

Negative Implications of Workload among Teachers: A Systematic Literature Review

Muhammad Haniff Syauqi Abdullah, Nurulhuda
Md Hassan

Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: haniffsyauqi@gmail.com

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Abstract

The education system at the school level frequently undergoes changes to ensure the delivery of more pertinent and efficient education. Subsequently, it was seen that these changes significantly affected the workload of teachers, resulting in numerous adverse consequences that could jeopardize their emotional, physical, and professional well-being. Indeed, the escalating volume of labor on a daily basis has the potential to erode the morale of an instructor, while also compromising the quality and efficacy of an education system. This study used a research methodology known as a Systematic Literature Review, with the objective of identifying the adverse consequences of a teacher's workload. A total of 30 papers were chosen from both domestic and international sources, utilizing three primary database search engines: Scopus, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. The selection process followed the PRISMA approach. The researcher has conducted a thorough literature analysis and has categorized the consequences of workload into three primary areas: health, professional advancement, and everyday life management. This study aims to enhance educators' understanding that a substantial workload might lead to diverse detrimental effects on them.

Keywords: Teacher's Heavy Workload, Teacher's Workload, Heavy Workload Teacher, Workload Teacher, Implications Of Teacher Workload.

Background

In an increasingly challenging and dynamic educational landscape, the teacher's role is no longer limited to teaching activities in the classroom. Teachers are now likened to the main pillar in the formation of future generations who are knowledgeable and highly skilled. Furthermore, the transition of education in the 21st century brings a significant impact on the role of teachers, including integrating technology in teaching, addressing the imbalance of access to education, and dealing with the pressure to achieve high academic standards (Purnairawan & Janah, 2022). This great responsibility comes with an increasing workload, which is even seen as becoming more extreme, causing various issues that require serious attention.

Teacher workload encompasses the diverse tasks and obligations that teachers must complete in their professional capacity, encompassing both the volume and intricacy of the

work they are obliged to undertake (Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024). Teachers have a dual role of imparting knowledge and education to pupils, as well as handling administrative duties, managing co-curricular activities, and participating in meetings and trainings (Schellings et al., 2023).

The excessive workload can have detrimental effects on both the physical and mental health of teachers, as well as the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning in the classroom. Multiple studies have demonstrated that the amount of work assigned to teachers can greatly influence their social skills (Purnairawan & Janah, 2022), professional sense of self (Spicksley, 2022), job performance, and overall state of being (Pajung et al., 2018). The incongruity between teachers' work and policy discourse as well as professional practice might provide issues for teachers, potentially impacting their professional identity and job satisfaction (Hashem et al., 2024).

Typically, an excessive workload can induce stress, weariness, and burnout in teachers, resulting in the decline of their mental and physical well-being (Pan et al., 2023; Rashid et al., 2022). Furthermore, it can diminish teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, resulting in less enthusiasm in fulfilling their duties (Puspitasari et al., 2024; Saks et al., 2022; Samsuddin et al., 2021). These ramifications extend beyond individual teachers and can impact the entire education system, including school organization and student performance. The significance of the issue of teacher workload in today's setting cannot be overlooked due to its extensive influence on the quality of education, especially inside the country. A thorough literature review was done to identify the adverse consequences experienced by teachers due to their workload.

This study also aims to raise awareness about the importance of support and effective workload management to ensure that teachers can carry out their duties effectively and without excessive pressure, while giving importance and benefits to various parties. For policy makers, it provides empirical evidence that can be used to design policies that better support teacher well-being. For school administrators, this study provides practical guidance on how to better manage teacher workloads. For the general public, it increases awareness of the challenges faced by teachers and the importance of their role in the education system. Overall, this study is expected to contribute to improving the quality of education by ensuring that teachers are in a good condition to carry out their duties.

