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School Leadership Support, Work-Life Balance, and Mental Health of Public Elementary Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships of perceived school leadership support with work-life balance and mental health among public elementary teachers in Kabacan South District. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design involved 121 teachers selected through proportionate stratified sampling, followed by 18 purposively selected participants in individual interviews (n = 10) and a focus-group discussion (n = 8). Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and simple linear regression, while qualitative accounts underwent thematic analysis and integration. Perceived leadership support (M = 4.577) and self-reported mental health (M = 4.519) were very high. Teachers reported low work–personal life conflict and very high work–personal life enhancement. Leadership support showed a moderate positive association with mental health ($r = .469$, $p < .001$) and explained 22.0% of its score variance. Its association with the original, uncorrected work-life balance composite was nonsignificant ($r = .029$, $p = .754$). Qualitative findings emphasized guidance, listening, flexibility, and recognition alongside persistent workload spillover and conflicting deadlines. Overall, supportive leadership was associated with better perceived mental health but did not eliminate work–family pressures. School administrators should sustain responsive leadership, strengthen practical assistance, and coordinate workloads and deadlines. Limitations included the district-specific, cross-sectional sample and an uncorrected work-life balance composite requiring respondent-level reanalysis. The study provides integrated local evidence for combining relational leadership with workload-sensitive teacher well-being initiatives.

Keywords: *Elementary Teachers, Mental Health, Mixed-Methods Research, School Leadership Support, Teacher Well-Being, Work-Life Balance*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

Teaching requires sustained attention to instruction, learner assessment, curriculum preparation, and responsibilities that extend beyond classroom delivery. These overlapping demands can place pressure on teachers' time, professional functioning, and personal well-being. Guided by the Job Demands–Resources perspective, recent meta-analyses have associated teacher well-being with the balance between occupational demands and resources available within the school environment (Li et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2024). A systematic review further identified workload and time pressure as recurring demands, while collegial relationships, collaboration, and supportive school leadership emerged as important resources (Moens et al., 2026). Teacher well-being consequently warrants attention as an organizational concern rather than solely a matter of individual coping. School leadership may shape this environment through emotional reassurance, practical assistance, timely information, and constructive feedback. A qualitative evidence synthesis associated teacher well-being with leadership practices that support autonomy, positive workplace relationships, professional growth, and responsive school climates (Karaferye & Bellibaş, 2025). Yet teachers' capacity to maintain boundaries between employment and personal life also depends on the volume and organization of their duties. Philippine research involving elementary teachers linked work-life balance with workplace support, work–family conflict, and health status (Yabut et al., 2023). In response to workload concerns, the Philippine Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024, concerning teachers' workload and teaching overload, and DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2025, concerning school forms and reports (Department of Education, 2024, 2025). These policies underscore the institutional responsibility to manage work demands. Against this backdrop, understanding how public elementary teachers in Kabacan South District perceive school leadership support in relation to their work-life balance and mental health became the central concern of the present study.

1.2. Research Problem

Although school leadership is frequently discussed as a protective organizational resource, supportive interactions do not necessarily eliminate competing instructional, administrative, and family-related demands. International evidence associates leadership practices with teachers' occupational experiences: Li et al. (2024), for example, examined distributed leadership, job stress, and job satisfaction across four countries. Meanwhile, Moens et al. (2026) showed that workload and time pressure persist alongside beneficial workplace resources. These findings suggest that leadership support and the practical management of job demands should be considered together rather than assumed to produce identical outcomes. Within the Philippines, work–family conflict and workplace support have been examined in relation to elementary teachers' work-life balance and health (Yabut et al., 2023). National workload reforms also recognize the need to clarify teaching responsibilities and streamline reporting obligations (Department of Education, 2024, 2025). Nevertheless, policy provisions and general research findings cannot establish how support is perceived or how its different forms relate to well-being in a particular district. For Kabacan South District, the issue is whether teachers' perceived emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support is associated with their work-life balance and mental health, and how teachers explain these relationships through their everyday experiences.

