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Lived Experiences of DepEd Secondary Teachers Managing Large Class Sizes: Phenomenological Study on Time Management Strategies

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Abstract. Large class sizes remain one of the most persistent challenges in basic education, affecting teachers' time management, workload, and instructional quality. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes in the Department of Education, with particular focus on the challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed, and the school-level factors that shaped their experiences. The study was conducted at Imelda National High School with fifteen (15) public secondary school teachers handling large class populations. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers relied on structured routines, prioritization, planning, and collaboration to cope with heavy workloads and time pressure. However, teaching large classes was consistently described as a "race against time" due to overcrowded classrooms, extensive checking of student outputs, classroom management demands, and administrative responsibilities that reduced preparation time and affected instructional quality. The study further found that supportive leadership, teacher collaboration, and resource sharing positively influenced teachers' ability to manage time effectively. Despite these challenges, teachers viewed their experiences as opportunities for professional growth, resilience, adaptability, and improved organizational skills. The study concludes that comprehensive school-based interventions, including workload management, instructional support, teacher aides, professional development, and improved resource allocation, are essential to help teachers manage large classes effectively while sustaining quality instruction and promoting teacher well-being. Schools are therefore encouraged to strengthen institutional support systems through equitable workload distribution, reduction of non-essential administrative tasks, provision of teaching aides and instructional resources, and continuous professional development.

Keywords: Classroom Management; Instructional Quality; Large Class Sizes; Teacher Workload; Time Management

Introduction

Large class sizes have been identified as a persistent challenge to teachers' ability to provide quality instruction. As class sizes increase, teachers have less time to attend to individual learners and spend a greater proportion of their working time on non-instructional responsibilities, including classroom management, paperwork, behavioral supervision, and grading (Blatchford et al., 2025). Teachers handling larger classes also experience increased stress and workload and may report lower job satisfaction, particularly when institutional resources and support are inadequate (Cinco & Sim, 2025; Ladjahasan, 2025). These challenges are closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for quality, inclusive, and equitable education and recognizes the importance of improving teaching and learning conditions.

In the Philippine context, teacher workload and classroom overcrowding have likewise emerged as systemic concerns. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) has highlighted infrastructure constraints, administrative workload, and competing school requirements as major barriers to the delivery of quality basic education. In its report, *Turning Point: A Decade's Necessary Reforms*, EDCOM 2 emphasized the mismatch between instructional time and the growing number of mandated school activities and system-level demands. This situation limits the time available for actual classroom instruction and places additional demands on teachers already constrained working time.

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The shortage of classrooms further intensifies these challenges. According to EDCOM 2, the Philippine public school system faces an estimated shortage of 165,000 classrooms, resulting in the continued use of multi-shift arrangements and congested classrooms in many regions. Current projections indicate that high levels of classroom congestion may persist in areas such as the National Capital Region, CALABARZON, Soccsksargen, and Bangsamoro through 2040 under existing construction trends. Persistent overcrowding consequently requires teachers to accommodate larger numbers of learners while simultaneously managing instruction, student behavior, assessment, and administrative responsibilities (EDCOM 2-PIDS, 2025).

Although previous studies have established that large classes are associated with heavier workloads, classroom-management difficulties, stress, and reduced opportunities for individualized instruction, less is known about how teachers themselves experience and make sense of the competing demands on their time while teaching large classes. Existing discussions tend to emphasize the measurable consequences of class size or broader workload and infrastructure problems, rather than examining how teachers negotiate instructional responsibilities, classroom-management demands, assessment tasks, and administrative requirements within their everyday practice. Moreover, the Philippine literature and policy discussions provide substantial evidence of the systemic conditions surrounding overcrowding but offer less insight into the lived experiences and practical time-management strategies of public secondary school teachers working under these conditions at the school level. This represents an important gap because understanding how teachers actually allocate, prioritize, and adapt their limited time can provide context-specific evidence for designing interventions that are responsive to their daily work realities.

Addressing this gap, the present phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing their time while handling large class sizes at Imelda National High School. It examined how teachers experienced and interpreted time-related demands, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies and forms of school-based support they used to manage these demands. By foregrounding teachers' perspectives, the study seeks to generate context-specific insights that can inform practical school-based interventions aimed at improving instructional quality while supporting teacher well-being.

Research Objectives

This study explored how public secondary school teachers in the Department of Education managed their time when handling large class sizes and to identify practical strategies and school-based interventions that could support teachers in improving time management while maintaining instructional quality. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes.
2. Examine the challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes.
3. Identify the strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality.
4. Determine the school-level factors that influence teachers' ability to manage their time effectively.
5. Explore how teachers reflect on their experiences in managing time with large class sizes and the insights or lessons they gain from these experiences.
6. Propose practical school-based systems or interventions that can support teachers in managing time effectively when handling large classes.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study explored the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes in the Department of Education. It examined how teachers allocate time for lesson delivery, checking student outputs, classroom management, and administrative responsibilities. Using a qualitative approach, the study sought to understand teachers' experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and reflections on time management in large classes. The study also investigated school-level factors, such as workload distribution, policies, and support systems, that influence teachers' time management practices. Conducted among fifteen (15) teachers at Imelda National High School, the study focused on educators handling large class populations. As a qualitative inquiry, it aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences rather than measure time management efficiency or establish causal relationships. The findings are limited to the study setting and may not be generalized to other educational contexts. External factors such as student achievement, parental involvement, and broader educational reforms were considered only when directly related to teachers' time management experiences.

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Literature Review

Large Class Sizes in Philippine Public Schools

Large class sizes remain a persistent structural challenge in Philippine public education and have important implications for teachers' workload and the quality of classroom engagement. The problem is not simply a matter of having more students in one classroom; rather, overcrowding interacts with shortages in classrooms, instructional resources, and teacher time, creating conditions that can constrain teachers' ability to provide individualized attention and respond to diverse learner needs. Documents from the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2, 2024) indicate continuing inadequacies in school infrastructure and educational resources in several areas, contributing to overcrowded classrooms. These conditions suggest that class size should be understood as part of a broader resource and workload problem rather than as an isolated classroom management issue.

It indicates that the consequences of large classes extend beyond instructional delivery. When teachers are responsible for a high number of students, routine tasks such as checking outputs, monitoring participation, maintaining records, and providing feedback become more time-consuming. At the same time, teachers are expected to perform administrative and non-instructional responsibilities. EDCOM 2 (2024) highlights the continuing effects of inadequate infrastructure and resource constraints on the provision of quality education, while the Department of Education (DepEd, 2023) recognizes the range of responsibilities undertaken by teachers. Taken together, these sources indicate that large class sizes and workload pressures are mutually reinforcing: overcrowded classrooms increase the amount of work associated with instruction and assessment, while additional administrative demands reduce the time teachers can devote to addressing the needs of individual learners.

However, existing discussions tend to frame large class sizes primarily as a system-level problem, emphasizing shortages in classrooms, resources, and personnel. While this perspective is important for policy and resource allocation, it provides less insight into how teachers themselves experience and negotiate these conditions on a daily basis. The distinction is significant because the same structural constraint may produce different experiences depending on teachers' classroom routines, organizational practices, available support, and individual approaches to managing time. Thus, understanding large classes requires not only examining their prevalence and structural causes but also investigating how teachers adapt their practices in response to them.

