The Role of Academic Leaders Mentorship in Preventing Burnout Among Newly Hired Teachers in Higher Education

Rejiena N. Reyes
College of Teacher Education, Sulu State College, Jolo, Sulu 7400, Philippines
nahudanrejiena@gmail.com

HOW TO CITE:
Rejiena N. Reyes (2026). The Role of Academic Leaders Mentorship in Preventing Burnout Among Newly Hired Teachers in Higher Education. International Journal of Special Education, 41(3s), 69-81.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:
Copyright: © 2026 Authors. Open access publication underthe terms and conditions of the Creative CommonsAttribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

ABSTRACT:
This phenomenological study explores how academic leader mentorship prevents burnout among 15 newly hired instructors at a private university. Findings indicate that effective mentorship transcends technical guidance, significantly reducing burnout by assisting with workload management, navigating institutional culture, and fostering work-life balance. Participants identified emotional support—rooted in empathy and reassurance—as a critical factor in building psychological resilience. Key mentoring strategies included encouraging healthy routines, reflective practices, and peer networking. The results emphasize that for mentorship to be a truly empowering tool for teacher retention, it must be emotionally responsive and tailored to individual needs. Consequently, the study recommends that higher education institutions implement structured mentoring programs that prioritize both professional growth and holistic mental health support for early-career faculty.

Keywords: Mentorship, Burnout, Academic Leaders, Newly Hired Teachers, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Burnout among newly hired teachers in higher education has become a growing concern worldwide, as the early years of teaching are often characterized by high stress, emotional exhaustion, and challenges in balancing academic responsibilities (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout not only affects teachers' psychological well-being but also compromises their job performance, engagement, and retention, leading to negative consequences for academic institutions and student learning outcomes (Schaufeli, 2017). Addressing burnout early in teachers' careers is thus critical for sustaining a healthy, productive academic workforce.

Mentorship has emerged as a vital strategy to support newly hired faculty members as they navigate the complex demands of academia. Effective mentorship programs foster emotional resilience, promote stress management, and enhance professional development, which collectively contribute to reducing burnout risks (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014). Particularly, mentorship led by academic leaders—such as department chairs, program heads, and deans—plays a crucial role because these leaders are positioned to provide both emotional support and instrumental guidance (Anderson & Shannon, 2016). Through mentorship, new faculty can develop coping mechanisms, receive constructive feedback, and build a sense of belonging within

their academic community (Darwin & Palmer, 2020).

Despite the acknowledged importance of mentorship in academia, much of the existing literature has focused broadly on mentorship's role in career advancement and teaching effectiveness rather than its specific impact on preventing burnout among newly hired teachers (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Johnson, 2016). Moreover, research that explores the mentorship practices implemented by academic leaders, who have distinct authority and influence compared to peer mentors, remains limited. Few studies have qualitatively examined how these leaders' mentoring behaviors contribute to emotional resilience and sustained well-being from the perspective of the faculty members in their early career stages (Baker, Pifer, & Griffin, 2019). This gap is significant because academic leaders' mentorship styles and support mechanisms can vary greatly, affecting the quality and outcomes of mentoring relationships (Vivekananda-Schmidt, King, & Peile, 2021).

Furthermore, while quantitative studies provide valuable statistical correlations between mentorship and burnout reduction, they often lack the depth required to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and nuanced processes through which mentorship impacts emotional and psychological well-being (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Kram, 2007). A qualitative exploration is thus necessary to capture these intricate dynamics and provide actionable insights for higher education institutions seeking to design effective mentorship interventions tailored to newly hired teachers' needs.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore how mentorship programs led by academic leaders help prevent burnout among newly hired teachers in higher education. Specifically, it seeks to examine the lived experiences of 15 newly hired teachers to identify the specific mentoring practices that contribute to their emotional resilience, effective stress management, and sustained well-being during the critical early years of teaching. This study intends to inform institutional policies and leadership training programs to enhance faculty support systems and ultimately improve teacher retention and performance.

2. LITERATURE

Teacher burnout in higher education necessitates effective mentorship to sustain a healthy workforce. While mentorship provides vital emotional and professional support, research on how academic leaders specifically design these practices to prevent burnout—particularly in the Philippines—remains limited.