1.3. Research Gap

Existing syntheses have clarified the relevance of job demands, resources, and leadership practices to teacher well-being, but they do not resolve how distinct forms of leadership support relate simultaneously to work-life balance and multidimensional mental health within Kabacan South District (Li et al., 2025; Karaferye & Bellibaş, 2025). Research on school climate likewise

establishes the importance of organizational conditions without replacing district-specific accounts of teachers' competing responsibilities (Boos & Tschannen-Moran, 2026). A further methodological gap concerns the interpretation of statistical relationships alongside teachers' lived experiences. Quantitative indicators can describe levels, associations, and predictive patterns, whereas qualitative accounts can clarify how assistance, communication, workloads, deadlines, and family responsibilities are experienced. The present study addressed this combined contextual and methodological need through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, connecting quantitative findings on leadership support, work-life balance, and mental health with qualitative explanations. It thereby sought a more integrated and locally grounded understanding without assuming causal effects from nonexperimental evidence.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between school leadership support and the work-life balance and mental health of public elementary teachers in Kabacan South District. Specifically, it assessed perceived emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support; determined levels of work-life balance and emotional, social, and psychological well-being; examined the association between overall school leadership support and self-reported mental health, and described work-life balance across its three measured dimensions. It also explored teachers' experiences and perspectives concerning leadership assistance, workload, personal responsibilities, and well-being. Through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, the study integrated quantitative results with qualitative accounts to explain areas of convergence, difference, and contextual meaning across the two strands.

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

The study offers a district-specific basis for understanding school leadership support as one organizational resource associated with teacher well-being. Its findings may help school heads distinguish supportive interpersonal practices from workload conditions requiring administrative or institutional action. For teachers, the examination of work-life boundaries and multidimensional mental health may support more responsive conversations about professional demands and available assistance. For district administrators, the integrated findings may inform the implementation of workload rationalization, reporting simplification, communication practices, and appropriate well-being initiatives consistent with existing policies. Academically, the study contributes contextual evidence by combining indicator-level statistical analysis with teachers' accounts, while offering future researchers a basis for investigating similar relationships in other educational settings.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

The study is directly aligned with three United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.). SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being is supported through its examination of teachers' emotional, social, and psychological well-being and the work-related conditions associated with these outcomes. SDG 4: Quality Education is relevant because teacher support and sustainable professional functioning are important organizational considerations for maintaining effective educational environments. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth is reflected in the study's attention to manageable workloads, work-life balance, and responsive leadership within public employment. These connections are practical rather than claims of measurable progress toward national SDG targets: the study supplies local evidence that may guide better school-level decisions concerning teacher welfare and working conditions.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (QUAN → QUAL), beginning with a quantitative assessment of elementary teachers' school leadership support, work-life balance, and mental health. The first phase established descriptive levels, associations, and predictive relationships. A subsequent qualitative phase examined teachers' lived experiences to interpret and contextualize the quantitative patterns. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated by comparing statistical patterns with participants' experiences to identify convergence, expansion, and divergence (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2025).

2.2. Research Locale, Population, and Participants or Respondents

The study was conducted among elementary school teachers in Kabacan South District. The district sampling frame comprised 172 teachers, of whom 121 participated in the quantitative phase. Eighteen of these teachers joined the explanatory qualitative phase: ten completed individual interviews, and eight participated in one focus-group discussion. Participants represented different school contexts and experiences of leadership support, work-life balance, and mental health. Qualitative accounts contextualized findings without claiming statistical representativeness.

2.3. Sampling Technique and Sample Determination

The quantitative sample was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding an approximate minimum of 120 respondents; the achieved sample comprised 121. Schools served as strata in proportionate stratified sampling, with allocations based on each school's number of teachers. For the qualitative phase, 18 quantitative respondents were purposively chosen for variation in the study constructs and school contexts, considering willingness and relevant experience. This qualitative selection aimed to obtain information-rich explanations, not statistical representation.

2.4. Research Instrument and Validation

A structured survey questionnaire assessed school leadership support, work-life balance, and mental health, while a semi-structured interview guide explored experiences, challenges, coping practices, and perceptions. Adapted instruments underwent content review by at least three experts in educational leadership, psychology, or measurement and were pilot-tested with teachers outside the final sample. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with .70 adopted as the evaluation benchmark. Mental health addressed emotional, social, and psychological well-being (Mendoza et al., 2026). Work interference with personal life (WIPL) and personal life interference with work (PLIW) were interpreted as conflict dimensions, while work–personal life enhancement (WPLE) was interpreted as a positive dimension. These dimensions were examined separately because their reported scores reflected different directions.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

After securing permission from the graduate school, Department of Education authorities, and participating school heads, the researchers obtained informed consent and administered the surveys. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, coded, and prepared for quantitative analysis. Individual interviews and a focus-group discussion followed, using consistent semi-structured questions and neutral probes. Interviewers avoided leading or evaluative responses and kept reflexive notes. Teachers were informed that participation would not influence employment-related decisions. Qualitative records were transcribed, anonymized, and coded before thematic analysis and integration with survey findings.