Teacher Workload and Administrative Demands

Teacher workload in Philippine public schools is shaped by both instructional and administrative responsibilities. In addition to classroom teaching, teachers are expected to prepare lessons, assess student work, maintain records, monitor learner progress, and complete various reports and other school-related requirements. The Department of Education (DepEd, 2025) has acknowledged concerns regarding administrative demands and has pursued measures intended to streamline reporting and reduce unnecessary paperwork. These policy responses demonstrate institutional recognition that excessive administrative work can interfere with teachers' primary instructional responsibilities.

Nevertheless, studies suggest that reducing paperwork alone may not fully address the workload experienced by teachers. Workload is multidimensional and includes not only the amount of time spent on formal administrative tasks but also the demands associated with teaching large numbers of students. A teacher handling a large class, for example, must assess substantially more student outputs, respond to more individual learning needs, manage more classroom interactions, and maintain more extensive records. Consequently, administrative workload and instructional workload should not be viewed as separate pressures. Instead, they can accumulate and compete for the same limited resource: teachers' available time.

This interaction is particularly important when considering teachers' capacity to maintain instructional quality. Existing policy discussions largely emphasize workload reduction through administrative streamlining, but the classroom-level implications of large student populations receive comparatively less attention. This creates a conceptual gap between policies designed to reduce administrative burden and the everyday realities of teachers who must simultaneously manage instruction, assessment, classroom behavior, and reporting requirements. The literature therefore points to the need to examine workload not merely in terms of the number of assigned tasks but in terms of how teachers prioritize, sequence, and manage competing demands within limited instructional time.

Teachers' Experiences and Strategies in Managing Workload

Research on teacher workload shows that teachers do not simply respond passively to excessive demands; they develop strategies to manage competing responsibilities. David et al. (2020) and Labrador and Oducado (2022), for example, identify practices such as prioritizing essential tasks, streamlining assessment

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processes, collaborating with colleagues, and establishing classroom routines as ways of managing workload. These findings suggest that workload management involves an active process of adaptation in which teachers determine which tasks require immediate attention, which activities can be simplified, and which responsibilities can be shared or reorganized.

The significance of these strategies becomes clearer when considered alongside studies on teacher stress and burnout. Oducado et al. (2020) demonstrate the importance of examining teachers' workload and well-being, but much of the broader literature has concentrated on measurable workload, stress, burnout, and policy-level concerns. Such studies are valuable in establishing the consequences of excessive demands; however, they provide less understanding of the processes through which teachers actually manage those demands in specific classroom contexts. In particular, the literature gives limited attention to how teachers make day-to-day decisions about the use of time when faced with large classes and simultaneous instructional and administrative requirements.

Literature therefore reveals an important distinction between identifying workload as a problem and understanding workload management as an experiential process. Quantitative and policy-oriented studies can establish that teachers experience heavy workloads, stress, or burnout, but they may not adequately explain how teachers respond to these pressures, why particular strategies are adopted, or how such strategies affect their classroom practices. Qualitative inquiry is particularly relevant to this issue because it can capture teachers' perceptions, decision-making processes, adaptations, and meanings attached to their experiences. Despite growing attention to teacher workload and educational resource constraints in the Philippines, there remains limited qualitative research specifically examining how public secondary school teachers experience and manage the combined demands of large class sizes, instructional responsibilities, and administrative work. Existing policy documents, including EDCOM 2 (2024), provide important evidence concerning systemic resource constraints, while DepEd (2023, 2025) provides an institutional perspective on teacher responsibilities and workload reduction. However, these sources do not sufficiently illuminate the lived experiences of teachers who must translate policy expectations into everyday classroom practices. Similarly, existing studies on teacher stress and workload provide evidence of the challenges teachers face but do not fully explain the practical strategies teachers develop to manage time and maintain instructional responsibilities in overcrowded classrooms.

The gap is therefore not simply the absence of studies on teacher workload. Rather, it concerns the limited synthesis of how structural conditions, workload demands, and teachers' adaptive strategies interact in the context of large public secondary school classes in the Philippines. Examining this interaction can provide a more nuanced understanding of workload as both a structural and experiential phenomenon. It can also reveal strategies that may remain invisible in policy-level analyses, including informal practices developed by teachers to prioritize tasks, organize classroom activities, manage assessment, collaborate with colleagues, and preserve instructional time. Accordingly, the present study is positioned to extend the existing literature by focusing on teachers' own accounts of managing workload in large-class settings. By examining their experiences, challenges, and self-developed strategies, the study can move beyond describing workload as a problem and instead explain how teachers negotiate competing demands in actual school contexts. Such an approach may contribute evidence for more context-sensitive workload policies and school-level interventions that recognize both the structural causes of teacher workload and the practical realities of managing large classes.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes. Phenomenology was appropriate because it focused on understanding participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings regarding time management in their teaching contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The design enabled an in-depth examination of how teachers balanced instructional responsibilities, administrative duties, and workload demands. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and reflective narratives, allowing participants to share their challenges, coping strategies, and insights. The study also examined school-level factors influencing time management and identified practical interventions to support teachers in large class settings. By focusing on teachers lived experiences, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and adaptive strategies associated with effective time management, offering insights useful for educators, administrators, and policymakers.

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Research Locale

The study was conducted at Imelda National High School, an integrated public secondary school located in Poblacion, Imelda, Zamboanga Sibugay Province. The school offered both Junior and Senior High School education to approximately 2,800 learners for the 2025–2026 school year and was supported by over 100 teaching personnel. This school was chosen as the research locale because it exemplified large class settings common in Philippine public education, providing a suitable context to explore teachers' experiences and strategies in managing time and workload.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were fifteen (15) public secondary school teachers from Imelda National High School who handled large class sizes. They were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they possessed direct and relevant experiences in managing large classrooms and could provide rich and meaningful accounts of their time management practices, challenges, and coping strategies. The selected participants represented varied teaching experiences, subject areas, grade levels, and classroom responsibilities, providing diverse perspectives on the factors influencing effective time management in large-class settings. To protect participants' confidentiality, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric code (T1–T15). In addition, descriptive pseudonyms such as "The Funny Teacher," "The Optimistic Teacher," "The Beginning Teacher," and similar labels were used in presenting their narratives. These descriptors were derived directly from the participants' own self-descriptions, statements, and characterizations of their teaching experiences during the interviews, rather than being imposed by the researcher. For example, participants who described themselves or their teaching approach in terms of humor, optimism, or being at the beginning stage of their teaching career were represented using corresponding descriptive pseudonyms. Thus, the labels reflect how participants presented and understood aspects of their own professional identities and experiences. The participant-derived descriptors were used solely to facilitate the presentation of individual narratives and maintain anonymity. They were not treated as research themes or analytical categories. The themes reported in the study were developed separately through systematic analysis and synthesis of the participants' interview responses. This distinction ensured that the participants' self-descriptions were preserved while the study's themes remained grounded in patterns of meaning identified across the fifteen participants' accounts.