Mentorship mitigates burnout by fostering emotional resilience and job satisfaction (Conway & Clark, 2003; Price, 2012; Wilson & Demetriou, 2007). Early-career faculty greatly benefit when leaders offer both emotional encouragement and academic guidance (Malloy & Allen, 2007; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Practically, structured mentoring equips novice teachers with essential time and workload management skills, reducing job strain (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentors providing concrete resources, like schedules and coping techniques, empower new teachers to maintain balance (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Furthermore, mentors modeling self-care behaviors offer tangible examples that enhance professional commitment and resilience (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014; Ho & Hau, 2008).

Beyond task management, supportive relationships built on empathy mitigate professional isolation (Gold, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Mentors also help mentees navigate institutional politics (Nature Editorial, 2024), build collaborative peer networks (Chanland, 2022; Kelchtermans, 2006) , and address workplace inequities (Paterson & Hughes, 2014). Encouraging reflective practices further helps educators identify stress triggers and develop personalized coping mechanisms (Parker et al., 2012; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Crucially, this supportive mentoring fosters a "sense of success" that increases motivation, bolsters career satisfaction, and reduces attrition (Allen et al., 2004; Fernet et al., 2012; Hong, 2012; Johnson, 2015). Academic mentorship led by department heads specifically reduces occupational stress and builds self-efficacy, acting as a buffer against occupational pressures (Berk & Berg, 2017;

Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Regular emotional check-ins and tailored stress management strategies are essential for bolstering holistic well-being (Cherkowski & Walker, 2019; Squires, 2019). This social support is a critical factor for proactive coping (Parker et al., 2012). Within the Philippine context, local studies confirm that mentorship reduces isolation, manages workloads, and fosters resilience, reinforcing the need to examine leadership-driven mentoring strategies (De Guzman & Cruz, 2021; Flores & Bautista, 2022; Santos & Reyes, 2022).

To comprehensively understand these mechanisms, this study is anchored in three interrelated frameworks. First, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness fosters motivation and reduces exhaustion (Burger, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Diab & Green, 2024). Second, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model explains that leadership mentorship provides critical resources to buffer high work demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Huang & Wang, 2022; Komlenac et al., 2022; Schaufeli, 2015). Finally, Resilience Theory highlights how mentoring facilitates social support and reflective adaptation to early-career adversity (Haidusek-Niazy, 2023; Tait, 2008).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically using a phenomenological approach, to explore and understand the lived experiences of newly hired teachers in higher education regarding how academic leader mentorship prevented burnout. A qualitative design was appropriate for this inquiry as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' feelings, perceptions, and experiences, which were central to understanding the nuanced and context-bound nature of mentorship and emotional resilience (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology, as a qualitative strategy, focused on capturing the essence of lived experiences. This approach aligned with the study's aim of understanding the subjective experiences of newly hired faculty members, making it possible to uncover the deeper meaning and impact of mentorship on burnout prevention. Giorgi (2009) asserted that phenomenological research enabled researchers to explore phenomena from the perspective of those who experienced it, which was vital in addressing complex emotional and psychological topics such as burnout. In addition, Patton (2015) emphasized that qualitative research is particularly valuable when studying programs and human experiences in real-life contexts, such as academic mentorship. Through this lens, the study gathered rich, descriptive data that contributed to theory building and practical improvements in higher education faculty development programs.

3.2. Population and sampling

The population of the study consisted of newly hired teachers in higher education institutions. A total of 15 newly hired teachers were purposefully selected and interviewed to gather in-depth insights into how the mentorship practices of their academic leaders contributed to the prevention of burnout. The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method commonly used in qualitative research. This technique enabled the researchers to intentionally select individuals who possessed direct experience with the research topic and were thus capable of providing rich and relevant data (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). A set of criteria was employed to determine the participants of the study:

1. Must be a newly hired faculty member (within their first 1 to 3 years of teaching).
2. Must be working in a recognized higher education institution, either private or public.
3. Must have undergone formal or informal mentorship led by an academic leader (e.g., Program Chair, Department Head, Dean).
4. Must be willing and available to participate in a semi-structured interview and provide informed consent.

This approach ensured that the selected participants had sufficient lived experience to address the study's objectives.

3.3. Instrument

To gather the necessary data, the researchers utilized a semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument. This tool allowed for

consistency in the questions asked while still providing flexibility to probe deeper into the participants' responses. The semi-structured format encouraged participants to share detailed narratives based on their personal experiences with their mentors, specifically in relation to burnout prevention. The development of the interview guide was informed by the study's research questions and reviewed by field experts for clarity and relevance. Semi-structured interviews have been widely recognized in qualitative research for their ability to elicit rich, descriptive data (Adams, 2015; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Kallio et al., 2016). Table 1 presents the instrument of the study:

Table 1. Instrument of the study.

