

TEACHERS' STATE AND TRAIT ANXIETY LEVELS AT A PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL ACADEMY: AN ASSESSMENT FOR THE RECOMMENDATION OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR A TEACHER'S MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SYSTEM

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Abstract

School officials, coworkers, and educational institutions all play an important role in supporting teachers' mental health and addressing anxiety-related concerns. Providing professional development programs on stress management, enacting supportive policies and procedures, and providing access to counseling or mental health resources can all contribute to a pleasant and supportive work environment for teachers? Open communication channels, as well as opportunities for collaboration and peer support, can also help teachers reduce anxiety and improve their general well-being. In line with these, this study aimed to measure teachers' state-trait anxiety levels and to develop a management plan for a teacher support system. Based on the results, teacher-respondents show a moderate level of anxiety. In addition, there were no significant differences in A-state anxiety levels based on

age, gender, length of service, or highest educational attainment. Except for age, a similar conclusion was observed for A-trait. Furthermore, there was a strong association found between instructors' anxiety levels and their responses in terms of A-state and A-trait, indicating that as state anxiety scores increase, trait anxiety ratings increase as well, and vice versa. Understanding the relationship between state anxiety, trait anxiety, and teachers' experiences is crucial for supporting their mental health and maintaining a conducive learning environment. These challenges can be solved by carefully designing a management plan for a teacher's mental health support system that is based on research and teachers' viewpoints.

Keywords: Anxiety, Mental Health, State and Trait Anxiety, Teachers, Support System

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a demanding job. It requires teaching hours in front of a class, planning and preparing activities, and supervising students as they perform these activities. In addition to these tasks, teachers are challenged to maintain the students' motivation and engagement. A teacher's role extends beyond the classroom. Teachers face daily tasks and evaluations by the school administration, requiring both physical and mental strength to cope with work demands, learners' needs, expectations, and stakeholders. Mental health is crucial for teachers, as it affects their entire being, including the learner. Anxiety has become a significant concern for teachers.

Chand and Marwaha (2023) define anxiety as a complex mood state that involves cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioral responses to threatening events. Moreover, pathological anxiety arises from overestimating perceived danger or erroneous appraisal, leading to inappropriate responses. Anxiety and perceived stress are influenced by workload, student behavior, and employment conditions. In addition to these factors, the lack of administrative assistance causes anxiety. Low job satisfaction increases burnout, anxiety, and depression. Reduced job satisfaction promotes depression, anxiety, and burnout. In addition to escalating anxiety, teachers' stress can also fuel resentment and burnout. Moreover, excessive levels of stress also contribute to excessive burnout (Agyapong et al., 2022). Aperribai et al. (2021) found that the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected teacher activities and put stress on their jobs, families, and social connections. The problem is made worse by elements such as screen time, technology, dealing with virtual pupils, and dealing with absent parents.

Teachers who have teaching anxiety may perform less well, experience occupational stress, or even lose their jobs. While it is impossible to eliminate classroom anxiety, it can be managed before it becomes crippling by being aware of its causes and consequences (Pasek, 2020). In Thailand, the Teacher Wellness Program was proposed to enhance teachers' personal and professional lives so they can handle the demands and difficulties of their daily responsibilities and provide a safe and supportive learning environment for their students (Ratanasiripong et al., 2021). Talindong and Toquero (2020) reported that teachers practiced virtual learning, communicated with the professional community, adhered to quarantine requirements, and engaged in worthwhile pursuits to deal with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the present study was to determine the state-trait anxiety levels of teachers and to recommend a management plan for a support system for teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The association between the anxiety levels of teacher responders to the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger, 1983) test was described using the descriptive-correlational technique of research.

2.2 Respondents to the Survey

All of the teachers in the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippine Pasay Chung Hua Academy were among the respondents. 41 of the 45 teachers who were surveyed completed the form. Three of the teachers hastily departed for China and were not found.

2.3 Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire was prepared which contains the respondents' demographic profile and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. The respondents' demographic profile included their names, ages, genders, lengths of service, and educational attainment.