Strategic Search

The study commenced by utilizing three primary database search engines, namely Scopus, Science Direct, and Google Scholar, to conduct a comprehensive search for journal papers pertaining to the adverse consequences associated with a teacher's workload. The search for this article includes Malay keywords such as "*beban tugas guru*", "*beban guru*", and "*implikasi beban tugas guru*". The English search terms include phrases such as "teacher's heavy workload," "teacher's workload," and "implications of teacher workload." This article search is restricted to publications published within the past 5 years.

Research Design

This study employs a systematic approach to conducting research. Pursell & McCrae (2020), define systematic research as a methodical and sequential research approach that involves comparing therapies, diagnostic tests, and other factors, while adhering to specific standards for interpreting the collected study data. Systematic research is a methodical and structured approach used to locate, select, and critically evaluate research publications that align with the researcher's predetermined study questions (Dewey & Drahotá, 2016). This strategy aligns with the study's objective and assists the researcher in consolidating papers that discuss the adverse effects of workload on instructors.

Article Selection Procedure

Every article pertaining to teacher workload will be thoroughly examined to determine the adverse consequences experienced by teachers due to their workload. Thus, the researcher has opted for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) as a framework to follow during the execution of this systematic literature review. The PRISMA method facilitates the clear definition of the research question by guiding the systematic study, establishing criteria and characteristics for article selection or elimination, and aiding in the comprehensive search of scientific literature within a specified timeframe (Sierra-Correa & Cantera Kintz, 2015).

There are four main phases involved in the implementation of the PRISMA method:

Identification

The researcher initiated a search for literature pertaining to the adverse consequences of teacher workload using three specific database search engines: Scopus, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. These articles are retrieved by searching for terms related to teacher workload, such as teacher's workload, implications of teacher's workload, teacher's heavy workload, and implications of teacher workload. A total of 57 articles (Google Scholar, N=33); Scopus, N= 15); Scopus, N= 9) were found.

ii. Screening

Subsequently, the researcher applied a filtration process to narrow down the selection of articles from 57 to a final count of 15 during the identification stage. Consequently, the researcher only chose 42 articles to be evaluated. During the screening step, multiple criteria have been established to ascertain if an item should be allowed or rejected:

Criteria	Acceptance	Rejection
Document type	Journal Articles (with full access)	Seminar articles, proceedings and systematic reviews
Language	Malay or English	Other than Malay or English
Context	The context of the negative implications of workload	Outside the context of the negative implications of workload
Year of Publication	The latest 5-year publication, starting from 2020 to 2024	Publications that are more than 5 years old, i.e. from 2019 and the previous years
Country coverage	Inside and outside of the country	Irrelevant

iii. Eligibility

During this step, the researcher conducted a meticulous examination of 42 papers, with the specific goal of discarding any articles that were not relevant to the study. A total of 12 articles have been published due to their lack of connection to the topic of education, which is unrelated to teachers.

iv. Included

Following the conclusive screening process, the researcher has chosen 30 research articles to be utilized as the primary material for analysis in this study. The subsequent text outlines the step-by-step process for carrying out this systematic review study:

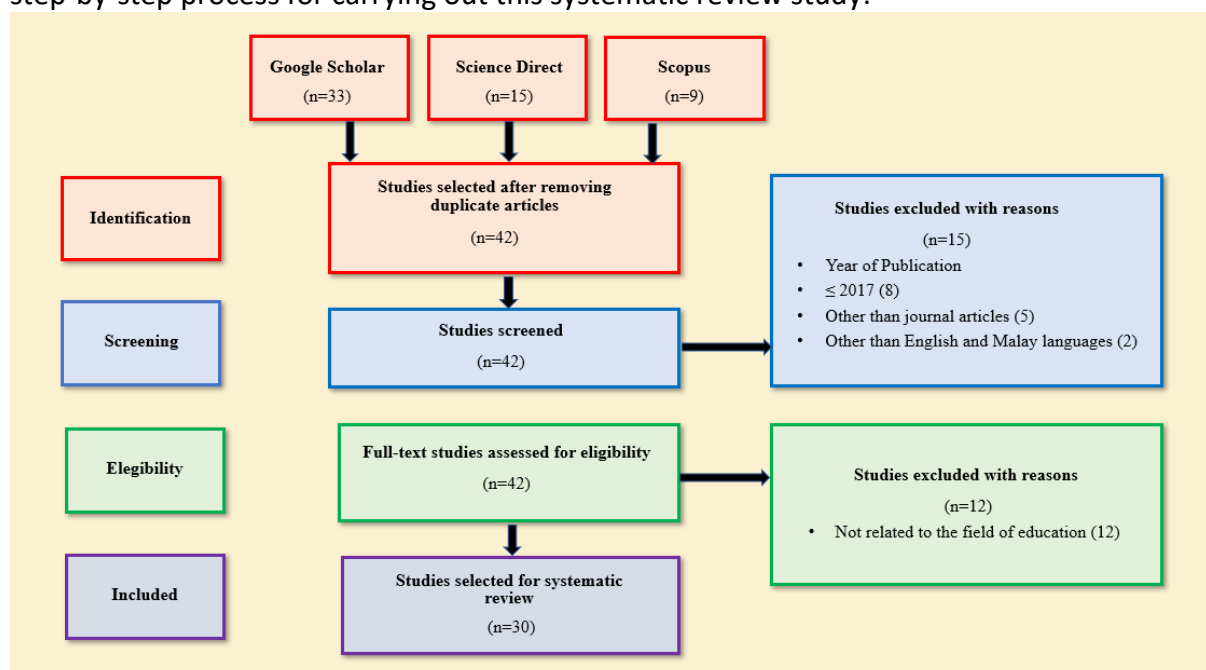


Figure 1: Source: A. Liberati (2009), Adapted from Sabudin & Halim (2020)

Findings and Discussion

From the 30 articles selected, there are five articles that focus on the implications of workload among teachers in Indonesia (Puspitasari et al., 2024; Mohzana et al., 2023; Slamet et al., 2023; Nyoto et al., 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2022), four research articles in Malaysia (Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Samsuddin et al., 2021; Jain et al., 2023; Abd Kaiyom et al., 2021) Philippines

(Pacaol, 2021; Jomuad et al., 2021; Magalong & Torreon, 2021), China (Wang, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023; Zang et al., 2022) and Pakistan (Rashid et al., 2022; Gul et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022), and two in Australia (Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024; Carroll et al., 2022). Meanwhile, research studies on the implications of teacher workload are also conducted in Sweden (Toropova et al., 2021), Taiwan (Pan et al., 2023), Japan (Hojo, 2021), India (Mary & Sethupathy, 2024), Netherlands (Schellings et al., 2023), UAE (Hashem et al., 2024), Peru (Cayupe et al., 2023), Romania (Ortan et al., 2021), Estonia (Saks et al., 2022) and Uganda (Nuwaha et al., 2023) (See Figure 2).