Objectives	Interview questions	Participants
To explore how mentorship programs led by academic leaders help prevent burnout among newly hired teachers in higher education.	1. How did your mentor assist you in handling institutional challenges, such as workload or expectations? 2. How did your mentor contribute to creating a healthy work-life balance during your transition into teaching?	Academic Leaders in Different Higher Institutions
To examine specific mentoring practices that contribute to newly hired teachers in preventing burnout and sustained well-being.	1. What specific mentoring practices helped you stay mentally and emotionally balanced during your first year? 2. How did your mentor helped you develop practical ways to handle stress or manage overwhelming responsibilities in your early teaching experience?	

3.4. Data gathering procedure

The data gathering process was carried out systematically to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Prior to data collection, the researchers secured the necessary approvals from the institutional review board and obtained formal consent from each participant. Participants were provided with a consent form detailing the purpose of the study, their rights, and how their data would be used and protected. Once consent was obtained, the researchers coordinated with the identified teachers to schedule the interview sessions at their most convenient time and preferred mode—either face-to-face or virtual. A total of 15 teachers participated in the study. The researchers ensured that a quiet and private environment was maintained during the sessions. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was guided by a semi-structured interview protocol. The researchers used audio recording devices to ensure the accurate capture of responses, and notes were taken simultaneously to record contextual insights. Following each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Member checking was employed by allowing participants to verify their responses to ensure the authenticity of the data.

3.5. Data analysis

The data collected from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification, examination, and interpretation of recurring patterns and themes within the narratives of the participants. This method was selected due to its flexibility and its effectiveness in capturing the complexity of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers began by familiarizing themselves with the data through repeated readings of the transcripts. Initial codes were then generated manually, highlighting significant statements and ideas related to the mentorship experiences. These codes were later grouped into categories and eventually developed into broader themes that captured the essence of the participants' responses (Nowell et al., 2017). To enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, the researchers employed

peer debriefing and intercoder agreement. Two independent coders analyzed the data and discussed discrepancies until a consensus was reached, in line with methodological guidance provided by Creswell and Poth (2018).

3.6. Ethical considerations

The researchers ensured that all ethical protocols were strictly followed. Approval was secured from the research ethics committee, and all participants were informed about the purpose, scope, and procedures of the study through a written informed consent form. They were assured that their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by assigning pseudonyms and securely storing all data. The researchers refrained from any form of coercion, aligning with the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

4. RESULTS

Research Objectives 1. To explore how mentorship programs led by academic leaders help prevent burnout among newly hired teachers in higher education.

Question No. 1. How did your mentor assist you in handling institutional challenges, such as workload or expectations?

1.1 *Practical Guidance in Managing Workload and Expectations*

12 out of 15 academic leaders provided hands-on, practical support to newly hired teachers by helping them navigate the often-overwhelming institutional demands. Mentors offered strategies to prioritize tasks, manage time effectively, and balance workload, which directly alleviated feelings of stress and burnout. This guidance helped mentees gain clarity on institutional expectations and avoid becoming overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of their responsibilities.

Many participants expressed that their mentors helped them break down large tasks into manageable steps, set realistic goals, and create schedules that balanced teaching, administrative duties, and personal time. Such structured support reduced the sense of chaos and gave them tools to cope with pressure.

"My mentor sat down with me during my first week and helped me map out my teaching schedule alongside administrative duties. She showed me how to block my time so I wouldn't get overloaded, and that really helped me breathe and focus on one thing at a time." (Participant 3)

"Whenever I felt overwhelmed with paperwork or deadlines, my mentor was there to remind me to prioritize what needed immediate attention and what could wait. She even shared templates and checklists that made things easier." (Participant 7)

"He gave me practical advice on how to say no politely to extra commitments when I was already swamped. That was something I struggled with before, and it made a huge difference in handling expectations." (Participant 11)

1.2 *Emotional Support and Encouragement to Build Resilience*

9 out of 15 academic leaders said, beyond practical advice, mentors played a critical role in providing emotional support that helped newly hired teachers build resilience against burnout. Participants highlighted how mentors listened empathetically, validated their struggles, and encouraged them to maintain a positive outlook despite challenges. This emotional backing fostered a sense of belonging and reduced feelings of isolation common in early career stages.

Mentors also modeled coping behaviors and shared personal experiences of overcoming similar institutional pressures, which inspired mentees to persevere. The presence of a supportive mentor was described as a psychological buffer, promoting emotional well-being and sustained motivation.