Research Instrument

To gather rich, in-depth data aligned with the objectives of this phenomenological study, the primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide. This instrument was designed to elicit the lived experiences, perceptions, and reflections of public secondary school teachers managing large class sizes. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to prepare key questions in advance while providing flexibility to probe, clarify, and explore participants' responses more deeply, ensuring the collection of detailed narratives related to time management, workload, classroom management, and school-level support (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview guide included open-ended questions aligned with the study objectives. These questions focused on teachers' experiences in managing time with large classes, challenges in instructional and administrative tasks, strategies to cope with time pressure, school-level factors affecting time management, personal reflections on managing workload, and suggestions for practical interventions. The guide also included follow-up prompts to encourage elaboration and clarification, ensuring comprehensive and meaningful data collection. The instrument underwent a validation process by subject matter experts, including experienced teachers and academic researchers, to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions for addressing the research objectives. Interviews were conducted individually, recorded (with consent), and transcribed for qualitative analysis. This approach ensured the accuracy, credibility, and richness of the data, which were critical for phenomenological research aimed at understanding teachers' lived experiences and deriving practical recommendations.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed a systematic and ethical process to collect data from public secondary school teachers with large class sizes. First, the researcher secured approval from the school administration and obtained a list of teachers handling the largest classes to identify potential participants. Using purposive sampling, 15 teachers were selected to provide rich and relevant insights into time management experiences. Before data collection, the researcher sought informed consent from each participant, explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted individually in a quiet and comfortable setting within the school to allow participants to freely share their experiences. Each interview was audio-recorded with permission and supplemented by field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual observations. After the interviews, recordings were transcribed verbatim for accuracy and prepared for analysis. The researcher then organized and coded the

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data, identified patterns, and developed themes that aligned with the study objectives. Member checking was conducted by sharing summarized findings with participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This procedure ensured that the collected data was credible, authentic, and reflective of the teachers lived experiences, supporting a thorough understanding of time management strategies in large class settings.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: Describe the experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes.

The dominant themes generated when the participants were asked about their experiences in managing time while handling large class sizes are: (1) Structured Routines Help Teachers Manage Time and (2) Teaching Large Classes Feels Like a Constant Race Against Time.

The first dominant theme for the experiences of secondary teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes is Structured Routines Help Teachers Manage Time.

While it can be argued that structured routines are preferred methods to teach in classrooms with many learners, the present findings suggest that, in Philippine public secondary schools, structured routines function not merely as preferred pedagogical practices but as adaptive mechanisms for protecting instructional time under conditions of large class enrollment and competing teacher responsibilities. With 50+ students, the limited amount of time available to be spent in the classroom becomes a high-value commodity and requires a high degree of structured flow with regard to lesson design. When teachers use structured routines to develop their lesson plans, they create a predictable point of reference for students through consistent portions of the lesson (e.g., review, discussion, activity, assessment), reducing the potential for wasted time due to ambiguity and thereby increasing student attention.

Further support for this structure is provided when teachers carefully prepare for class, allowing them to anticipate potential delays, establish efficient transitions, and reduce the amount of instructional time consumed by organizational concerns. Therefore, routines provide teachers with control and stability, enabling them to work with several complexities within a large-class environment while providing high-quality instructional delivery. Additionally, structured routines serve to minimize repetition during classroom management, enabling students to have a clear understanding of expectations and, therefore, providing a conducive learning environment that allows teachers to increase instructional time spent on teaching and learning rather than managing discipline and organization.

Thus, the use of clear structured routines is an effective and responsive strategy to address time constraints that are characteristic of large-class environments. More importantly, the findings indicate that Filipino public secondary teachers are not simply implementing routines because they are theoretically recommended; they are actively adapting and operationalizing routines as practical responses to the structural realities of their classrooms. In this sense, routine becomes a form of teacher agency—an intentional way of reclaiming instructional time within an environment where class size, learner diversity, classroom management, and administrative demands compete for the same limited resource.

The participants' narratives further demonstrate that time management in large Philippine classrooms is closely intertwined with classroom management. The teachers did not describe time as something that could be managed independently of learner behavior and classroom organization. Rather, they emphasized consistency, automation, clear instructions, and predetermined time limits as mechanisms for preventing disruptions and maintaining lesson momentum. This suggests that, in large-class Philippine settings, effective time management is relational: teachers manage time partly by managing predictable classroom interactions and learner expectations. Such a finding extends the understanding of time management beyond individual teacher efficiency and positions it as a classroom-level strategy shaped by the social and organizational conditions of teaching.

"During class, I follow a structured routine: attendance, review, lesson proper, activity, then reflection… time-conscious gyud ko, so every activity has clear time limits." – Scientific Teacher

"I organized my time so much ahead of time… I give time for my routines, the motivation, then discussion, then student activities, and assessment." – Cool Teacher

"I rely on structured routines and time conscious strategies." – Mother Figure Teacher

"My routine is built on automation and consistency… I reduce the time spent on repeated instructions, allowing me to maximize the actual 'teaching' window." – Techy Teacher

"I follow a strict routine… Dili pwede ang walay sistema kay magka-gubot gyud." – Strict Teacher

"I rely on consistent routines… This structure protects our instructional time." – Inspirational Teacher

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"I keep my lesson structure simple—short review, clear discussion, then one meaningful activity." – Chill Teacher

"I keep a consistent structure: short review, then clear instructions, then activity." – Activity-Lover Teacher

Classroom routines that can be established have an extremely positive effect on both time management, instruction efficiency, and minimizing classroom behavior problems especially within larger/more diverse classrooms. Routines provide consistency for teachers resulting in improved instructional time, as well as, creating a better organized and effective setting to learn in (Wong H., Wong R. 2022).

However, the present study contributes a context-specific understanding of this established principle. In the Philippine public secondary school context, structured routines appear to serve as a compensatory response to conditions that teachers cannot readily control, particularly large class sizes and the resulting demands on classroom organization. Rather than suggesting that routines alone can resolve the problem of overcrowded classrooms, the findings reveal how teachers strategically use routines to mitigate the consequences of limited instructional time. This distinction is important because it shifts the discussion from "teachers should manage their time better" toward recognizing how teachers exercise professional agency within structural constraints.

This finding also has implications for teacher development and school-level support. Professional development on time management for teachers handling large classes may be more meaningful when it focuses on practical classroom systems—such as predictable lesson sequences, transition routines, concise instructions, time-bound activities, and procedures that reduce repetitive classroom-management tasks—rather than treating time management solely as an individual teacher skill. In the Philippine setting, such support may help teachers preserve instructional time without requiring them to sacrifice meaningful learner engagement.

The second dominant theme that emerged from the experiences of secondary teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes is Teaching Large Classes Feels Like a Constant Race Against Time.
The themes described were found throughout this study about the relentless time constraints faced by large classes taught by public secondary teachers. All participants' stories indicated that teaching in a crowded classroom resembles an endless race against time to ensure that every minute is utilized to address many demands, both instructional (what to teach) and administrative (how to track students). Teachers have to deliver lessons, manage classroom and student behaviour, keep students engaged, and assess students, all of which require multiple tasks to be completed within limited time and, therefore, have to be completed simultaneously. This scenario of continuous multitasking results in both physical and mental exhaustion for these teachers because many of their responsibilities extend beyond classroom working hours (e.g., checking outputs, lesson preps, and paper work). One participant indicated that "there is never enough time" becomes a continual reality for these teachers, resulting in diminished instructional depth and their own emotional well-being. Additionally, the pressure to provide quality instruction and complete the instructional process as quickly as possible renders many of these teachers anxious regarding their ability to meet students' learning needs, given the constraints of time. Such lived experience clearly illustrates how much larger class sizes increase workload and limit available time to teachers to complete tasks. Thus, teachers are forced to prioritize and compromise on their tasks and continually adjust to keep up with their daily demands.

