

Fall 12-8-2022

Assessing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Teachers' Workplace Wellness

Fiona Tang

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, f.tang1@usa.edu

Karen Park

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, kpark@usa.edu

Susan MacDermott

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, smacdermott@usa.edu

Deja Anderson

danderson@ausd.net

Follow this and additional works at: <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2022>



Part of the [Junior High, Intermediate, Middle School Education and Teaching Commons](#), [Occupational Therapy Commons](#), [Online and Distance Education Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tang, F., Park, K., MacDermott, S., & Anderson, D. (2022, December 8). Assessing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Teachers' Workplace Wellness. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2022/7>

This Poster/presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the OTD Capstone Symposia at SOAR @ USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, Fall 2022 by an authorized administrator of SOAR @ USA. For more information, please contact soar@usa.edu, erobinson@usa.edu.

Assessing Asian American and Pacific Islander Teachers' Workplace Wellness

Fiona Tang, OTS; Karen Park, OTD, OTR/L, BCP

BACKGROUND

- ❖ Teachers have many instructional, administrative, behavior and classroom management responsibilities (Cormier et al., 2021; Hilger et al., 2021; Roeser et al., 2022).
- ❖ Emotional exhaustion is a key aspect of teacher burnout (Valosek et al., 2021). Lack of job resources, including supervisory and colleague social support, feedback, and autonomy, were attributed to disengagement and decreased mental and physical health (Hilger et al., 2021).
- ❖ Nearly 11,500 hate incidents were reported from March 2020 to March 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stop AAPI Hate (2022) reported 49% of Asian Americans who experienced a hate incident reported depression or anxiety and 72% listed discrimination against them as their main stress during the pandemic.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There needs to be increased attention in addressing the causes of burnout in middle-school and high-school teachers, and the impact of COVID-19 on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) teachers' mental health.

PURPOSE

- ❖ Conduct a qualitative research study to understand current challenges, barriers, and unique factors of being an AAPI teacher.
- ❖ Analyze the causes and symptoms of burnout in public, middle-school and high-school AAPI teachers.
- ❖ Strategize how occupational therapists can provide burnout-prevention and resources to promote teachers' mental health, optimal work performance, occupational participation and satisfaction, leading to improved student and district outcomes.

METHODS

A qualitative, mixed methods design was used to understand the challenges, barriers, and current supports of AAPI, middle-school and high-school teachers. Participant criteria:

- 25-65 years old
- Teach public, middle- or high-school (6th-12th gr.)
- Identify with at least one AAPI ethnicity background
- At least two years of experience before the COVID-19 pandemic or currently work as a teacher during the ongoing pandemic

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling method and posting flyers on social media.