The tool was utilized to determine the respondents' state and trait anxieties. Anxiety state evaluates how a respondent feels at the very moment on a four-point scale: (1) not at all, (2) somewhat, (3) moderately so, and (4) very much so. The trait anxiety determines how a respondent generally feels on a four-point scale: (1) almost never, (2) sometimes, (3) often, and (4) almost always.

The STAI is the definitive instrument used for adults. The test differentiates between the temporary conditions, which is the state anxiety. This may be triggered as a result of an incident, and the more general and permanent, trait anxiety, is considered as the attitude and outlook of an individual. The characteristics evaluated by the STAI (State Anxiety) scale are feelings of worry, apprehension, tension, and nervousness. When the stimulus to cause tension increases, the scores in the state anxiety also increase. When it is relaxed, the score decreases. This can be compared to kinetic energy in science. The STAI (Trait Anxiety), consistent with the trait anxiety construct, with depressed psychoneurotic individuals would have increased scores. This is compared to potential energy in science.

The STAI has two forms. Twenty (20) statements ask the respondent to describe how he/she feels at a particular given time. This is the A – State form. The next twenty (20) statements ask the respondent how he/she generally feels.

2.4 Validation of Instrument

Questions included in the survey instrument were evaluated for their validity and reliability.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the distribution of the survey questionnaires, permission of the school director was obtained. The survey questionnaires were sent through email. Accomplished questionnaires were submitted immediately.

2.6 Statistical Treatment

Data collected were statistically treated using the weighted mean, standard deviation, t-test for significant correlation, ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Table 3.1 shows the demographic profiles of the 41 teachers from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy. Their ages ranged from 22 to 71 years old, with a mean of 46.37 years (SD=13.10 years). With 17, (41.5%), the majority were between the ages of 50 and 59. There were 5 (or 12.2%) who were 60 years old. The majority of responses were females, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:6. Moreover, the length of service ranged from less than 5 years to more than or equal to 25 years, with a mean of 14.15 years (SD=10.14). The majority of respondents were either in the service for less than 10 years (19; 46.3%) or for more than or equal to 25 years (16; 39%). Finally, 31 (75.6%) held a college degree, 6 (14.6%) held a master's degree and 1 (2.4%) held a Ph.D. degree.

Table 3.1: Demographic Profiles of the Teacher-Respondents from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy

Variable	Frequency (N=41)	Percentage
Age (in years)		
20 – 29	8	19.5
30 – 39	4	9.8
40 – 49	7	17.1
50 – 59	17	41.5
≥60	5	12.2
Gender		
Male	6	14.6
Female	35	85.4
Length of Service (in years)		
0 – 4	11	26.8
5 – 9	8	19.5
10 – 14	3	7.3
15 – 19	0	0.0
20 – 24	3	7.3
≥25	16	39.0
Highest Education Attainment		
Elementary Graduate	1	2.4
College Degree	31	75.6
Master's Degree	6	14.6
Doctorate Degree	1	2.4
Technical Or Vocational	2	4.9

3.2 Respondents' Level of Anxiety

Table 3.2 presents the Level of A-State Anxiety and A-Trait Anxiety based on the responses of 41 teachers from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy. The weighted mean response range for A-State Anxiety ranged from 1.88 to 2.83, indicating "Somewhat" to "Moderately" responses (Table 3.2A). While in the A-Trait Anxiety, the weighted mean response ranged from 1.54 to 2.49, indicating "Not at all" to "Somewhat" responses (Table 3.2B). In the STAI scoring system, highlighted items indicate the reverse.

Table 3.3 also shows respondents' distribution based on their state and trait anxiety levels. State anxiety ranged from 22 to 74, with a mean of 44.61 (SD=13.19), while trait anxiety ranged from 21 to 69 years old, with a mean of 40.34 years (SD=11.40). The results suggest that respondents' state and trait anxiety levels are highest in the range of 41 - 50, 34.1% and 39.0%, respectively, indicating moderate anxiety in both state and trait anxiety.