What is particularly significant in the present findings is that the experience of time scarcity was not described simply as "having too much work." Rather, participants experienced time scarcity as a persistent condition embedded in the everyday organization of public school teaching. Their narratives suggest that the problem is not merely the number of instructional tasks but the simultaneous demand to perform teaching, classroom management, assessment, documentation, and learner monitoring within fixed instructional periods. Consequently, large class size transforms time from a neutral resource into a persistent source of professional pressure.

"*A typical day feels like a race against time… time always feels insufficient… I feel physically and mentally drained." – Scientist-Maker Teacher*

"A typical day feels like a constant race against time… it's exhausting." – Optimistic Teacher

"Murag pirmi ko nagdali, murag kulang gyud ang oras." – Beginning Teacher

"Kapoy na kaayo, pero padayon lang kay para sa mga bata." – Beginning Teacher

"After six hours of continuous teaching, I often feel physically exhausted… dili gyud makaya." – Strict Teacher

"Prepared nah pero bilar gamay." – Dedicated Teacher

"Hindi puwedeng isa-isa kasi aabutin tayo ng next school year… time management talaga is about keeping things moving." – Funny Teacher

The phrase "keeping things moving" captures a key dimension of teaching large classes in the Philippine public school context. Teachers continuously move between instructional, administrative, and

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classroom-management tasks to meet demands within limited time, creating a tension between lesson coverage and instructional depth. The pressure to maintain momentum may limit opportunities for individualized feedback, remediation, and deeper learner engagement.

The findings further suggest that time scarcity is not merely an individual time-management issue but is shaped by the interaction between large class sizes and the multiple responsibilities of public school teachers. Despite careful planning and structured routines, participants continued to experience persistent time pressure and exhaustion. This indicates the need for organizational responses, including manageable class sizes, realistic workload allocation, streamlined administrative tasks, and school-level support that protects instructional preparation time.

Taken together, the findings highlight a central contribution of the study: teacher time management in Philippine public secondary schools is both an individual practice and a structural concern. Teachers demonstrate agency by developing routines and time-conscious strategies, but these efforts remain constrained by conditions beyond the classroom. Thus, improving teachers' time management should be complemented by institutional measures that address the structural sources of time scarcity and support sustainable instructional practice.

Research Question 2: Examine the challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes.

The dominant themes generated when the participants were asked about challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes are: 1.) Time Constraints Lead to Simplified Lesson Planning, Output Checking, and Feedback Practices 2.) Overwhelming Workload in Monitoring, Classroom Management, and Output Checking in Large Classes 3.) Administrative Work Overloads Teachers and Reduces Time for Lesson Preparation and Instructional Quality

In the first dominant challenge faced by secondary school teachers in managing classroom output with many students, and completing administrative functions associated with large classes, is the impact of limited time on the quality and type of lesson plans teachers create, how they check student learning outputs, and how they provide student feedback. The longstanding time constraints experienced by teachers of large, public secondary classrooms heavily dictate how teachers plan for and assess students' learning processes. All the participants expressed that the number of learners enrolled presents a challenge to sustaining any type of comprehensive or individualized assessment strategies for some limited amount of time. Thus, lesson planning tends to be simplified and focused on what is practical and doable, as opposed to being focused on what is ideal and comprehensive in nature. When creating or designing learning activities, teachers tend to place a high value of time, efficiency, clarity and feasibility/realism, as they do retain enough instructional time to provide appropriate instruction for the learners in their classrooms. Teachers expressed that the quantity of student outputs they are responsible for assessing makes it extremely difficult to assess individual outputs in meaningful ways. Consequently, this difficulty causes many teachers to implement more practical strategies for providing assessment, including group-based assessment, peer assessment, selective assessment and/or identifying and correcting common errors to a group of learners. While teachers understand that individualized feedback is important in supporting student success, they agree that the realities of having to operate in a time-constrained environment and have workloads that exceed the volume of students they need to provide feedback create significant challenges to maintaining consistent, individualized feedback in large classes. Similarly, these limitations also create challenges in providing feedback to students. Instead of providing all of the students with detailed feedback when providing feedback to learners, teachers generally provide learners with generalized group feedback, or only provide feedback on selected, representative samples of student outputs that demonstrate common strengths and weaknesses. This approach assists teachers in maintaining instructional flow, while also allowing teachers to provide guidance for students in terms of how to improve, however, the nature of this support is limited compared to the depth of instruction students would require to be successful. Overall, the theme points to how the size of large classes forces teachers to alter their lesson plans, assessments and feedback to be developed and implemented based on time efficiency, not based on instructional quality or the level of individualized instructional support that supports their academic achievement. As a result, while these adaptations are necessary to manage the overwhelming workload teachers are faced with, they also reflect the ongoing discrepancy between quality instruction and the realities of time-constrained teaching environments.

"Mas time-consuming siya kay daghan submissions. For feedback, dili pirmi possible ang individual feedback, so I usually give group feedback or common corrections to save time." — Scientific Teacher

"In checking outputs, I make sure not to be overwhelmed by giving group work instead of individual tasks." — Cool Teacher

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"Sometimes I cannot assess them individually… Most of the time if dli najud kaya kay group feedback gyud ang madali." — Dedicated Teacher

"We are often unable to spend enough time checking and analyzing each student's work in detail… we are sometimes forced to provide group feedback instead of individualized feedback." — Authoritative Teacher

"It would be very challenging to check the outputs in a short period of time." — Passionate Teacher

"With almost 60 students, dili gyud possible nga detailed feedback for everyone all the time." — Strict Teacher

"I rely more on group outputs and performance-based tasks… I also use peer and self-assessment para makatipid sa time." — Activity-Lover Teacher

"Checking outputs is one of the hardest parts… Grabe kadaghan ang papeles, usahay dili na jud kaya mahatagan og detailed feedback tanan." — Beginning Teacher

"Checking outputs takes so much time, often extending into my personal time." — Optimistic Teacher

The OECD report (2023) shows that teachers working in schools with many students often simplify their planning of class work by using quick assessments/marking because of time pressure and large numbers of marks to complete. As a result, the report indicates that large class sizes result in limited opportunities for individualized feedback for students, thus forcing teachers to correct work as a group (or) provide more general assessments as coping strategies to manage their workloads.

However, the present findings show that, in Philippine public secondary schools, assessment practices are not simply simplified for convenience; they are deliberately adapted to make instruction operationally possible within large-class conditions. The teachers' accounts reveal a recurring negotiation between what constitutes ideal instructional practice and what can realistically be accomplished. Thus, group assessment, peer assessment, selective checking, and generalized feedback function as adaptive responses to structural constraints rather than merely as pedagogical preferences.

This finding is significant because it shifts the interpretation of teachers' assessment practices from individual efficiency to constrained professional decision-making. Filipino teachers appear to preserve the continuity of instruction by modifying the depth, frequency, and form of feedback they provide. While these strategies help teachers manage workload, they may also reduce opportunities for individualized feedback, remediation, and identification of learner-specific difficulties. The Philippine context therefore highlights a tension between teachers' commitment to responsive assessment and the structural conditions that limit their capacity to provide it.

The second dominant theme for challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes is Overwhelming Workload in Monitoring, Classroom Management, and Output Checking in Large Classes.