2.6. Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized quantitative responses. Pearson product–moment correlations examined relationships between school

leadership support and work-life balance and mental health. Separate simple linear regressions estimated total-score predictive associations (N = 121; residual df = 119). The reported regression analyses examined overall school leadership support as the predictor variable, with the interpretation focused on its association with teachers' self-reported mental health. Thematic analysis progressed through familiarization, coding, theme development, review, definition, and interpretation. Quantitative results and qualitative themes were compared to explain the patterns identified across the two phases. Statistical interpretation used α = .05, with results considered associative rather than causal.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality, privacy, and withdrawal rights were protected; qualitative records and quotations used participant codes, and identifying details were excluded from reporting. Participation had no bearing on employment, evaluation, promotion, or assignment. The study observed applicable Department of Education requirements and Republic Act No. 10173, and recognized Republic Act No. 12080 (2024). Administrative permissions were secured from the relevant educational authorities, and participants provided informed consent before data collection.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Very High Perceived School Leadership Support Across Four Dimensions

Among the 121 survey respondents, the overall level of perceived school leadership support was very high (M = 4.577, SD = 0.475). The four assessed dimensions—emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support—were all interpreted as very high, reflecting generally favorable perceptions of the assistance teachers received from their school leaders. Emotional support received the highest rating (M = 4.624, SD = 0.590), followed by appraisal support (M = 4.591, SD = 0.518) and informational support (M = 4.570, SD = 0.519). Instrumental support ranked lowest (M = 4.525, SD = 0.545), although it remained within the very high category. This relatively narrow range suggests that participants experienced support through both interpersonal reassurance and professional guidance. The lower comparative rating for instrumental support nevertheless directs attention to access to materials, administrative assistance, and practical help with competing demands. Group averages do not establish uniform experiences among individual teachers. The pattern aligns with Floman et al. (2024), who linked emotionally supportive school leadership with educator well-being, and Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2022), who emphasized feedback, autonomy, and professional development as workplace resources. Karaferye and Bellibaş (2025) similarly identified relational support, autonomy, professional growth, and well-being practices as leadership resources. For Kabacan South District, maintaining approachable communication and constructive feedback while strengthening practical assistance addresses both the strongest and comparatively weaker support dimensions. Overall, teachers perceived their school leaders as supportive across all four measured areas.

3.2. Work-Life Balance Characterized by Low Conflict and High Enhancement

Teachers' work-life balance was examined through work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), and work-personal life enhancement (WPLE). The two conflict dimensions were rated low, whereas enhancement was rated very high. These components had different scoring directions: higher conflict ratings reflected greater interference, whereas higher enhancement ratings reflected more favorable experiences. Work interference with personal life was low (WIPL: M = 2.390, SD = 1.128), as was personal life interference with work (PLIW: M = 2.229, SD = 1.093), whereas work–personal life enhancement

was very high (WPLE: M = 4.238, SD = 0.598). This pattern indicated limited reported conflict and substantial enhancement between professional and personal roles. The work-life balance dimensions were interpreted separately because the interference and enhancement measures reflected different scoring directions. The findings indicated low work–personal life conflict and very high work–personal life enhancement. These component-level results provided a clearer description of teachers' work-life experiences than the originally reported combined score. The qualitative strand adds an important qualification: some teachers reported schoolwork extending into family time, overlapping deadlines, and competing obligations despite favorable component averages. Work-life balance therefore varied in concrete circumstances and should not be represented by the raw composite alone. Li et al. (2021) and Cho et al. (2025) discussed the importance of work-family and work-leisure conflict; Philippine studies likewise identified work conditions and family responsibilities as relevant contexts (De La Cruz & Solomon, 2025; Tipan & Aguilar, 2025). The findings point toward protecting working-hour boundaries and coordinating deadlines while preserving the reported enhancement between work and personal life.