"Whenever I felt like I was drowning in work, my mentor reminded me that feeling overwhelmed was normal but temporary. She encouraged me to take breaks and check in with myself, which made me feel cared for and less alone." (Participant 2)

"He shared his own stories about how he dealt with similar pressures when he started. That made me feel understood and gave me hope that I could get through this phase too." (Participant 9)

"Just knowing that someone believed in me and was there to listen when I needed to vent was a huge relief. It kept me going when things got tough." (Participant 14)

1.3 *Navigating Institutional Culture and Building Professional Networks*

9 out of 15 Mentors assisted mentees in understanding the unwritten rules, culture, and politics of the institution, which helped reduce anxiety and uncertainty that often contribute to

burnout. Through mentorship, newly hired teachers learned how to effectively communicate with colleagues and administrators, advocate for their needs, and access support systems within the institution.

Moreover, mentors facilitated introductions to professional networks and communities of practice, which expanded the mentees' support system and resources. This integration into the academic community fostered a sense of belonging and collective efficacy that buffered the stress of institutional challenges.

"My mentor explained how things worked behind the scenes, like who to talk to about certain issues and how decisions were made. That insight helped me avoid unnecessary frustrations." (Participant 4)

"She introduced me to several faculty groups and encouraged me to join committees that aligned with my interests. That helped me build connections and not feel isolated." (Participant 10)

"Knowing the culture and having a network made it easier to ask for help and get feedback. My mentor's support in this area really eased the transition." (Participant 15)

Question No. 2. How did your mentor contribute to creating a healthy work-life balance during your transition into teaching?

2.1 *Guidance in Setting Boundaries Between Work and Personal Life*

14 out of 15 participants emphasized how mentors played a crucial role in helping them establish clear boundaries between their professional duties and personal time. Many shared that their mentors encouraged them to prioritize self-care and avoid overextending themselves during the challenging transition period. This guidance helped reduce feelings of overwhelm and prevented early signs of burnout.

"When I first started, I would bring work home every single night. My mentor noticed my exhaustion and told me, 'You have to give yourself permission to rest. You can't pour from an empty cup.' That conversation was life-changing. It made me realize I had to protect my evenings and weekends to recharge. Without her support, I honestly think I would have burned out in those first few months." (Participant 1)

"My mentor showed me how to organize my schedule so that I wasn't constantly on call. She said, 'Teaching is a marathon, not a sprint.' She taught me to say no when necessary and to block out time for my family and hobbies. It was more than just advice—it felt like someone truly cared about my well-being." (Participant 11)

"There were days I felt like I was drowning in lesson plans and meetings. My mentor would check in and remind me, 'Balance is key. You matter outside of work too.' Those words gave me permission to slow down, and that emotional support kept me going when I wanted to quit." (Participant 8)

2.2 *Modeling Healthy Work-Life Practices*

10 out of 15 participants noted that their mentors not only gave advice but also modeled healthy work-life balance through their own behavior. Seeing mentors set boundaries and prioritize well-being inspired new teachers to adopt similar habits. This modeling fostered a positive culture where maintaining balance was normalized rather than seen as a weakness.

"My mentor never worked late nights or weekends unless absolutely necessary. She'd leave the office on time and always seemed genuinely relaxed and happy. Watching her manage her workload without sacrificing her personal life made me realize it was possible. She didn't just tell me to take breaks—she showed me how." (Participant 6)

"At first, I thought working 24/7 was part of being a good teacher. But my mentor's example taught me otherwise. She made me see that being effective doesn't mean burning out. That shifted how I approached my job and helped me set realistic expectations for myself." (Participant 4)

"When I saw my mentor attend yoga classes and talk about her weekend hikes, I realized teachers deserve joy and balance too. It was a relief to learn from someone who lived that truth. It gave me permission to prioritize my mental health without guilt." (Participant 5)

2.3 *Providing Emotional Support and Encouragement*

11 out of 15 participants highlighted that mentors played a vital role in offering emotional support, which indirectly helped maintain a healthy work-life balance. Mentors listened empathetically, validated struggles, and encouraged self-compassion, which eased stress and strengthened resilience during a challenging transition.