This theme describes the struggles of secondary public-school teachers attempting to manage classroom behavior and monitor student engagement alongside checking large amounts of student's outputs at the same time due to overcrowded classrooms. All participants mentioned having the challenge of time constraints and the number of learners making it difficult to adequately supervise all of the students at once, particularly during group activities and hands-on learning experiences. Teachers reported having a hard time paying attention to all of their learners, especially those who are quiet, passive, or struggling, during classroom activities and ensuring those learners actively participate at all times while engaged in a classroom activity. The most common concerns regarding classroom management were noise, distractions, unequal participation, and providing clear directions so that all learners understand. Participants also noted that frequently directions needed to be repeated several times, due to the class size and student ability to comprehend directions. Although group activities allow students to engage with each other, teachers also struggle with determining if all group members are equally contributing and are on task during group activities. Furthermore, teachers reported challenges relating to the monitoring and checking of student outputs. Teachers indicated that the volume of submissions makes it difficult to check each student's work thoroughly, in a timely manner, for accuracy. In addition, some teachers indicated challenges with tracking missed submissions, knowing if outputs are original, and checking for plagiarized work. The combination of checking outputs and the pressure of teaching creates difficulties due to time constraints and teacher fatigue, making it difficult to provide students with immediate or detailed feedback regarding their work. This theme identifies how large class sizes can compound the workload of a teacher with regard to classroom management and checking outputs because both tasks become an increased demand on the teacher's time. Teachers are forced to seek out ways to be efficient and to develop coping strategies which may include grouping students together, using checklists, and focusing on specific outputs, while still experiencing challenges in providing quality supervision or assessment to all their learners.

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"Main challenges are limited time, volume of papers to check, classroom noise, and making sure all students are engaged. Lisod pud ma-monitor tanan learners especially katong quiet or struggling students." – Scientific Teacher

"It is difficult to ensure that all members are actively participating and contributing… and it is challenging to properly assess their outputs." – Cool Teacher

"Very limited kaayo nga time… Pag check sa output… dili tana matawag sa ka short sa time." – Dedicated Teacher

"Monitoring and checking outputs are the biggest challenges… dili tanan students active, so you need to push them." – Strict Teacher

"The primary difficulty is the sheer volume of data… providing individualized feedback is challenging." – Techy Teacher

"Monitoring student engagement… Some students may become passive or distracted… Noise and varied learning paces can lead to misunderstandings." – Mother Figure Teacher

"Checking outputs parang walang katapusan." – Funny Teacher

"One major challenge is monitoring all outputs; it's really time consuming." – Chill Teacher

"Time is the biggest issue… Lisod gyud i-check tanan outputs in detail." – Activity-Lover Teacher

"Managing behavior is also difficult—noise and distractions… tracking outputs becomes overwhelming." – Scientist-Maker Teacher

"Sometimes it feels like there's not enough of me to go around." – Optimistic Teacher

"Lisod i-control usahay, labi na kung kapoy na pud ko… Managing outputs is also overwhelming." – Beginning Teacher

Research supports the idea that teachers' workload is greatly increased due to larger classes, especially with respect to being able to monitor student behaviour, classroom dynamics and assess student work. Blatchford et al. (2023) talk about the challenges faced by teachers when working within overcrowded classrooms, whereby they cannot provide close supervision and timely and individualized feedback to their learners, because of the volume of work associated with the number of students. Additionally, the authors stated that the increased cognitive and organizational demands caused by larger classes increased the reliance of teachers on simplified assessment strategies (i.e. groups of learners working on the same tasks) and selective checking of outputs as a way to cope with those challenges. Additionally, the OECD (2023) stated that teachers of high-enrolled classes typically have difficulty managing classroom order and providing active engagement for all students, due to having divided attention among several students simultaneously. As such delayed feedback, difficulties in tracking student progress and greater reliance on structured classroom systems to effectively manage instructional flow are common occurrences in these settings.

This study reveals a "simultaneous attention" challenge in Philippine public schools, where teachers must manage instruction, behavior, engagement, monitoring, and assessment within limited time. This fragmentation of attention may particularly affect quiet or struggling learners who require closer support. Filipino teachers respond through grouping, checklists, selective checking, and common feedback, demonstrating adaptability while revealing a trade-off between efficiency and individualized monitoring. These findings suggest that large-class teaching requires not only teacher-level coping strategies but also school-level support, including streamlined assessment systems, structured peer assessment, targeted learner monitoring, and carefully designed group tasks to sustain instructional quality.

The third dominant theme for challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes is Administrative Work Overloads Teachers and Reduces Time for Lesson Preparation and Instructional Quality.

This theme shows that educators of public secondary schools continue to be burdened by numerous responsibilities and obligations. These include, but are not limited to, completing administrative tasks, preparing for lessons, assessing students and instructing large groups of students. In addition, teachers reported that they spend significant amounts of time creating paperwork, meeting and submitting the required documentation, which usually prevents them from dedicating enough time to plan lessons (i.e., lesson preparation) in a professional and timely manner.

Consequently, teachers noted that they are required to spend less time creating effective, engaging lesson plans than they would prefer while preparing for class or creating teaching strategies. In addition, the participants reported many times that they were unable to continue to develop new lessons due to interruptions caused by administrative responsibilities and being taken away from teaching-related activities. Participants also mentioned instances where they had to delay or simplify lesson plans due to deadlines caused by pressure to complete paperwork. There were also instances where they entered their classrooms unprepared to teach because of competing demands of time based around paperwork versus time dedicated to lesson planning. Therefore, through administrative demands, administrators continue to place multiple competing demands on secondary teachers through compliance matters, which will ultimately impact their effectiveness

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as educators as well as their readiness to instruct students. The participants also felt stressed and mentally drained due to their administrative paperwork requirements and discussed feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed or having divided attention between being able to complete their paperwork requirements and fulfilling their duties as teachers. Some participants also pointed out that administrative workload demands have negatively impacted their work/life balance, as many teachers continued to work on their paperwork after school hours by taking it home to work on (thus blurring the line between work and home).

In general, through administrative and paperwork overloads, the teachers expressed they are unable to fully prepare for their teaching responsibilities, which will ultimately affect their effectiveness as teachers and their ability to prepare their students adequately in the classroom.

"Administrative tasks like reports, forms, meetings, and documentation reduce the time for lesson preparation." – Scientific Teacher

"Instead of preparing detailed lesson plans, I have to set them aside due to administrative responsibilities." – Cool Teacher

"Reports, meetings, and other administrative tasks can reduce our focus on teaching and lesson preparation." – Dedicated Teacher

"Paperwork and other administrative responsibilities often take away my focus… I enter the classroom not as fully prepared." – Authoritative Teacher

"Workload from school requirements affect my efficiency in preparing lessons… lesser workload would make the teacher more effective." – Passionate Teacher

"Administrative tasks such as reports, meetings, and forms reduce the time available for planning engaging lessons." – Mother Figure Teacher

"Administrative tasks often compete with instructional time… the 'fatigue' factor is real." – Techy Teacher

"Nababawasan yung time ko to prepare detailed lessons… I simplify my plans." – Funny Teacher

"They really take time… ma-busy sa paperwork." – Strict Teacher

"Administrative duties… can be thieves of creative energy." – Inspirational Teacher

"Administrative tasks take time away from lesson preparation and checking outputs." – Chill Teacher

"Sometimes instead of improving activities, ma-focus sa reports and documentation." – Activity-Lover Teacher

"Administrative tasks take a significant portion of my time… more time spent on paperwork than actual teaching preparation." – Scientist-Maker Teacher

"Administrative tasks take a significant amount of time… I feel overwhelmed, like I'm being pulled in different directions." – Optimistic Teacher

"Daghan kaayo'g paper works, usahay madala na nako sa balay ang trabaho." – Beginning Teacher

This discovery aligns with occupation-based psychological research, which has shown that teachers suffer burnout, cognitive overload, and emotional exhaustion due to having a large amount of non-teaching administrative work. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2022), non-instructional tasks that take up teachers' time and mental energy have resulted in lower levels of instruction by teachers as well as decreased feelings of well-being for teachers. Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2023) determined that excessive demands from performing too much administrative work can create stress and lead to conflicts between work and home life, since teachers usually complete work-related tasks during off-hours as well. All of these studies indicate that large amounts of administrative work can impair how well teachers instruct students and adversely affect teacher well-being.