3.3. Very High Self-Reported Emotional, Social, and Psychological Well-Being

Teachers reported a very high overall level of mental health across the assessed domains (M = 4.519, SD = 0.407; N = 121). The instrument described perceived emotional, social, and psychological well-being rather than establishing a clinical mental-health diagnosis. Psychological well-being obtained the highest mean (M = 4.542, SD = 0.427), followed closely by emotional well-being (M = 4.536, SD = 0.501). Social well-being was comparatively lowest (M = 4.479, SD = 0.456), but it remained very high. This result indicates a generally favorable picture of teachers' perceived psychological functioning, affective experiences, and social connectedness. The smaller relative mean for social well-being provides a practical reason to sustain collegial relationships and inclusive workplace communication without treating that dimension as deficient. Dreer (2023) and Zhou et al. (2024) emphasized that teacher well-being is multidimensional; Moens et al. (2026) and Wang and Long (2026) also highlighted the roles of school-based demands and resources. These studies help situate the positive ratings alongside the pressures documented qualitatively. High self-reported well-being can coexist with workplace strain and should not be interpreted as the absence of stress. The descriptive results establish teachers' perceived well-being profile, while the inferential analyses below examine its association with leadership support.

3.4. Leadership Support and the Raw Work-Life Balance Score: Nonsignificant Association

The originally reported correlation between overall school leadership support and the work-life balance composite was negligible and statistically nonsignificant (r = .029, p = .754; N = 121). However, the composite combined interference and enhancement dimensions with different scoring directions. Consequently, the statistical result applies only to the originally reported composite and cannot establish the relationship between leadership support and a directionally consistent overall work-life balance measure. The interpretation of work-life balance therefore focused on the separate dimensions and participants' qualitative accounts. These accounts described schoolwork extending into family time, overlapping deadlines, and competing professional and personal responsibilities. The findings highlight the importance of managing workload, coordinating school activities, and strengthening practical administrative support. These considerations are consistent with research emphasizing the importance of work

demands, workplace resources, and work–family responsibilities (Yabut et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025; Creagh et al., 2025).

3.5. Leadership Support and Mental Health: Significant Positive Association

The association between school leadership support and teachers' self-reported mental health differed from the work-life balance finding. Pearson correlation indicated a statistically significant moderate positive relationship ($r = .469$, $p < .001$; $N = 121$), meaning that respondents who perceived greater leadership support also tended to report more favorable mental health across the assessed domains. This finding established association, not causality. Simple linear regression also revealed a statistically significant positive predictive association between leadership support and the mental-health score, $B = 0.401$ ($SE = 0.069$), $\beta = .469$, $t(119) = 5.812$, $p < .001$. Model fit was $R = .469$, $R^2 = .220$, adjusted $R^2 = .213$, $F(1, 119) = 33.77$, $p < .001$; leadership support accounted for 22.0% of the observed variance in mental-health scores. The estimated intercept was $B = 2.681$ ($SE = 0.318$), $t = 8.433$, $p < .001$. Because the study was nonexperimental, statistical prediction did not establish a causal effect of leadership practices on mental health. The regression findings represented the association between overall school leadership support and teachers' perceived mental health. The four individual support dimensions were examined descriptively rather than compared through separate regression coefficients. The observed association is consistent with Floman et al. (2024), Karaferye and Bellibaş (2025), and Li et al. (2024), who discussed supportive relationships and school leadership in relation to educator well-being. Philippine evidence from Casanova et al. (2023), along with analyses by Zhou et al. (2024), Li et al. (2025), and Boos and Tschannen-Moran (2026), similarly situates well-being within social, organizational, and personal resources. These findings support sustaining approachable, fair, emotionally responsive, and development-oriented leadership while monitoring demands that may affect teachers' mental health.

3.6. Leadership Support Experiences: Guidance, Listening, Flexibility, and Recognition

Interview and focus group discussion accounts produced four themes describing teachers' experiences of school leadership support: Developmental Guidance, Listening and Emotional Support, Human-Centered Flexibility, and Professional Growth and Recognition. Their statements illustrated how technical assistance, guidance, emotional reassurance, consideration of family circumstances, and opportunities for professional growth contributed to the positive survey ratings.