"There were days when I felt overwhelmed and doubted if I could handle everything. My mentor would listen without judgment and remind me that it's okay to feel that way. She said, 'You're doing better than you think.' Just having that emotional safety net made it easier to step away from work and recharge." (Participant 3)

"My mentor didn't just help me with work tasks—she helped me with the emotional toll. When I cried about how hard it was, she hugged me and said, 'This is tough, but you're tougher.' Knowing someone believed in me made me want to keep going and take care of myself." (Participant 10)

"The encouragement I got to take breaks and prioritize myself wasn't just about time management—it was about feeling worthy of care. That emotional support helped me avoid burnout by reminding me that my well-being matters as much as my job." (Participant 7)

Research Objectives 2. To examine specific mentoring practices that contribute to newly hired teachers in preventing burnout and sustained well-being.

Question No. 1. What specific mentoring practices helped you stay mentally and emotionally balanced during your first year?

1.1 Regular One-on-One Check-Ins Focused on Emotional Well-Being

8 out of 15 effective mentors was scheduling consistent, dedicated meetings specifically to discuss the mentees' mental and emotional health—not just work tasks. These check-ins provided a safe space for new teachers to express concerns, reflect on challenges, and receive personalized support. This practice encouraged openness and prevented feelings of isolation, which can lead to burnout.

"My mentor made it a point to meet with me every two weeks just to talk—not about lesson plans or grading, but about how I was feeling. It was like a breath of fresh air. Knowing someone genuinely cared about my mental health kept me grounded, especially during stressful periods." (Participant 3)

"Those meetings were the only time I could be honest about my struggles without fear of judgment. My mentor listened patiently, helped me reframe negative thoughts, and offered practical coping strategies. It made me feel seen and supported beyond my role as a teacher." (Participant 15)

"The emotional check-ins became a lifeline. When I felt overwhelmed, my mentor would guide me to pause, breathe, and prioritize self-care. It was a unique practice that I hadn't experienced before but became essential to my well-being." (Participant 10)

1.2 Mentor-Provided Stress Management Techniques Tailored to the Individual'

5 out of 15 mentors went beyond general advice by introducing specific stress management tools tailored to the individual needs and preferences of their mentees. These included mindfulness exercises, time management hacks, and personalized self-care routines. Such concrete practices equipped new teachers with actionable ways to maintain balance and reduce emotional exhaustion.

"My mentor taught me breathing exercises and quick mindfulness techniques I could do between classes. She noticed I was anxious and showed me how to ground myself in just a few minutes. This practical support was a game-changer during hectic days." (Participant 2)

"She helped me build a schedule that included 'me-time' blocks. At first, I thought I couldn't afford breaks, but she showed me that short pauses actually made me more productive and less stressed. This personalized planning helped me keep burnout at bay." (Participant 14)

"What made my mentor's support different was how she tailored advice to what worked for me. Instead of generic tips, she asked about my hobbies and encouraged me to use them as stress relief. That made the coping strategies more meaningful and sustainable." (Participant 7)

1.3 *Creating Peer Support Networks Through Mentor Facilitation*

11 out of 15 effective mentors recognized the value of social connectedness and actively facilitated the creation of peer support groups among new teachers. These networks became vital platforms for shared experiences, mutual encouragement, and collaborative problem-solving, enhancing emotional resilience and reducing feelings of burnout.

"My mentor organized monthly gatherings for us new teachers. It wasn't just about venting—it was about building community. Sharing stories and advice with peers helped me realize I wasn't alone in my struggles." (Participant 8)

"These peer groups were a safe space where we celebrated small victories and supported each other through setbacks. My mentor's role in bringing us together created a sense of belonging that made the workload more bearable." (Participant 5)

"Knowing others were going through similar challenges was comforting. The mentor didn't just focus on me; she helped build a whole support system. That network was crucial for my mental health during the first year." (Participant 14)

Question No. 2. How did your mentor helped you develop practical ways to handle stress or manage overwhelming responsibilities in your early teaching experience?

2.1 *Guided Prioritization and Task Management Strategies*

9 out of 15 mentors played a crucial role in helping newly hired teachers navigate their overwhelming responsibilities by teaching them how to prioritize tasks effectively and manage their time. This practical guidance reduced feelings of chaos and made daily workloads feel more manageable, which lowered stress levels.