The findings shows how administrative workload interacts with large-class teaching to create a cumulative burden in Philippine public schools. Administrative tasks compete directly with time needed for lesson preparation, assessment, classroom management, and learner support, further limiting teachers' instructional capacity. The findings also indicate that improving instructional quality cannot rely solely on individual teacher development; organizational measures such as workload distribution, streamlined documentation, and protected preparation time are necessary. Notably, teachers' willingness to extend work into personal time and simplify lesson preparation demonstrates adaptive resilience, but also suggests that teacher commitment is being used to compensate for systemic workload pressures.

The three themes show that large class sizes, output checking, classroom monitoring, and administrative demands are interconnected, creating a cycle in which teachers prioritize efficiency over instructional depth. The study's key contribution is the "trade-off between instructional quality and operational feasibility" in Philippine public schools. While teachers demonstrate adaptability through simplified assessments, grouping, peer assessment, and streamlined routines, these strategies largely compensate for structural constraints. Thus, sustainable improvement requires not only teacher-level time-

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management strategies but also institutional support through manageable workloads, streamlined administrative requirements, and protected time for lesson preparation, assessment, and learner engagement.

Research Question 3: Identify the strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality.

The dominant themes generated when the participants were asked about strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality are: 1.) Prioritization, Planning, and Structured Routines Help Teachers Manage Workload Efficiently 2.) Collaboration, Delegation, and Simple Systems Reduce Time Pressure in Large Classes

The first dominant themes emerged for strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality is Prioritization, Planning, and Structured Routines Help Teachers Manage Workload Efficiently.

According to their statements,, public secondary teachers use the following methods to assist with managing heavy workloads and pressure associated with time constraints: prioritizing, planning in advance, implementing structure to classroom routines to enhance efficiency; teachers have noted that they are able to put their focus toward essential teaching by being able to identify what is both urgent and important (what are the required conditions for an effective class); that if they develop all necessary materials, lessons, and all associated assessments ahead of time, then their delivery of a lesson will run smoothly even though they may have very large class sizes; that if they create structured routines such as consistent attendance procedures,, organized sequencing of lessons, and smooth transitions between activities, their instructional delays can be reduced while maximizing the amount of time all students are learning; and, in order to assist with managing the large amount of students in their class, teachers will often times use group work and having students deployed or assigned leaders for each group and by utilizing simplified instructional techniques will assist with maximizing student engagement as well as reducing the amount of work created for teachers; these comments indicate that while both structured organization and preparation are key component elements of managing time efficiently in large classes, the primary benefit is that they both allow for efficient time management through routine type teaching methods.

"I prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance… clear routines… group activities help save time." – Scientific Teacher

"I organized my time so much ahead of time… motivation, discussion, then student activities, and assessment." – Cool Teacher

"I always prioritize the most important tasks first… practical, doable, and time-efficient activities." – Dedicated Teacher

"Time management gyud ang pinaka key nku… I prioritize the most important tasks." – Authoritative Teacher

"We hit two birds in one stone… having class while also doing administrative tasks." – Passionate Teacher

"Careful lesson planning with clear objectives… using routines reduces wasted time." – Mother Figure Teacher

"I use prioritization and batching… set deep work hours for lesson planning." – Techy Teacher

"Group work talaga ang lifesaver… prepare materials ahead of time." – Funny Teacher

"Discipline and routine… students follow instructions for smoother flow." – Strict Teacher

"I live by prioritization… clear learning objectives and batching tasks." – Inspirational Teacher

"Simple routines… consistent class structure and clear instructions." – Chill Teacher

"I prioritize urgent and important tasks… simple routines and combining tasks." – Activity-Lover Teacher

"I set clear routines, so students already know what to do… group activities help." – Scientist-Maker Teacher

"I rely on routines and prioritization… focus on what's most important." – Optimistic Teacher

"I try to simplify and prioritize… kung naanad na sila sa routine, mas paspas ang klase." – Beginning Teacher

The study by Creagh et al. (2025) builds on what has been learned through other researchers about how teachers have struggled with managing their workload and how they manage their time with their students. When managing the growing demands of their classrooms (and the increasingly higher numbers of students they are responsible for), teachers regularly use prioritizing their daily/weekly time and carefully planning and organizing their day-to-day/lesson plans by developing structured instructional routines. Creagh et al. (2025) have also noted that when teachers are put under pressure from having. instable time periods during the school day, they typically streamline their lesson preparation methods and specifically use

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systematic classroom strategies in order to maintain flow and efficiency of instruction. In a similar manner, the authors of this study found that teachers are relying more than ever on using structured organization and planning of their day-to-day work as a primary strategy for coping with the increasing demands placed on them by large classes, and in being able to continue providing quality instruction.

However, the present findings extend this literature by showing that, in Philippine public secondary schools, prioritization and routines function as adaptive mechanisms for working within structural constraints rather than simply as personal productivity strategies. Teachers strategically determine what is essential, simplify what is feasible, and establish predictable routines to protect instructional time. This demonstrates that Filipino teachers exercise professional agency by transforming limited time into more manageable instructional processes.

Importantly, the findings suggest that maintaining instructional quality in large classes does not necessarily mean maintaining every instructional activity in its ideal form. Instead, teachers negotiate between pedagogical ideals and classroom feasibility. Their strategies reflect a practical form of professional judgment in which instructional priorities are preserved while less essential or time-intensive practices are modified.

The second dominant themes emerged for strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality is Collaboration, Delegation, and Simple Systems Reduce Time Pressure in Large Classes.

Public Secondary School Teachers can handle the demands placed on them by large, unwieldy classes by working together to help share the workload. Through collaboration, delegation of classroom duties, and simple organizational systems, these teachers are able to manage their time. Each participant in this study reported that providing their students with assigned-group leaders, peer assistance, and collaborative learning activities are effective means of distributing duties across the class and simplifying the oversight of student outcomes and assessment of student work. These peer collaboration strategies have allowed them to keep their students actively engaged in class while creating a conducive learning environment to deliver high-quality educational services to large student populations as effectively as possible. Also, participants of the study reported using simple organizational tools (checklists, rubrics, electronic systems, how folders are labeled, batching, etc.) and peer evaluations as ways to simplify the process of evaluating and supporting student performance while encouraging the learning of their students. Overall, each participant in this study reported that by combining the use of collaborative approaches with structured but simplified organizational systems, teachers can manage multiple demands without compromising the quality of their teaching.