Developmental Guidance

Teachers described technical assistance, clear explanations, and constructive feedback as resources for handling unfamiliar responsibilities and strengthening confidence. As one participant stated, "I became more confident after receiving that guidance" (FGD 5). Another explained, "She corrects my work and suggests the best things that I can do to improve it" (IDI 9). These accounts demonstrated that informational and appraisal support involved active professional guidance rather than general goodwill. The pattern was consistent with Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2022) and Karaferye and Bellibaş (2025) on feedback and development as workplace resources.

Listening and Emotional Support

Participants connected attentive communication with reassurance and greater confidence. One teacher explained, "It reduced my stress, increased my confidence in performing my

responsibilities, and motivated me to continue doing my best in my work" (IDI 3). Another reported, "She listened and helped me identify which tasks should be prioritized" (FGD 3). These accounts clarified the very high emotional-support rating by showing how listening and encouragement were experienced in daily school work. Floman et al. (2024) and Li et al. (2024) provided relevant comparisons concerning supportive leadership and teacher well-being. Active listening, clear expectations, and constructive assistance therefore emerged as practical expressions of leadership support.

Human-Centered Flexibility

One participant described considerate leadership in direct terms: "Our school head considered my situation and allowed me to make necessary adjustments while still ensuring that my work was completed" (FGD 7). The account illustrated flexibility accompanied by accountability, a practice that could help teachers negotiate personal circumstances without removing professional expectations. The importance of autonomy-supportive practices described by Karaferye and Bellibaş (2025) and contextual factors reviewed by Zhou et al. (2024) provided a relevant basis for interpreting this experience.

Professional Growth and Recognition

Training, seminars, appreciation, and constructive recognition were reported as reinforcing competence and professional value. One participant shared, "The experience helped refresh and improve my knowledge and gave me more confidence in teaching my learners" (IDI 8). Another stated, "I feel very much appreciated and supported when she guides me and helps me improve my work" (IDI 9). These statements complemented the very high appraisal rating and aligned with the value of professional learning and recognition discussed by Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2022) and Karaferye and Bellibaş (2025). Taken together, the four leadership themes portrayed support as both interpersonal care and professional assistance.

3.7. Work-Life Balance Experiences: Spillover, Prioritization, and Competing Roles

Teachers' qualitative accounts of work-life balance yielded four themes: Workload Spillover, Time Management and Prioritization, Competing Role Negotiation, and Manageable Workload. These experiences provided concrete context for the low average conflict ratings and very high work–personal life enhancement score, while identifying circumstances in which work continued to intrude on family and personal time.

Workload Spillover

Teachers reported that lesson preparation, reports, checking, coaching, and other school responsibilities sometimes extended beyond working hours. IDI 6 stated, "Sometimes, I bring schoolwork home, which reduces my time with my family." The account demonstrates a direct pressure on personal time that can remain visible even when average survey conflict is low. Creagh et al. (2025) and Sandmeier et al. (2022) discussed workload intensification, extended working time, and educator exhaustion. The implication is to review assignments that routinely extend into evenings or family time.

Time Management and Prioritization

Participants described completing urgent tasks first, planning schedules, preparing learning materials in advance, and finishing schoolwork during regular working hours. One teacher stated, "I try to finish as much as possible during school hours so that I can focus on my family

when I go home" (FGD 2). Another explained, "When I organize my materials and lesson plans early, I have more time for my personal responsibilities" (FGD 5). Their strategies illustrated active boundary management but did not show that time management alone resolved workload pressures. Yabut et al. (2023), Cho et al. (2025), De La Cruz and Solomon (2025), and Tipan and Aguilar (2025) provided comparable work–family and school-workload contexts.

Competing Role Negotiation

One teacher described the difficulty of fulfilling simultaneous responsibilities: "There are times when I have school activities that I need to attend, while my children also have activities that require my presence" (IDI 1). The finding emphasized conflicts between legitimate professional and family roles rather than deficiencies in individual time management. It was compatible with discussions of work-family conflict by Li et al. (2021) and Cho et al. (2025). Advance notice and predictable schedules emerged as relevant considerations for reducing avoidable conflicts.

Manageable Workload

One participant explained, "I experienced having several reports and school activities with almost the same deadline" (FGD 3). In contrast, another stated, "It becomes easier when my tasks are manageable and when support from my school leader and colleagues is available" (IDI 3). These accounts indicated that prioritization alone did not necessarily overcome excessive or compressed demands. Creagh et al. (2025) and Yabut et al. (2023) provided a relevant basis for considering the distribution and timing of work alongside individual coping. Across the four work-life balance themes, even favorable leadership experiences could coexist with persistent pressures on personal and family time.