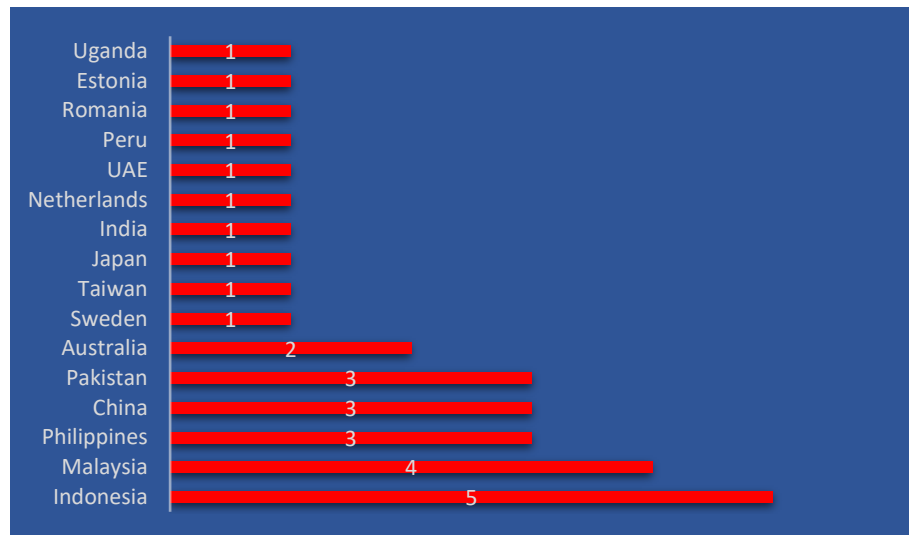


Figure 2: list of selected article country names

In addition, it was found that 13 articles have focused on quantitative analysis (Wang, 2024; Magalong & Torreon, 2021; Pan et al., 2023; Hojo, 2021; Gul et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023; Cayupe et al., 2022; Zang et al., 2021; Abd Kaiyom et al., 2021), five articles were seen to focus on qualitative analysis (Pacaol, 2021; Jain et al., 2023; Schellings et al., 2023; Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024; Slamet et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the remaining 12 articles use a mixed method, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (Jomuad et al., 2021; Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Samsuddin et al., 2021; Nuwaha et al., 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2022; Hashem et al., 2024; Nyoto et al., 2022; 2024) (See Figure 3).

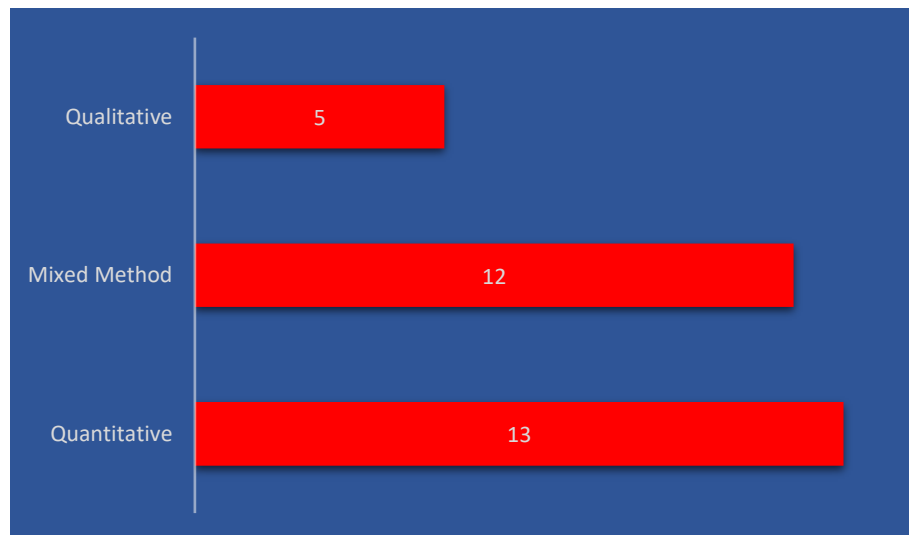


Figure 3: the research method of the selected articles

Next in terms of the year of publication, there are 10 articles published in 2021 (Pacaol, 2021; Jomuad et al., 2021; Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Samsuddin et al., 2021; Magalong & Torreon, 2021; Gul et al., 2021; Ortan et al., 2021; Abd Kaiyom, 2021), six articles were published in 2022 (Supriyanto et al., 2022). 2022; Carroll et al., 2022; Zang et al., 2022), and nine articles were published in 2023 (Nuwaha et al., 2023). , 2023; Mohzana et al., 2023; Slamet et al., 2023; 2023) and the remaining five articles were published in the most recent year which is 2024 (Wang, 2024; Puspitasari et al., 2024; Hashem et al., 2024; Mary & Sethupathy, 2024; Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024) (See Figure 4).