Table 3.2: Level of A-State Anxiety and A-Trait Anxiety based on the responses of the Teacher-Respondents from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy

A. LEVEL OF A-STATE ANXIETY			
Items	\bar{x}	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes.	2.46	0.95	Somewhat
2. I feel secure	2.29	0.87	Somewhat
3. I feel calm	2.27	0.92	Somewhat
4. I feel upset	2.02	1.01	Somewhat
5. I feel at ease	2.27	0.90	Somewhat
6. I feel tense	1.95	0.97	Somewhat
7. I feel anxious	1.90	0.94	Somewhat
8. I feel satisfied	2.46	0.90	Somewhat
9. I feel inspired	2.10	0.94	Somewhat
10. I feel comfortable	2.22	0.91	Somewhat
11. I feel confident	2.20	0.84	Somewhat
12. I feel nervous	1.88	0.90	Somewhat
13. I feel pleasant	2.20	0.93	Somewhat
14. I feel relaxed	2.44	0.98	Somewhat
15. I feel uncertain	2.00	0.89	Somewhat
16. I feel concerned	2.83	0.97	Moderately
17. I feel worried	2.17	1.02	Somewhat
18. I feel confused	2.17	1.12	Somewhat
19. I feel steady	2.46	0.87	Somewhat
20. I feel firm	2.32	0.79	Somewhat
B. LEVEL OF A-TRAIT ANXIETY			
Items	\bar{x}	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel nervous and restless	1.71	0.87	Somewhat
2. I feel satisfied with self	2.17	1.02	Somewhat
3. I feel pleasant	1.95	0.89	Somewhat
4. I feel rested	2.44	0.81	Somewhat

5. I feel “calm, cool, and collected”	2.20	0.95	Somewhat
6. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be	2.46	1.02	Somewhat
7. I feel that difficulties are piling up so I cannot overcome them	1.93	0.82	Somewhat
8. I am worrying too much over something that really doesn’t matter	1.85	0.85	Somewhat
9. I am happy.	1.85	0.85	Somewhat
10. I am contented.	1.90	0.97	Somewhat
11. I have disturbed thoughts	1.95	0.97	Somewhat
12. I lack confidence	1.73	0.78	Not at all
13. I feel adequate	2.22	0.88	Somewhat
14. I feel firm.	2.17	0.86	Somewhat
15. I feel like a failure	1.54	0.90	Not at all
16. I make decisions easily	2.49	0.90	Somewhat
17. Some unimportant thoughts run through my mind and bother me.	1.93	1.01	Somewhat
18. I take disappointments so early and I can’t put them out of my mind.	1.76	0.77	Somewhat
19. I get in a state of tension or confusion, and I think of recent concerns and interest	2.00	0.81	Somewhat
20. I am a steady person	2.10	0.94	Somewhat
Note: Not at all (1.00 – 1.75); Somewhat (1.76 – 2.50); Moderately (2.51 – 3.25); Very Much (3.26 – 4.00)			

Table 3.3: Respondents' Distribution Based on the Teacher-Respondents State and Trait Anxiety Levels

Range Level	A-State Anxiety				A-Trait Anxiety			
	\bar{X}	SD	Frequency (n=41)	Percentage	\bar{X}	SD	Frequency (n=41)	Percentage
20 – 30	44.61	13.19	7	17.1	40.34	11.40	11	26.8
31 – 40			9	22.0			7	17.1
41 – 50			14	34.1			16	39.0
51 – 60			7	17.1			6	14.6
61 – 70			0	0			1	2.4
71 – 80			4	9.8			0	0

3.3. Level of Anxiety in the Demographic Profile of Respondents in Terms of A-State and A-Trait

Based on demographic information, Table 3.4 compares the state and trait anxiety scores of 41 teachers from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy. All p-values greater than 0.05 suggested that there was no significant difference in the state and trait anxiety levels based on gender, civil status, length of service, and highest educational attainment. This implies that the state and trait anxiety score is equivalent across the various demographic characteristics presented in the table. However, in accordance with age, the respondents' state anxiety score shows no significant differences, however, the trait anxiety score reveals a significant difference. This may have been due to the respondents' trait anxiety scores being greater between the ages of 20 and 29 and decreasing between the ages of 30 and 39 and 40 and 49 before increasing between the ages of 50 and 59. Pairwise comparisons, as shown in Table 3.5, revealed that respondents aged 20 to 29 had significantly higher trait anxiety levels than those aged 30 to 39 and 40 to 49, as indicated by p-values of 0.05 and 0.005, respectively. Similarly, p-values of 0.02 indicated a significant difference in

the anxiety level of respondents aged 40-49 years and 50-59 years.