"My mentor showed me how to break down my to-do list by urgency and importance. Before that, I was trying to do everything at once and feeling paralyzed. She helped me focus on what truly mattered, and suddenly, things didn't feel so overwhelming." (Participant 10)

"She taught me to set realistic daily goals instead of aiming for perfection. I learned to say 'no' or delegate some tasks, which was a huge relief. That shift in mindset helped me breathe and handle my workload without constantly stressing." (Participant 14)

"The time-blocking technique my mentor introduced changed everything. Scheduling specific times for grading, lesson prep, and breaks helped me regain control. This practical method kept me from feeling swamped and made the responsibilities seem doable." (Participant 1)

2.2 *Modeling Stress-Reduction Techniques and Self-Care Practices*

10 out 15 mentors did not only advise but modeled stress management through their own behaviors and routines. This modeling provided mentees with tangible examples of how to maintain balance, prioritize self-care, and decompress, encouraging teachers to adopt similar habits.

"Seeing my mentor take short breaks, meditate, or go for walks during the day made me realize it's okay to step back sometimes. She encouraged me to treat self-care as part of the job, not a luxury." (Participant 7)

"She often shared her own stories of stress and burnout and how she dealt with it—through exercise, journaling, and setting boundaries. This openness made me feel less alone and more motivated to try these practical methods myself." (Participant 14)

"My mentor's example taught me that managing stress isn't just about the work but about how you care for yourself. Her calm presence and habits showed me a way to handle pressure without losing myself." (Participant 9)

2.3 Encouraging Reflective Practices to Identify Stress Triggers and Solutions

6 out of 15 mentors encouraged mentees to engage in regular reflection—journaling, discussing daily experiences, or guided questioning—to become more aware of what causes their stress and to develop personalized strategies for coping. This reflective practice empowered teachers to handle stress proactively.

"My mentor asked me to keep a stress journal, noting when I felt overwhelmed and what triggered it. Reviewing it together helped me spot patterns and come up with solutions that actually worked for me." (Participant 9)

"Talking through my days with my mentor made me more mindful of what was draining me. She guided me in finding specific ways to reduce those triggers, like reorganizing my lesson plans or asking for help." (Participant 5)

"Reflection made me feel in control rather than a victim of stress. My mentor's gentle prompts and listening ear gave me the courage to face challenges head-on and develop practical ways to manage them." (Participant 11)

5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how mentorship led by academic leaders serves as a critical buffer against burnout for newly hired teachers. By examining the lived experiences of 15 instructors, it becomes evident that mentorship is not merely a professional orientation but a multi-dimensional support system that addresses emotional, structural, and relational needs.

A primary finding was that mentors prevent burnout by providing a combination of practical task management and emotional validation. Participants highlighted that "mapping out schedules" and "prioritizing tasks" directly reduced the exhaustion associated with high job demands. This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which posits that providing structural resources—such as the time-blocking techniques and templates mentioned by Participants 3 and 7—can mitigate the strain caused by heavy workloads (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli, 2015). Furthermore, the emotional

support identified by the participants, characterized by empathy and reassurance, confirms the assertions of Gold (1996) and Price (2012) that affective leadership is essential for reducing professional isolation. When mentors validated the struggles of new teachers as "normal but temporary," they bolstered the mentees' emotional resilience, a key protective factor against burnout (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

The results also demonstrated that academic leaders play a pivotal role in helping new faculty set boundaries. The data showed that 14 out of 15 participants benefited from mentors who explicitly gave them "permission to rest." According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), when leaders support a mentee's autonomy and well-being rather than just demanding performance, it fosters intrinsic motivation and prevents emotional exhaustion (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Diab & Green, 2024). By modeling healthy work-life practices—such as leaving the office on time or engaging in self-care—mentors normalized a culture of balance. This confirms the findings of Ho and Hau (2008) and Eller et al. (2014), who argued that role modeling is a powerful mentoring mechanism for promoting long-term professional commitment.

Beyond individual coping, the study found that mentors act as "cultural translators" within the institution. By explaining unwritten rules and facilitating peer networks, mentors satisfied the psychological need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Participants noted that these connections made them feel "less alone" and more integrated into the academic community. This social connectedness is a cornerstone of Resilience Theory, which emphasizes that social support networks are vital for adapting to early-career adversity (Tait, 2008; Haidusek-Niazy, 2023). These findings echo local Philippine studies by Flores and Bautista (2022) and Santos and Reyes (2022), which identified community-building as a primary strategy for reducing teacher stress in the local context.

Finally, the emphasis on regular one-on-one check-ins and reflective practices (such as stress journaling) indicates that the most effective burnout prevention is proactive rather than reactive. Participants who engaged in guided reflection were better able to identify their stress triggers—a skill that Young-Jones et al. (2013) and Parker et al. (2012) identified as essential for sustained faculty well-being. By fostering these reflective habits, academic leaders move beyond administrative supervision and into a transformative role that equips new teachers with the psychological tools necessary for a long-term career in academia.

6. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that mentorship led by academic leaders is a vital institutional mechanism for preventing burnout among newly hired teachers. The findings suggest that when mentors provide a balanced mix of practical guidance, emotional validation, and boundary-setting, they significantly enhance the resilience and job satisfaction of early-career faculty. By applying the lenses of Self-Determination Theory and the JD-R Model, it is clear that mentorship provides the psychological and structural resources necessary to navigate the high-pressure environment of higher education.

To sustain a healthy academic workforce, higher education institutions should prioritize the training of academic leaders in "emotionally responsive" mentoring practices. While technical orientation is necessary, the findings emphasize that the human element of mentorship—empathy, role modeling, and the facilitation of peer support—is what ultimately protects new teachers from the detrimental effects of burnout. Future research should continue to explore the long-term impacts of these leadership strategies on faculty retention and student learning outcomes within the Philippine context.

By illuminating the specific mentoring practices that nurture mental and emotional well-being, this research advances understanding of how mentorship can be intentionally designed to sustain teacher motivation and longevity in academic settings. The findings challenge institutions to move past generic onboarding and toward dynamic mentorship models that prioritize personalized engagement and empower new faculty not only to survive but to thrive.

Looking forward, this study offers a foundation for developing structured mentor training programs that equip academic leaders with

the skills to address diverse mentee needs—including emotional intelligence, cultural competence, and reflective facilitation. It also invites further exploration into the long-term impacts of such mentorship on faculty retention, institutional climate, and student outcomes.

Ultimately, investing in thoughtful, evidence-based mentorship is not only an investment in individual educators but a strategic imperative for cultivating vibrant, resilient academic communities capable of sustaining excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the respondents who participated in this study. Their willingness to share their lived experiences and personal narratives was essential in providing the rich, qualitative data required to understand the role of mentorship in burnout prevention.

In the interest of academic transparency and integrity, the authors certify that this study's research, data, and conclusions are entirely original and fundamentally grounded in these shared human experiences. While the core content is original, AI-assisted language tools were utilized strictly for grammatical refinement and linguistic polishing to support English as a Second Language (ESL) expression. The authors have personally reviewed the final manuscript and take full responsibility for its content and integrity.

References

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K. Newcomer, H. Hatry, & J. Wholey (Eds.), Handbook of practical program evaluation (4th ed., pp. 492–505). Jossey-Bass.

Allen, T. D., Eby, L. T., Poteet, M. L., Lentz, E., & Lima, L. (2004). Career benefits associated with mentoring for protégés: A meta-analysis. Journal of Applied Psychology, 89(1), 127-136. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.1.127

Anderson, L. A., & Shannon, A. L. (2016). Toward a conceptualization of mentoring. Journal of Teacher Education, 67(3), 256–267. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116639734

Baker, V. L., Pifer, M. J., & Griffin, K. A. (2019). Mentoring in higher education: Theory, research, and practice. Stylus Publishing.

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model: State of the art. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22(3), 309–328. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115

Berk, R. A., & Berg, J. (2017). The effects of academic mentorship on faculty stress and burnout in higher education. Journal of Faculty Development, 31(2), 45-53. https://doi.org/10.1108/JFD-09-2017-0046

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.

Burger, K. (2021). Mentoring and teacher well-being: Supporting basic psychological needs. Teaching and Teacher Education, 98, 103251. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103251

Chanland, T. (2022). Networked mentoring in higher education. Journal of Academic Development, 38(2), 112-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2022.2033456

Cherkowski, S., & Walker, K. (2019). The role of mentoring and coaching as a means of supporting the wellbeing of educational professionals. International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE122019081

Conway, J. M., & Clark, M. A. (2003). Faculty development, mentoring, and institutional support: Addressing the burnout challenge. Innovative Higher Education, 27(1), 29-44. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022108811604

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Crisp, G., & Cruz, I. (2009). Mentoring college students: A critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2007. Research in Higher Education, 50(6), 525–545. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-009-9130-2

Darwin, A., & Palmer, E. (2020). Mentoring circles for women in higher education leadership. Studies in Higher Education, 45(6), 1173–1186. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1630679

De Guzman, A. B., & Cruz, L. M. (2021). The practice and challenges in teacher leadership of academic managers in Philippine public schools.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Diab, A., & Green, K. (2024). Psychological need satisfaction and resilience in teacher mentorship. Journal of Educational Leadership and Practice.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. Medical Education, 40(4), 314–321. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x

Eller, L. S., Lev, E. L., & Feurer, A. (2014). Key components of an effective mentoring relationship: A qualitative study. Nurse Education Today, 34(5), 815–820. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.07.020

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Flores, R. T., & Bautista, A. L. (2022). Investigating the impact of mentoring on new teachers.