"I use spreadsheets… rubrics… peer checking… assign group leaders." – Scientific Teacher
"I ask my students to help me… I let go of some activities." – Cool Teacher
"I collaborate with co-teachers and rely on LAC sessions." – Dedicated Teacher
"I use consistent discipline and group leaders." – Strict Teacher
"Hit two birds in one stone… class and administrative tasks together." – Passionate Teacher
"Using routines and organization… reduce repetition of instructions." – Mother Figure Teacher
"I use automated tools and digital templates." – Techy Teacher
"Group work talaga… assign student leaders." – Funny Teacher
"Use checklists and assign group leaders." – Strict Teacher
"Peer-review circles and self-assessment." – Inspirational Teacher
"Checklists for submissions… digital tools and group chats." – Chill Teacher
"Combine tasks… outputs as both activity and assessment." – Activity-Lover Teacher
"Group activities reduce outputs I need to check individually." – Scientist-Maker Teacher
"Rubrics and peer checking help speed up checking." – Optimistic Teacher
"Maglista gyud ko… tabang-tabang pud ang mga estudyante." – Beginning Teacher

OECD (2023) finds that educators utilize such strategies to maintain instructional quality in large classes by using collaborative learning arrangements; that is, they use collaborative learning arrangements and delegation of tasks and other simplified organizational implements in order to effectively manage their workload. Furthermore, such collaboration is found to reduce the amount of time teachers feel pressured to get students engaged in their classes and help increase the degree of student involvement and engagement in the classroom setting. Therefore, these strategies are effective approaches to maintaining instructional quality in high-enrollment classroom.

The present findings reveal a distinctive feature of the Philippine context: teachers actively mobilize learners and existing classroom structures as resources for managing workload. Group leaders, peer assessment, collaborative tasks, and shared classroom responsibilities do not merely support learning; they also redistribute routine monitoring and assessment demands. This suggests that learner participation becomes both a pedagogical strategy and a practical workload-management mechanism in large Philippine classrooms.

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The findings therefore point to a model of "distributed classroom management," in which teachers retain instructional leadership while strategically sharing selected responsibilities with learners and colleagues. This approach demonstrates teacher adaptability and resourcefulness, particularly where additional instructional support may be limited. However, delegation must remain structured and purposeful to ensure that efficiency does not compromise assessment validity, learner equity, or teacher oversight.
The findings show that Filipino teachers manage time pressure through prioritization, routines, collaboration, and delegation. The study contributes to the Philippine context by showing that teachers sustain instructional continuity not simply by working faster, but by strategically reorganizing time, tasks, and responsibilities. These adaptive practices reflect teacher resilience and resourcefulness in large public-school classrooms. Thus, school-level support should strengthen these practices through efficient lesson design, collaborative assessment, peer-assisted learning, digital tools, and structured delegation to sustain instructional quality without increasing teachers' workload.

Research Question 4: Determine the school-level factors that influence teachers' ability to manage their time effectively.

The dominant themes emerged for the school-level that influence teachers' ability to manage their time effectively are: 1. Supportive Leadership and Clear School Guidance Improve Time Management and 2.) Collaboration and Resource Sharing Among Teachers Reduce Workload Pressure

The first dominant theme emerged for the school-level that influence teachers' ability to manage their time effectively is Supportive Leadership and Clear School Guidance Improve Time Management.
School leadership has shown that supportive school leadership and clear administrative guidance are crucial components for improving teachers' ability to effectively manage their time while teaching large classes. Participants spoke consistently about how when school leaders (e.g., head teachers, department heads, principals) gave teachers clear directions, realistic timelines, and a structured work schedule, teachers were able to better organize their work tasks and prepare for teaching. Communication of clear responsibilities and expectations provided teachers with less confusion about what needed to be done which resulted in fewer delays related to schoolwork being completed. Additionally, teachers identified that when school leaders encouraged them to prepare for lessons in advance by providing clarity on how they will report their work, it improved the flow of work and helped improve teachers' time management. Key characteristics that were also identified as helping to alleviate time pressures were flexibility, an understanding of teachers' overall workload, and a fair allocation of responsibilities among teachers to allow teachers to spend more time preparing to teach and delivering instruction in the classroom.

"Support from school heads, cooperative co-teachers… helps a lot. When administrators understand teacher workload and give realistic deadlines, mas manageable gyud ang trabaho." – Scientific Teacher

"My master teacher would suggest how to divide my actual teaching time every time I will submit my lesson plan." – Cool Teacher

"It helps when teachers' workloads are properly evaluated and balanced." – Dedicated Teacher

"Providing a calendar schedule would also help avoid confusion and make report preparation less time-consuming." – Strict Teacher

"Our principal always reminds us to do things ahead of time so there is still room for correction and improvement." – Passionate Teacher

"Structured scheduling of academic and non-academic calendars… makes it easier for teachers to plan instruction." – Mother Figure Teacher

"Structured scheduling and collaborative planning time are the biggest helps." – Techy Teacher

"Support from the administration really helps when they understand our situation." – Scientist-Maker Teacher

According to the report released by OECD (2023) regarding educational leaders at schools, effective educational leadership greatly impacts the quality of teaching and supports the success of instructional practices by teachers. In the report, one of the key findings points out that when school leaders provide clearly defined directions for the teachers, and when there are structured support systems in place and well-organized processes in the schools, the teachers are more able to manage their workload to be able to plan their lessons more efficiently and to have increased opportunity to spend time on the instruction that occurs within the classroom. Additionally, when the principal or other school leaders perform their jobs to be supportive leaders, this will reduce the confusion surrounding administration and will enhance the ability of teachers to maintain high-quality instruction and the quality of instruction even in highly demanding school environments like schools with large number of students and/or multiple classes.

The present study demonstrates that in Philippine public secondary schools, leadership functions as an important time-allocation mechanism. Teachers' time is influenced not only by their individual ability to

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organize tasks but also by how school leaders structure schedules, deadlines, reporting requirements, and workload distribution. The findings therefore suggest that effective time management is partly an organizational responsibility rather than solely an individual teacher competency. Clear guidance and realistic expectations allow teachers to protect time for lesson preparation, classroom instruction, assessment, and learner support.

A particularly important contribution of the study is the finding that supportive leadership is experienced through practical administrative actions rather than leadership support in general. Calendar coordination, advance reminders, workload balancing, flexibility, and guidance on lesson preparation directly shape how teachers use their limited time. In the Philippine context, where teachers commonly manage instructional and non-instructional responsibilities simultaneously, these seemingly routine leadership practices can determine whether available time is used for instruction or consumed by competing administrative demands. Thus, school leadership should be viewed as a structural factor that can either reduce or intensify teachers' time pressure.

The second dominant theme emerged for the school-level that influence teachers' ability to manage their time effectively is Collaboration and Resource Sharing Among Teachers Reduce Workload Pressure. Teachers collaborating together, through shared resources, has been shown to be one of the most effective examples in improving the time management of teachers working with a larger number of students. All of the participants believed that the collaborative method of working together with co-teachers or sharing materials, developing lesson plans and participating in professional development activities such as the LAC meetings and PLCs, helped reduce the amount of individual work they had to do, thus improving the overall effectiveness of their instruction. With the availability of shared modules, instructional tools and instructional materials, teachers were able to greatly decrease their preparation time and focus their energies on providing high-quality instruction. In addition, the same teamwork among teachers at the department level helped alleviate the duplication of effort and allowed the sharing of strategies and ideas; thus, creating a positive professional climate among those involved in the collaboration model. Overall, the benefits of using a collaboration model resulted in reducing the pressures associated with managing the work efforts of the teacher and allowed for a longer period of time to be devoted to effective management of time; thus, helping to ensure that the quality was maintained.