3.4 Relationship Between Teachers' Anxiety Levels and Their Responses in Terms of A-state and A-Trait

According to the Pearson correlation analysis, there was a significant correlation, as indicated by the p-value of 0.001. A moderately positive correlation ($r=0.449$) was identified. This suggests that as state anxiety levels rise, trait anxiety levels rise as well, and vice versa. This was supported by the scattering of points in Figure 3.1 following a straight line that moves upward. Teachers may experience anxiety as a result of a variety of reasons relating to their profession. Their anxiety can be influenced by both state anxiety and trait anxiety (MacIntyre, 2017). State anxiety is a transient and situational anxiety reaction, whereas trait anxiety is a more consistent tendency to experience anxiety in a variety of settings (Wu et al., 2020).

Table 3.4: Comparison of the State Anxiety Scores According to the Different Demographic Profiles of the Teacher-Respondents

Variable	A. State Anxiety		B. Trait Anxiety	
	Score Mean \pm SD	p-value	Score Mean \pm SD	p-value
Age (in years)				
20 – 29	44.00 \pm 9.50	0.94 [†]	47.50 \pm 10.62	0.03 [†]
30 – 39	41.25 \pm 22.53		33.25 \pm 10.99	
40 – 49	42.43 \pm 16.13		31.29 \pm 8.96	
50 – 59	46.18 \pm 12.25		42.41 \pm 10.52	
≥ 60	46.00 \pm 13.29		40.20 \pm 11.52	
Gender				
Male	49.83 \pm 19.86	0.30 [‡]	45.83 \pm 15.66	0.20 [‡]
Female	43.71 \pm 11.87		39.40 \pm 15.66	
Civil Status				
Single	46.07 \pm 13.36	0.95 [†]	39.80 \pm 12.02 (39)	0.61 [†]
Married	43.65 \pm 14.35		40.15 \pm 11.46 (42)	
Separated	47.00 \pm 0.00		54.00 \pm 0.00 (54)	
widowed	43.60 \pm 10.99		40.00 \pm 11.00 (44)	
Length of Service (in years)				
0 – 4	45.27 \pm 14.02	0.29 [†]	44.82 \pm 10.64	0.15 [†]
5 – 9	38.50 \pm 9.68		36.88 \pm 10.64	
10 – 14	44.00 \pm 25.53		28.00 \pm 8.89	
20 – 24	58.33 \pm 13.58		36.33 \pm 13.65	
≥ 25	44.75 \pm 10.94		42.06 \pm 11.17	
Highest Education Attainment				
Elementary graduate	35.00 \pm 0.00 (35)	0.46 [§]	58.00 \pm 0.00 (58)	0.35 [§]
College degree	46.00 \pm 14.36 (45)		40.10 \pm 11.93 (42)	
Master's degree	38.50 \pm 8.02 (36.5)		37.17 \pm 9.35 (36)	
Doctorate degree	39.00 \pm 0.00 (39)		36.00 \pm 0.00 (36)	
Technical or vocational	49.00 \pm 0.00 (49)		47.00 \pm 2.83 (47)	

* $p > 0.05$ - Not significant; $p \leq 0.05$ - Significant
[†] ANOVA; [‡] T-test; [§] Kruskal Wallis Test
 Values in parenthesis are medians

Table 3.5: Pairwise Comparisons of the State Anxiety Scores According to the Different Age Ranges of the Teacher-Respondents

AGE (in years)	p-value
20 – 29 vs 30 – 39	0.03
20 – 29 vs 40 – 49	0.005
20 – 29 vs 50 – 59	0.26
20 – 29 vs ≥60	0.23
30 – 39 vs 40 – 49	0.77
30 – 39 vs 50 – 59	0.12
30 – 39 vs ≥60	0.33
40 – 49 vs 50 – 59	0.02
40 – 49 vs ≥60	0.15
50 – 59 vs ≥60	0.68

* $p > 0.05$ - Not significant; $p \leq 0.05$ -Significant
Least Significant Difference (LSD) Test