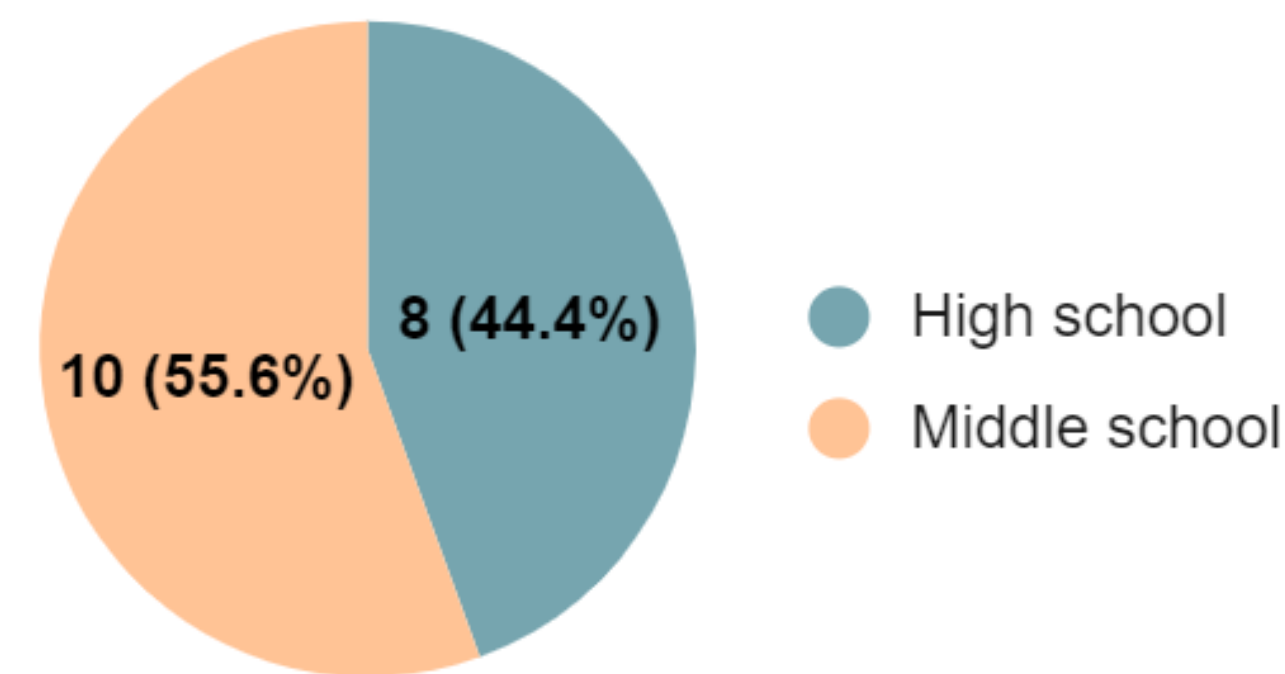
25-question survey via Microsoft Forms

18 participants (n=18)

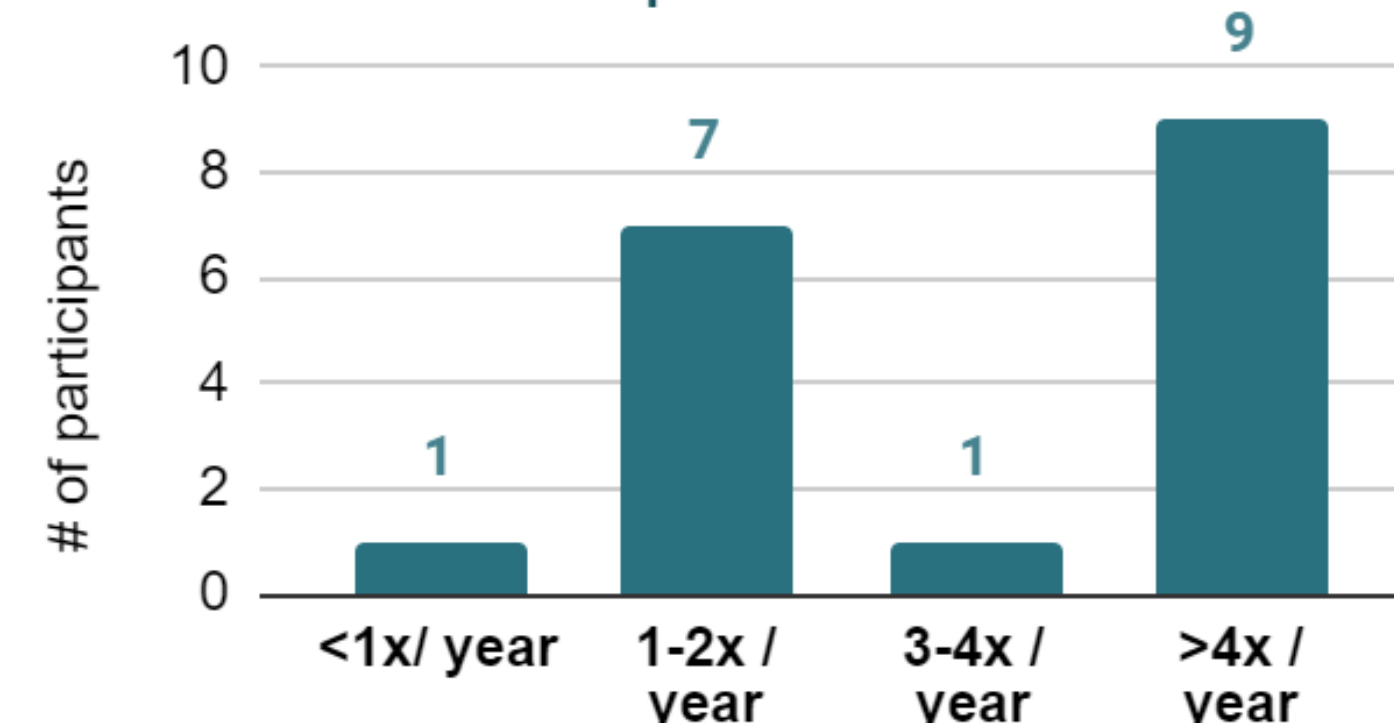
60-minute, virtual, follow-up interview

6 participants (2 high school, 4 middle school teachers)

AAPI Teacher Participant Demographics



"How often have you experienced burnout since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020?"