Giorgi, A. (2009). The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach. Duquesne University Press.

Gold, Y. (1996). Beginning teacher support: Attrition, mentoring, and induction. In Handbook of Research on Teacher Education (pp. 548–594). Macmillan.

Haidusek-Niazy, M. (2023). Mentorship and resilience among early-career teachers in crisis contexts. International Journal of Educational Research, 125, 102677. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102677

Ho, C. S., & Hau, K. T. (2008). Effects of a mentoring program on teachers' professional development. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 28(4), 479-493. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188790802496408

Hong, J. Y. (2012). Why do some beginning teachers leave the school, and others stay? Understanding teacher resilience through psychological lenses. Teachers and Teaching, 18(4), 417-440. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.689693

Huang, M., & Wang, Y. (2022). Emotional empowerment and burnout mediation in academia. Higher Education Studies, 12(3), 88–96. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v12n3p88

Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. Review of Educational Research, 81(2), 201-233. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311403323

Johnson, W. B. (2015). On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty. Routledge.

Johnson, W. B. (2016). On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty. Routledge.

Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 72(12), 2954–2965. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031

Kelchtermans, G. (2006). Teacher collaboration and collegiality as resources for professional development. Teaching and Teacher Education, 22(8), 922-934. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.007

Komlenac, N., et al. (2022). The influence of academic supervisor support on stress among university faculty. Education Sciences, 12(4), 274.

Kram, K. E. (1985). Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life. Scott Foresman.

Malloy, J., & Allen, J. (2007). The impact of mentorship on new faculty in higher education. Innovative Higher Education, 32(4), 255-269. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-007-9035-9

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. World Psychiatry, 15(2), 103–111. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311

Nature Editorial. (2024). Supporting junior faculty: navigating academia's culture and politics. Nature, 610, 8-9. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-024-00001-2

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16(1), 1–13.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Parker, P., Martin, A., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. (2012). Teachers' workplace well-being: The importance of self-efficacy, social support, and coping. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37(4), 27-37. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n4.3

Paterson, M., & Hughes, J. (2014). Mentoring in higher education: Issues of diversity and power. Studies in Higher Education, 39(3), 471-482. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2012.709494

Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Price, H. E. (2012). Principal–teacher interactions: How affective relationships shape principal influence. Educational Administration Quarterly, 48(1), 39-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11427379

Ragins, B. R., & Kram, K. E. (Eds.). (2007). The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice. SAGE Publications.

Santos, R. P., & Reyes, M. L. (2022). Teachers' workload policy: Its impact on Philippine public schools.

Schaufeli, W. B. (2015). Engaging leadership in the JD-R model. Career Development International, 20(5), 446–463. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-02-2015-0025

Schaufeli, W. B. (2017). Applying the Job Demands-Resources model: A 'how to' guide to measuring and tackling work engagement and burnout. Organizational Dynamics, 46(2), 120–132. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2017.04.008

Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25(3), 293-315. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.248

Schlichte, J., Yssel, N., & Merbler, J. (2005). Pathways to burnout: Case studies in teacher isolation and alienation. Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 50(1), 35–40. https://doi.org/10.3200/PSFL.50.1.35-40

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy: Relations and consequences. International Journal of Educational Research, 70, 17-25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.11.006

Squires, V. (2019). The wellbeing of the early career teacher: A review of the literature on the pivotal role of mentoring. International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 8(2). https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE0220190025

Tait, M. (2008). Resilience as a contributor to novice teacher success, commitment, and retention. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(4), 57–75.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. Teaching and Teacher Education, 23(6), 944-956. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.003

Vivekananda-Schmidt, P., King, R., & Peile, E. (2021). Mentoring in higher education: A qualitative study of department chairs' roles and experiences. Higher Education Quarterly, 75(3), 320–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12302

Wilson, E., & Demetriou, C. (2007). Mentoring in higher education: An introduction. Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 15(2), 135-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611260701357221

Young-Jones, A. D., Burt, T. D., Dixon, S., & Hawley, J. D. (2013). The impact of mentoring on faculty mentees' professional lives: A qualitative study. Journal of Faculty Development, 27(3), 143-150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878113502929