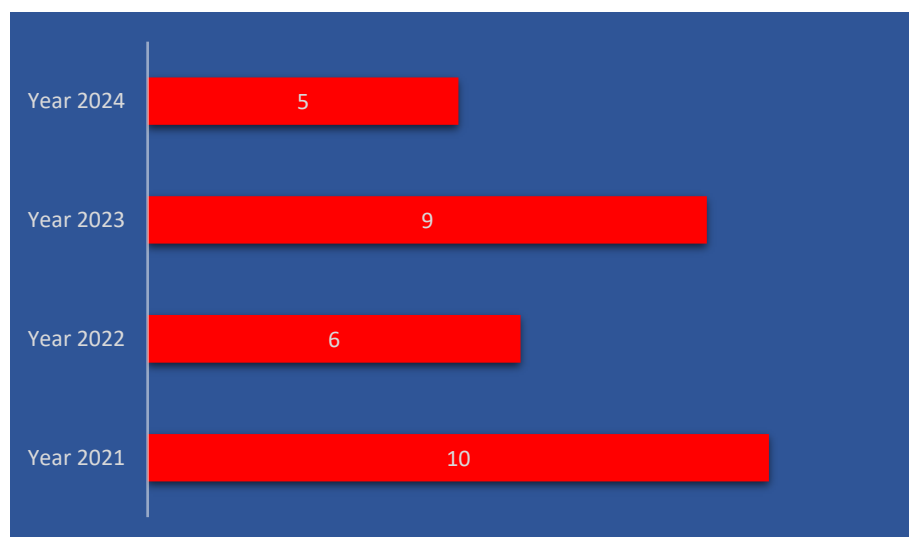


Figure 4: year of publication of selected articles

The Negative Implications of Workload on Health Aspects

The persistent stress resulting from the weight carried by educators can lead to the decline of their mental well-being. The study conducted by Jomuad et al (2021), revealed that teachers in the Philippines encounter multiple work responsibilities such as administrative tasks, disorganized classes, and workplace conflicts with colleagues and administrators. These factors contribute to the teachers' experience of anxiety, as supported by the findings of

Schellings et al (2023); Zang et al (2022); Puspitasari et al (2021); Samsuddin et al (2021); and Nyoto et al (2024). Individuals frequently experience stress due to ceaseless job obligations, leading to a sense of hopelessness and diminished enthusiasm for their professional pursuits (Wang, 2024; Cayupe et al., 2023; Hojo, 2021). Over time, the excessive workload can result in burnout, a state in which instructors suffer from severe physical, mental, and emotional fatigue caused by persistent and escalating strain and workload.

Research conducted by Jain et al (2023); Pacaol (2021); Pan et al (2023); and Abd Kaiyom et al (2021), has demonstrated that excessive workload among instructors is associated with a considerable level of exhaustion, which is a negative consequence. Teachers frequently encounter a range of additional duties that extend beyond regular teaching hours, such as creating instructional materials, evaluating students, handling administrative work, and participating in meetings or extracurricular activities. Teachers are frequently compelled to work beyond their designated working hours due to the persistent workload, resulting in a diminished opportunity for rest and rejuvenation (Magalong & Torreon, 2021; Saks et al., 2022). This circumstance results in instructors experiencing insufficient sleep and rest, hence exacerbating their weariness. Indeed, the persistent exhaustion can also lead to a decline in work efficiency (Jomud et al., 2021). This results in fatigued educators being unable to properly concentrate on instruction, that eventually impacts the caliber of education, particularly for pupils in schools.

The excessive workload experienced by teachers not only negatively affects their mental health and causes significant exhaustion, but it also poses many physical health concerns, increasing the chance of developing various diseases and health issues. Cardiovascular disease is a common health issue among teachers (Jain et al., 2023). According to a study conducted by Wang (2024), teachers in China experience chronic stress, resulting in elevated heart rate and blood pressure, which can ultimately contribute to the development of hypertension and heart disease. Furthermore, a study conducted by Saks et al (2022), indicates that chronic stress can lead to sleep disruptions, hence diminishing the body's capacity for rest and recovery, as well as compromising the immune system. Teachers who experience high levels of stress are also susceptible to developing chronic digestive disorders such as gastritis and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). These conditions can disrupt the normal functioning of the digestive system, leading to symptoms such as stomach aches, flatulence, and other digestive issues. Ultimately, this can significantly impact their overall quality of life (Mary & Sethupathy, 2024; Magalong & Torreon, 2021).