RESULTS

Themes	Subthemes
Strengths and challenges as an AAPI teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural connection with AAPI students • Experiencing racial discrimination in the workplace
Challenges and barriers from a systemic level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding and teacher support from admin • Need more helpful solutions and implications (e.g., mental health days, more subs, aides, translators)
Impact of COVID-19 on teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased challenges with student behaviors after transitioning back in-person • Utilizing hybrid teaching model
Work overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many responsibilities, not enough time • Dealing with student behaviors and parents

DISCUSSION

- ❖ AAPI identity was a strength in terms of having a cultural connection to AAPI students, compared to their non-AAPI colleagues. AAPI teachers still face discrimination in the work environment.
- ❖ Teachers reported having a lack of support from administration, funding, and resources, to reduce class sizes, increase teacher collaboration, and disperse excessive tasks among other staff.
- ❖ Although helpful for some, teachers do not need more staff meetings on mental health and self-care tips, but the ability to request mental health days in advance and practice self-care; there is no time to do so during work hours.

OT IMPLICATIONS

- ❖ Spread awareness of teachers' challenges and barriers and provide helpful implications for teacher supports.
- ❖ Further research on OT's role in promoting teachers' wellness in various work environments.
- ❖ Advocacy on funding for supports, (e.g., paid mental health days, hiring substitute teachers and teacher aides, compensation for over-contractual work hours) via administrative or legislative level.

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to
Deja Anderson, PPS, EdD, and
Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

References



Themes	Subthemes	Quotes
<p>Strengths and challenges as an AAPI teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural connection with AAPI students Experiencing racial discrimination in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A strength is jumping in between different view lenses. Understanding different cultures and [values of] different things. How to connect with students on a surface level with cultural things like anime, K-pop, and foods; after connecting surface level [I] can identify or learn how other students value family, education, and style of learning.” “I feel like there are certain like stereotypes that people have about Asian people that students kind of bring up that they don't really know is offensive. But that comes up and you know, your job as an educator is to educate them about what is appropriate to say and what isn't.”
<p>Challenges and barriers from a systemic level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding and teacher support from admin Need more helpful solutions and implications (e.g., mental health days, more subs, aides, translators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “But the second thing that I look for, and [...] may be more important, is having administration who is supportive. And when I say supportive, it's not just in what they do, but how they act.” “I think what would be more supportive on the district's end, is to give us time off specifically for like mental health days where we are practicing self-care, because it's a lot of like, participating in these PDs. There is this expectation of, you're still at work, you know, like you're participating in these PDs, but you're still at work. [...] they're just preaching at you, but they don't give [you] the ability to practice what they preach.” “There has been strides to create a health and wellness committee. However, it seems more like an attempt to say the district cares but puts the self-care [...] on the teachers. The admins can instead increase and have teachers take a mental health day. Hire more subs so it is possible to support teachers to take the day.” “Lack of clear support of teachers that are trying to reclaim their time. Pressure to do it all. I don't need someone to do cute health things like yoga links, meditation practice, etc. I need class sizes under 32. Right now, it's about 37. [We] need to be compensated for [our] time and respect the hours of our contract. Grading and working at home is part of the gig... but it's too much to ask us to do all of the other things they ask.”
<p>Impact of COVID-19 on teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased challenges with student behaviors after transitioning back in person Utilizing hybrid teaching model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Administration should help with the behavior support in the classroom. There is no consequence for students' inappropriate actions.” “One asynchronous day a week for secondary. [...] Then I could allot this time to grade, e-mail parents, develop new resources.”
<p>Work overload</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many responsibilities, not enough time Dealing with student behaviors and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Too much on my plate. SEL, subject content, grading papers, planning, meeting with parents, meetings with students, managing long absences of sick students. As a social science teacher, no one is happy if you teach anything 'too liberal' or 'too conservative.' Angrier parents, more emotionally immature with little resilience/coping mechanisms, district policy to accept any late work at any time in the year, fears of being labeled racist, homophobic, anti-religion, being insensitive (especially online), reaching schoolwide goals, reaching department goals, meeting my goals, etc.”