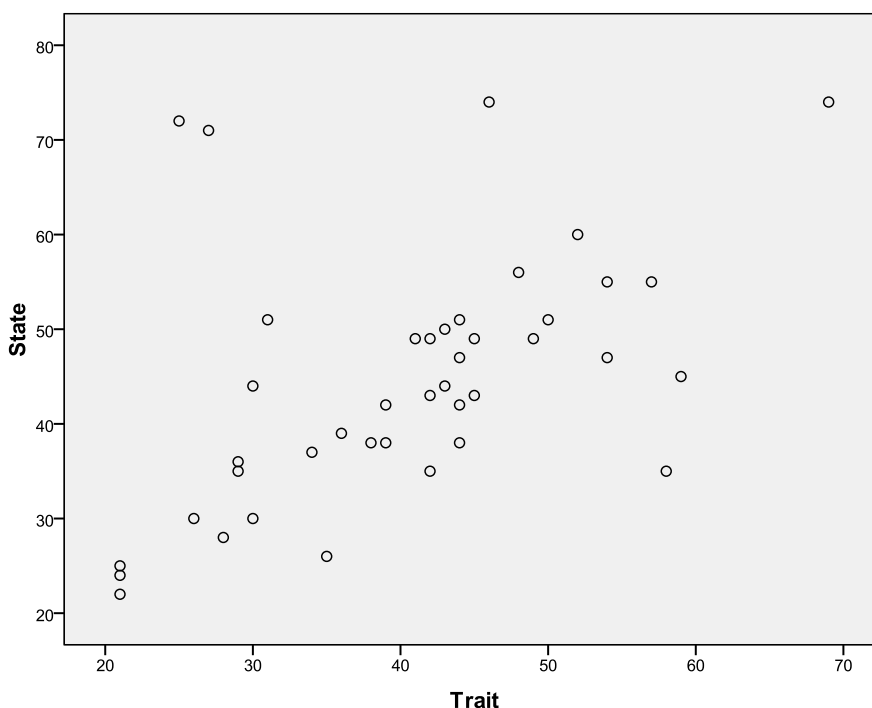


Figure 3.1: Scatterplot Diagram for the Relationship between the State and Trait Anxiety Scores

Teachers may experience state anxiety in response to certain events or circumstances in their teaching environment. Teachers, for example, may suffer state anxiety before significant assessments, parent-teacher conferences, or while dealing with difficult classroom conditions

(Guimond et al., 2015). State anxiety can impair their capacity to concentrate, make judgments, and engage with students successfully. Teachers must learn coping mechanisms to manage and reduce state anxiety, such as relaxation techniques, time management tactics, and requesting assistance from colleagues or mentors (Onieva-Zafra et al, 2020). On the other hand, trait anxiety is a more general tendency to be anxious in a variety of settings. Teachers who have high levels of trait anxiety may be more prone to anxiety in several elements of their teaching role (Zeidner, 2014). This could involve being concerned about their performance, expecting obstacles, or feeling overwhelmed by their job. Teachers who have high trait anxiety may benefit from therapies that emphasize resilience, self-efficacy, and stress management skills. Regular self-care activities, professional support, and practicing mindfulness or cognitive-behavioral approaches can all help with trait anxiety (Rudaz et al, 2017; Rice & Williams, 2022).

Both state and trait anxiety may negatively impact teacher well-being and performance. Chronic anxiety can cause stress, burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and diminished teaching effectiveness (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Classroom dynamics, student-teacher relationships, and instructional quality can all be affected by anxiety. Teachers must learn practices and cope with anxiety, as well as build a supportive school atmosphere, engage in self-care practices, and pursue professional development opportunities that address stress management and emotional well-being (Dye et al., 2020).

Understanding the connection between state anxiety, trait anxiety, and teachers' experiences is critical for supporting their mental health and fostering a conducive learning environment. Educational stakeholders may help teachers thrive professionally and enhance student success by recognizing and treating anxiety-related difficulties.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, teachers-respondents from the English and Chinese Departments of the Philippines Pasay Chung Hua Academy where most of the respondents belong to the 50-59 years of age range, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:6. Range of service ranged from less than 5 years to more than or equal to 25 years. The majority of the respondents were either <10 years or has been in service for more than or equal to 25 years. The majority were college degree holders with 31 respondents. Results also show that teachers-respondents have a moderate anxiety level.