Moreover, excessive work demands can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (Slamet et al., 2023), a condition that impairs the proper functioning of joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves, tendons, and the spine. This is typically caused by improper posture, prolonged sitting, and insufficient physical activity. Teachers frequently disregard personal health factors, such as maintaining a balanced diet and engaging in enough exercise, due to a heavy workload. Consequently, this behavior escalates the likelihood of encountering various health issues (Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024).

The Negative Implications of Workload on Professional Careers

Teachers are constantly under strain due to the excessive obligations they have to handle, which include both academic and non-academic work. The strain not only impacts their job satisfaction and professional growth, but also leads to a decline in the quality of teaching efficacy (Hashem et al., 2024; Slamet et al., 2023). Teachers who are overwhelmed with an excessive workload may encounter challenges in maintaining complete concentration during the teaching process. This is demonstrated by the research conducted by Pacaol (2021), which reveals that a significant number of teachers in the Philippines have time limitations when it comes to creating well-organized and innovative teaching materials. Lack of sufficient preparation might result in a decrease in the organization, engagement, and interactivity of teaching. In addition, teachers who are overwhelmed with administrative responsibilities and other tasks may be compelled to utilize insufficient teaching resources or repurpose outdated teachings, thereby compromising the standard of instruction (Hojo, 2021; Mohzana et al., 2023; Nyoto et al., 2023). Consequently, a teacher's inability to effectively organize and implement teaching due to a shortage of time and energy directly impacts the quality of education that pupils receive. This also leads to a decline in teachers' motivation (Ortan et al., 2021; Supriyanto et al., 2022) and passion for teaching (Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Magalong & Torreón, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023), hence hindering their willingness to go above and beyond to assist pupils requiring further support.

Moreover, the cognitive and affective strain endured by educators as a result of an overwhelming amount of tasks can impede their capacity to instruct with efficacy. The strain can also induce mental exhaustion, inhibiting instructors' ability to engage in critical and creative thinking while delivering classes (Cayupe et al., 2023). The majority of 820 teachers in Pakistan, who participated in the study conducted by Gul et al. (2021), expressed fear and concern regarding this situation. They believe that it can have a negative impact on the quality of interaction between teachers and students. Stressed teachers are likely to display less patience and empathy, which in turn hinders their ability to fully attend to the needs of their students.

Furthermore, an excessive workload is also associated with a decline in job satisfaction (Rashid et al., 2022; Nyoto et al., 2023). Teachers experiencing a sense of burden and stress often find themselves unsatisfied with their professional lives. In the study conducted by Cayupe et al. (2023), which focused on teachers in Peru from both public and private educational institutions, it was found that a significant number of instructors reported poor levels of job satisfaction. Consequently, they perceived themselves as being less efficient in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as educators. Insufficient support from the school and administration might adversely affect teacher job satisfaction, leading to an increased burden (Samsuddin et al., 2021). They will experience a lack of recognition and frequently lack a strong sense of determination. A conducive atmosphere is crucial for enhancing a teacher's motivation and passion, particularly when faced with the demanding workload.

Furthermore, a significant consequence of the burdensome task is the strong likelihood that a teacher may resign from the profession. This is demonstrated by the fact that a majority of Australian teachers, namely 749 participants in the study conducted by Carroll et al (2022), expressed serious contemplation of abandoning the teaching profession due to exhaustion

resulting from a range of physical and mental factors. The persistent and immediate stress can also motivate educators to pursue different professions that provide a more favorable equilibrium between work and personal life (Toropova et al., 2021; Gul et al., 2021; Cayupe et al., 2023; Mohzana et al., 2023). This situation not only results in a shortage and departure of skilled teaching personnel (Wang, 2024; Jomud et al., 2021; Abd Kaiyom et al., 2021; Ortan et al., 2021; Gavin & McGrath-Champ, 2024), but also presents numerous obstacles for the education system in maintaining the uninterrupted delivery and high standard of instruction (Nuwaha et al., 2023).

