 2015, schools must create and execute programs over three years to empower school teams and enhance the quality of education. The proposed Teacher Wellness Program (TWP), which aims to promote work-life balance and enhance teachers' productivity, will take place every Friday of the month. The ten (10) TWP sessions will be tailored to generational differences, applying the results of this study and its incorporation into the Enhanced School Improvement Plan, which is planned for SY 2024 – 2025 with a proposed budget of Php 30,000.

## **CONCLUSION**

Most secondary school teachers belong to the middle generations, specifically, millennials and Generation X. As the workforce naturally ages, baby boomers and Generation Z educators now make up the minority.

Millennial teachers, followed by Gen Zs, have reported experiencing a more balanced work-life experience than other generations. They are better at managing work interference with their personal lives and excel in enhancing professional and personal aspects of life. In

contrast, older generations experience lower work-life balance. This suggests that younger generations cope with work and life better than older generations.

Work-life balance is different for each generational cohort among secondary school teachers.

There is a potential link between career progression and work-life balance for the generational group of teachers. Millennials, who might be in earlier stages of their careers, may prioritize factors like technological literacy and autonomy but struggle with financial burdens and workload. As teachers progress through their careers, Gen X and Boomers, financial security might improve, but technological literacy, workload, and time pressure could become more prominent. Gen Z teachers, who are at the early stage of their careers, excel in technological capabilities; however, they struggle most with financial instability.

There is a potential shift in work-life balance priorities across generations. Although all generations manifest work-life balance differently, younger teachers tend to prioritize career growth, technological literacy, social support, and autonomy over their work environment. At the same time, financial security becomes more important as teachers progress in their profession.

While career progression and financial security are essential across generations, millennials and Gen Z prioritize additional factors specific to their needs. Technological fluency empowers millennials and Gen Zs, whereas social support networks are vital for Gen Z teachers.

The nature of work-life balance priorities for teachers is evolving. While factors like career progression and financial stability remain important across generations, the specific needs and values of each generation differ. Boomer and Gen X educators may prioritize control over their work environment and opportunities for professional growth alongside financial security. Millennials, in addition to career advancement and financial stability, also value tools and resources that can help them work more efficiently. The priorities shift even further for Gen Z teachers, who might prioritize not only technology but also a supportive work environment with opportunities to learn and grow, along with having control over their work.

Both the facilitators and the hinderers of work-life balance among the generations hold equal importance in addressing the work-life balance requirements of teachers across all generations. Implementing strategies that promote work-life balance principles, offer workload management techniques, and foster supportive school environments can empower teachers. Additionally, addressing work environment challenges, reviewing DepEd policies, and providing support for effective time management can help alleviate the burdens teachers face.

A Teacher Wellness Program (TWP) is being proposed to promote work-life balance and enhance teachers' productivity. Based on a study's results, the program aims to support teachers' work-life balance needs by conducting ten (10) tailored TWP sessions that address generational differences. These sessions will occur on the last Friday of every month with a proposed budget of P3,000.00 per session.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research on teacher work-life balance in Gingoog City Division revealed valuable insights into the experiences of educators across generations. Based on these findings, here are some recommendations for the Department of Education (DepEd), school principals, teacher associations, individual teachers, and future researchers:

### **Department of Education (DepEd) Region X Gingoog City Division**

The Division Office may consider addressing the work-life balance concerns of its secondary school teachers by providing approval and support to the proposed Teachers' Wellness Program. Additionally, partnering with a university or research institution to delve deeper into the other factors of work-life balance not included in this research would also be beneficial. Additional research on how to improve teacher retention may also be implemented, particularly in the advent of teachers resigning from DepEd to seek employment abroad.

### **School Principals**

School administrators may prioritize promoting a healthy work environment for teachers. This can be achieved by encouraging teachers to take breaks, effectively utilizing allotted planning time, and setting boundaries between work and personal life. Recognizing and celebrating teacher achievements can also boost morale and contribute to a sense of career progression.

### **Teacher Associations**

Teacher Associations may advocate for policies that enhance teacher financial management skills, as financial security is a prevalent concern among educators. Furthermore, providing workshops and resources focusing on stress management can assist teachers in effectively managing their stress, thereby contributing to their overall well-being. Additionally, the facilitation of peer-to-peer mentoring programs is significant, as it connects teachers across generations, fostering valuable support and knowledge sharing.

### **Individual Teachers**

Teachers may prioritize self-care by scheduling time for relaxation and engaging in activities outside of work to prevent burnout. Seeking out professional development opportunities is crucial, as continuously learning new skills can enhance career satisfaction and technological proficiency. Additionally, building strong relationships with colleagues is essential, as having a supportive network at work can make a significant difference in overall well-being.

### **Future Researchers**

Future researchers may consider exploring the impact of alternative work arrangements, such as job sharing or flexible schedules, on teacher work-life balance. Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies to track the changes in work-life balance over an extended period would provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of various interventions and policies. Furthermore, incorporating a comparative analysis with work-life balance initiatives in other educational contexts can offer a broader perspective and facilitate the identification of best practices. By continually examining and addressing the work-life balance of educators, future researchers can contribute to the ongoing improvement of teaching conditions and the overall well-being of teachers within and beyond the Gingoog City Division.

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