3.8. Mental Health Experiences: Belonging, Occupational Stress, and Adaptive Coping

Four themes summarized teachers' mental-health experiences: Recognition and Belonging, Workload and Deadline Stress, Adaptive Coping, and Supportive Leadership and Workload Sensitivity. The accounts showed that appreciation and approachable leadership could coexist with occupational strain arising from paperwork, multiple duties, and overlapping deadlines.

Recognition and Belonging

Recognition, teamwork, appreciation, and open communication supported participants' feelings of connection and professional value. IDI 1 stated, "I feel positive and valued when my school leader appreciates what I have done." These accounts help contextualize the very high social and emotional well-being scores without equating high scores with an absence of difficulties. The pattern corresponds with Casanova et al. (2023) and Floman et al. (2024) on social support and leadership-related well-being.

Workload and Deadline Stress

Participants identified paperwork, simultaneous deadlines, and multiple school responsibilities as sources of occupational pressure. One teacher stated, "Deadlines, reports, and heavy workloads cause stress" (IDI 6), while another observed, "Multiple deadlines and school activities can make me feel overwhelmed" (FGD 3). Ghasemi (2025) and Moens et al. (2026) similarly considered occupational demands relevant to teacher mental health. These accounts showed that highly rated well-being and experiences of stress were not mutually exclusive; the timing and organization of work remained important.

Adaptive Coping

Teachers described setting priorities, organizing tasks, seeking assistance, taking short breaks, and drawing on personal resilience and faith. One participant reported, "I cope by managing my time, setting priorities, organizing my tasks, and taking short breaks when needed" (IDI 8). Another described "organizing my tasks, asking for help when necessary, and trying to finish work on time" (FGD 6). A further participant referred to personal faith as a source of strength (IDI 5). These experiences highlighted teachers' personal coping strategies alongside continuing organizational workload pressures. Beames et al. (2023) reviewed teacher well-being interventions, while noting variability in the quality of evidence. Institutional support therefore remained important alongside personal coping.

Supportive Leadership and Workload Sensitivity

One participant observed, "When my school head listens to my concerns and provides guidance, I feel that I am not facing my responsibilities alone" (FGD 1). Another stressed that leaders could help by "considering teachers' workload, giving clear instructions, and recognizing our efforts" (FGD 4). Fairness, understanding, and access to professional development were also emphasized (FGD 7). These accounts provided experiential context for the positive leadership support–mental health association without proving its mechanism. Collie (2023) and Moens et al. (2026) likewise considered job resources alongside job demands, pointing toward emotionally responsive and workload-sensitive school leadership.

3.9. Explaining Contrasting Associations Through Structural and Relational Themes

The combined interpretation identified two cross-cutting themes: Structural Limits of Leadership Support and Leadership Support as a Mental Health Resource. Participants' descriptions of competing family commitments, overlapping deadlines, guidance, listening, and recognition helped contextualize the different quantitative relationships: a significant positive association between leadership support and perceived mental health, alongside descriptive and qualitative findings concerning work-life balance and occupational pressures.

Structural Limits of Leadership Support

Teachers appreciated guidance and encouragement but also described schoolwork extending into the home, conflicting school and family activities, and multiple near-simultaneous deadlines. IDI 6 reported reduced family time when bringing work home; FGD 3 reported overlapping submissions and activities. These accounts suggest that interpersonal support can coexist with work organization that places pressure on personal boundaries. This is a contextual explanation, not a statistical test of workload as a mediator or moderator. It is consistent with Creagh et al. (2025) on time poverty and indicates a need for deadline coordination, practical assistance, and workload review.

Leadership Support as a Mental Health Resource

Participants also described recognition, attentive listening, fair decisions, and technical guidance as sources of confidence, motivation, and reassurance. FGD 1 described feeling supported when the school head listened and offered guidance, while IDI 1 associated appreciation with feeling valued. These accounts are compatible with the moderate, significant positive correlation between leadership support and mental health ($r = .469$, $p < .001$), without proving its direction or mechanism. Collie (2023) and Moens et al. (2026) provide relevant support for understanding well-being in terms of interacting organizational resources and

demands. Together, both themes emphasize that leadership relationships and structural working conditions address partly different aspects of teachers' experiences.