There were no significant differences in A-state anxiety levels based on age, gender, length of service, or highest educational attainment. Except for age, a similar finding was observed for A-trait, where it has a significant difference. The trait anxiety levels were greater in respondents aged 20 to 29, then decreased in those aged 30 to 39, 40 to 49, then increased in those aged 50 to 59.

Moreover, there was a significant correlation noted between the anxiety levels of the teachers with their responses in terms of A-state and A-trait. This means that as state anxiety scores increase, the trait anxiety scores also increase and vice versa.

The findings of this study reveal significant implications to managers on the prevention of stress and anxiety which may be remedied in such programs as cooperative, group, and team-building activities, leadership-followership workshops and seminars, increased teacher involvement, and awards system. Table 4.1 is a proposed management plan that school administrators may adopt to minimize anxiety among teachers.

It is recommended that educational institutions, particularly instructors, foster a healthy environment among their staff through seminars, outreach, team building, and training programs. Because of their stressful jobs, school administrators must be able to establish environments that allow teachers to rest. In addition, school administrators must be able to foster a welcoming work environment and a supportive community in which they may feel like a family and be themselves while remaining professionals.

Table 4.1: Proposed Management Plan for a Teacher’s Mental Health Support System for one (1) School Year

Project	Objectives/ targets	Strategies/ activities	Time frame	Persons responsible	Resources/ budget	Expected outcome
Staff Development	Capability building of all teachers in every department	Involvement and orientation of all teachers in all departments	July	Guidance Counselor English, Chinese, and Kindergarten supervisors	Treasury Department	100 % participation to target
Management Support	Discuss the anxiety program the school prepares	Coordinate with all department heads and teachers on the program prepared	August	Director and Asst. Director	Chinese Research Center	Complete the program laid out and explained
	Map out potential causes of anxieties of teachers	Identification of potential causes of teacher anxieties	August-September	English, Chinese, and Kindergarten supervisors, subject coordinators	Treasury Department	List of potential causes of teacher anxieties
	Map out ways in how anxieties may be minimized	Identification of ways on how teacher anxiety may be minimized	August-March	English, Chinese, and Kindergarten Supervisors, subject coordinators	Treasury Department	Teacher collaboration and mentoring of ways to minimize anxiety
	Create a grievance committee/ support group	Organize school grievance committee to address teacher anxiety issues	September	Guidance Counselor, school disciplinarian	Faculty Fund	Organized grievance committee or support group
	Establish an out-of-school activity	Form teams/groups to be in charge of committees	December	Co and Extra-curricular activity coordinator and subject coordinators	Filipino-Chinese Federation	Participation in out-of-school activity as a stress reliever (team building and leadership

						activity)
	Constant monitoring of teacher anxiety	Update/evaluation of teacher complaints/concerns/challenges	August-April	Subject coordinator, English, Chinese and kindergarten supervisors	Treasury Department	Updated report and evaluation of teachers who experience anxiety
	Develop the well-being of teachers socially, emotionally, and physically	Conduct a bi-monthly aerobic/ Zumba session or sports events	August-March	High School P.E teachers	Treasury Department	Developed the well-being of teachers including the spirit of camaraderie
	Give recognition and award to teachers for their service and performance	Organize a recognition/ appreciation and award ceremonies	March/April	Director, Asst. Director and English, Chinese, and Kindergarten Supervisors	Filipino-Chinese Federation	Teacher appreciation for the recognition given

Moreover, teachers want to feel valued and acknowledged; so, a rewards and appreciation program should be implemented. School administrators must be able to recognize and reward great instructors. Furthermore, teachers thrive when they have mentors and can collaborate with one another; therefore, a mentoring and feedback program must be established. To reach out to and develop teachers who need it the most, school leaders should start a mentoring program that fosters diversity.

Lastly, teachers thrive when they have positive relationships with their coworkers and maintain a work-life balance; consequently, a personal and professional development program tailored to their lifestyle should be developed. School administrators should implement a holistic development program that addresses teachers' physical, emotional, spiritual, and professional well-being. Administrators must be able to recognize and reward great instructors.

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