Moreover, the excessive workload of teachers has diminished the amount of time they have to participate in professional development initiatives. According to the research conducted by Toropova et al (2021), Swedish teachers are hindered from dedicating time for their professional growth because of an overwhelming amount of administrative responsibilities. Similarly, the research conducted by Wang (2024), Jain et al (2023), and Slamet et al (2023), concurred that administrative responsibilities in schools have led to a rise in workload, hence impeding the professional growth of teachers. Insufficient school resources, including technological tools and inadequate classroom upkeep, might impede teachers' capacity to actively participate in professional development (Mary & Sethupathy, 2024). Teachers are confronted with difficulties in prioritizing activities such as planning, professional development, and reflection, which are crucial for their long-term efficacy (Puspitasari et al., 2024). Therefore, the overwhelming amount of work has hindered a teacher from devoting time to enhance their abilities and participate in professional development initiatives aimed at emphasizing teacher improvement.

The Negative Implications of Workload on The Conduct Of Daily Life

The substantial burden experienced by teachers not only impacts their job performance, but also has notable consequences for managing their day-to-day lives. The persistent demands of work and extended working hours frequently diminish the amount of time that can be allocated to family, friends, and personal pursuits. The research conducted by Mohzana et al. (2023); Pan et al (2023); Carroll et al (2022); Ortan et al (2021); and Toropova et al (2021), clearly demonstrates that the excessive workload has hindered teachers from allocating time to their families. They frequently carry home tasks that require completion, such as reviewing student assignments or devising teaching and learning strategies for the following day (Hashem et al., 2024). Consequently, the available time for engaging with one's spouse, children, or other family members becomes restricted. This scenario has the potential to impact familial bonds and engender emotions of solitude or disregard within family members. Excessive workload hinders instructors from participating in enjoyable activities, such as hobbies, fitness, or leisure pursuits (Rashid et al., 2022; Magalong & Torreon, 2021). The time allocated for relaxation and stress relief has to be reallocated to fulfill academic obligations and school-related responsibilities. Consequently, educators may experience stress when they are unable to devote sufficient time and attention to their families and personal well-being as a result of excessive work obligations. Insufficient time for rest and relaxation can lead to extended physical and emotional exhaustion, resulting in a decline in the overall quality of life for instructors (Schellings et al., 2023). In addition, instructors may encounter challenges in successfully managing their time, leading them to work beyond their designated working hours Wang, (2024) in order to finish pending responsibilities.

Importance of Implications

The results of this comprehensive study can enhance readers' understanding of the actual consequences of heavy workloads in the field of education. Teachers should have a thorough comprehension and awareness that a heavy, excessive, and pressing task might currently have an adverse impact on their well-being.

Furthermore, the results of this comprehensive analysis might also offer valuable insights for school administrators managers. The administrators have the authority to oversee both the academic and non-academic responsibilities of the teachers in order to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed and to guarantee an equitable distribution of jobs. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of workload on teachers, highlighting its detrimental impact on multiple areas.

In addition, the results of this comprehensive survey study can offer valuable insights to relevant authorities, particularly the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), regarding the current challenges faced by teachers due to their growing workload. This information can enable MOE to explore potential solutions and implement necessary measures to alleviate the burden on teachers in schools.

Conclusion

This study has determined that investigating the workload of teachers is crucial as it not only provides an accurate portrayal of the workload they face, but also has detrimental effects on their health, professional advancement, and ability to manage daily life. Hence, the outcomes of this comprehensive analysis are anticipated to serve as a foundation for future investigations, particularly in the quest for efficacious remedies and interventions to mitigate the escalating detrimental effects of workload on teachers.

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