3.10. Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative Findings and Theoretical Implications

The integration of survey and interview findings showed convergence concerning school leadership support and mental health. Support was rated very high (M = 4.577, SD = 0.475), and participants described emotional encouragement, technical guidance, flexibility, recognition, and professional development. Mental health was likewise rated very high (M = 4.519, SD = 0.407), and the positive association with leadership support was statistically significant (r = .469, p < .001). Participants' accounts of feeling valued, listened to, and professionally guided expanded the meaning of this association without establishing a causal pathway. The findings for work-life balance require a more qualified synthesis. Low reported WIPL and PLIW and very high WPLE suggest favorable component-level experiences, yet respondents also described work brought home, deadline compression, and competing family roles. The overall raw work-life balance composite (M = 2.952, SD = 0.731) was a pre-reverse-scoring value, and a corrected respondent-level score was not supplied. Accordingly, the nonsignificant association (r = .029, p = .754) and regression (B = 0.044, β = .029, R^2 = .001, p = .754) characterize only the raw index. Qualitative accounts expand the interpretation of these findings but do not resolve the measurement issue or prove a mechanism. The integration is consistent with the view that positive organizational resources and ongoing job demands can operate simultaneously (Li et al., 2025; Moens et al., 2026; Zhou et al., 2024). The findings are consistent with perspectives emphasizing the importance of organizational resources and multidimensional well-being in understanding teachers' professional experiences (Li et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026). The accounts of role conflict, time pressure, and professional support also align with the Job Demands–Resources Model, although the quantitative regressions did not include direct measures of job demands. Theoretical consistency should therefore be treated as interpretive rather than confirmatory. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative strands converged in depicting leadership support as a valued relational and professional resource for teachers' self-reported mental health. They also indicated that support alone did not remove reported workload and work-family boundary challenges. The practical synthesis for Kabacan South District is to sustain supportive and fair school leadership while coordinating deadlines, distributing responsibilities reasonably, clarifying instructions, offering assistance, and protecting teachers' personal time. The interpretation of work-life balance was therefore limited to the reported component-level descriptive findings and teachers' qualitative experiences.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that school leadership support and teachers' mental health were perceived as very high among public elementary school teachers in Kabacan South District. Teachers generally experienced low interference between work and personal responsibilities and strong work–personal-life enhancement. School leadership support demonstrated a significant, moderate positive relationship with teachers' mental health but no significant relationship with the retained work-life balance measure. Regression findings further indicated that leadership support accounted for approximately 22% of the variance in teachers' mental health. Qualitative findings reinforced the importance of emotional encouragement, professional guidance, flexibility, and recognition while identifying heavy workloads, overlapping deadlines, and family responsibilities as continuing challenges. These findings suggest that supportive leadership contributes to a positive school environment associated with teachers' psychological well-being, although work-life balance requires broader organizational consideration. Overall, the

study highlighted the importance of integrating leadership practices with workload management and teacher well-being initiatives within the educational setting.

School heads should sustain effective emotional, informational, and appraisal support while strengthening instrumental assistance through adequate resources, timely guidance, and responsive administrative practices. School administrators should establish manageable workload arrangements, coordinate academic schedules, and minimize overlapping deadlines to support teachers in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Schools are encouraged to maintain mental health initiatives that promote open communication, professional recognition, collaboration, and access to appropriate well-being services. Teachers should strengthen time management, task prioritization, and advance preparation, supported by institutional practices that respect family responsibilities. Furthermore, educational administrators may develop a School Leadership and Teacher Well-Being Support Framework integrating supportive leadership, workload management, work-life balance, and mental health promotion. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional occupational demands and organizational factors associated with teacher well-being and extend similar investigations to other educational settings to strengthen the applicability and understanding of the findings.

The study involved 121 public elementary school teachers from Kabacan South District, limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader educational settings. Its cross-sectional explanatory sequential design restricted causal interpretation, while self-reported responses were potentially influenced by recall and social desirability biases. Interpretation of work-life balance focused on its separate dimensions because the original composite combined measures with different scoring directions. The assessment of instrument reliability was described through expert review, pilot testing, and the stated internal-consistency benchmark rather than numerical reliability coefficients. Nevertheless, the mixed-methods approach provided complementary perspectives. Future studies may incorporate broader samples, longitudinal designs, and complete item-level datasets to strengthen statistical analysis and interpretation.

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