"Support from colleagues… sharing materials, ideas, and even just encouragement makes a difference." – Scientific Teacher

"We share ideas and materials, and sometimes just talking about our struggles makes things lighter." – Optimistic Teacher

"Shared materials and support from co-teachers malaking tulong." – Funny Teacher

"Support from co-teachers and having available materials really help." – Strict Teacher

"The most valuable support is collaborative planning time… it lifts a huge weight." – Inspirational Teacher

"Having shared or unified learning materials really helps because it saves preparation time." – Chill Teacher

"Sharing of materials within the department saves time. If there is teamwork, mas dali gyud ma-manage ang workload." – Activity-Lover Teacher

"Support from colleagues really helps. Sharing ideas and materials makes things easier." – Beginning Teacher

A recent study conducted by Vivek Venkatesh and co-authors (2022) confirmed the findings of this study through their investigation into how teachers in collaborative teams work together. Their results indicate that collaboration (in terms of resource sharing and co-planning) can lead to significant reductions in the individual workload, while simultaneously improving an individual teacher's effectiveness (Venkatesh et al., 2022). This finding also relates to the time that teachers are able to save when preparing for classes because of the shared collaboration, as this leads to reduced duplication of effort and increased time spent on effective instruction delivery. Overall, the evidence provided by Venkatesh et al. (2022) supports our current findings regarding the importance of collaboration and resource sharing as effective strategies to support collaborative workload management, especially in a larger class size, as evidenced by the above findings.

The findings shows that collaboration in Philippine public schools functions not only as professional learning but also as an informal workload-management mechanism. Shared materials, co-planning, LAC/PLC activities, and collegial support reduce duplication, redistribute effort, and protect time for instruction. Beyond practical assistance, collegiality also provides social support for teachers managing multiple school responsibilities.

Taken together, the themes demonstrate that teacher time management is not solely an individual skill but is shaped by school-level conditions. In the Philippine context, supportive leadership, clear organizational systems, fair workload distribution, and collegial resource sharing collectively enable teachers to manage time

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more effectively. This shifts the focus from individual coping toward strengthening school structures that support sustainable instructional quality.

Research Question 5: Explore how teachers reflect on their experiences in managing time with large class sizes and the insights or lessons they gain from these experiences.

The dominant theme emerged for teachers' reflection on their experiences in managing time with large class sizes and the insights or lessons they gain from these experiences is Teaching Large Classes Builds Resilience, Adaptability, and Professional Growth.

Teaching in a large class has created numerous options for teacher development professionally and personally, while also being challenging. All of the participants felt that this teaching experience required development of patience, organization, resourcefulness, and flexibility in various classroom situations. In addition, they became better at multitasking, adapting their style of teaching to accommodate the needs of each of their students, and adjusting their responses to differing needs of the same student in a timely manner. The many challenges of large-class teaching have developed increased resiliency in educators and a strengthening of their commitment to the teaching profession. Overall, many teachers currently have some level of acknowledgment that the stress associated with managing a large class has not only been an obstacle but is now viewed as an opportunity for them to grow into more competent, flexible, and thoughtful teachers.

"*Professionally, it made me more patient, organized, and resourceful. I learned how to multitask and adapt quickly." – Scientific Teacher*

"Teaching large classes has somehow helped me develop patience… and made me more resourceful in handling different classroom situations." – Dedicated Teacher

"Teaching large classes has made me more disciplined, firm, and efficient… and grow into a stronger, more resilient teacher." – Strict Teacher

"It has made me more resilient and creative…" – Scientist-Maker Teacher

"It has helped me grow stronger and more creative. I've learned to adapt and find solutions…" – Optimistic Teacher

"It has helped me grow. I've become more patient and resilient… 'Daghan kaayo ko'g nakat-onan, bisan lisod." – Beginning Teacher

Through demanding working conditions such as large amounts of work and difficulty managing a classroom, teachers learn to demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and professional competence. Difficult working conditions push teachers to become more resourceful, reflective, and dedicated to their work, which supports the finding that teachers' professional growth and development are enhanced by managing large numbers of students (Day, C., & Gu, Q., 2021).

Teachers expressed that they strongly support a comprehensive school-based support system that will assist in addressing the issues associated with over-sized classrooms through the use of both structural and instructional support. The participants of the study stated that the most feasible way to reduce class size is by putting additional classrooms and teachers into place; however, due to current economic conditions, that option may not always be available. Therefore, participants have listed a number of options they believe exist to alleviate issues caused by over-sized classrooms; these options include adding Teacher Aides, equitably distributing the workload, eliminating non-essential administrative tasks, and providing teachers with sufficient amounts of time to plan and evaluate student work. In addition, teachers stressed the importance of having access to common/shared instructional resources and having adequate amounts of instructional materials along with supplies to enhance the effectiveness of the classroom. Ongoing Professional Development, with an emphasis on large class-size management and delivering instruction in an effective manner, was also very important to the participants. Overall, the results of this study indicate that in order for teachers to effectively manage large class sizes and provide students with quality instruction, a comprehensive school-based support system comprised of institutional support, adequate resource availability, and effective workload management must be present.

The findings suggest that large-class teaching in Philippine public schools is both a source of professional learning and a reflection of structural constraints. Teachers' experiences develop resilience and adaptability, but they also reveal the need for school-level conditions that prevent resilience from becoming a mechanism for absorbing excessive workload. Thus, the study contributes a more critical understanding of teacher resilience—as both a professional strength and an indicator of the need for stronger institutional support.

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Research Question 6: Propose practical school-based systems or interventions that can support teachers in managing time effectively when handling large classes.

In response, the intervention "TIMEWISE: A School-Based Intervention System for Enhancing Teachers' Time Management and Instructional Efficiency in Large Class Settings" is proposed. TIMEWISE (Teaching Instructional Management Efficiency, Workload Integration, Strategies, Enhancement) aims to provide structured school-based support systems that help teachers manage their time more effectively and reduce workload burdens. Through strategies such as structured routines, collaboration, and simplified systems, the program seeks to improve teaching efficiency while also supporting teacher well-being in large-class environments.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards to protect participants' rights, privacy, and well-being. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). The interview questions and informed consent form were reviewed and validated by qualified experts for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, and right to withdraw without penalty. Participation was voluntary, with no coercion or undue influence. Pseudonyms or participant codes were used to protect identities, and research data were securely stored with access limited to authorized personnel. The researcher-maintained neutrality and accurately represented participants' experiences throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting. The study complied with relevant institutional and professional ethical guidelines, including applicable Department of Education policies and principles for ethical qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conclusion

Experiences of public secondary school teachers in managing time while handling large class sizes. To understand how secondary school teachers manage large class sizes and time their success depends on having strategies to adapt to ongoing pressure to develop a productive learning environment, teachers must be able to create routine schedules that are safe and efficient with the limited amount of time they have in the classroom. These two processes additionally provide the stability required to maintain discipline among students and the continual flow of lessons that occur each day; thus, creating a necessary structure for professional personal satisfaction. Too often teachers feel like they are racing against the clock; because of this, teachers must juggle multiple tasks everyday with little to no time to complete them. Thus, to represent the balance that exists between being organized and fatigued, the combination of these characteristics provides evidence of teacher resilience and demonstrates the need for professional support systems to promote quality instructional experiences, and to help preserve teacher wellness and quality. Challenges that teachers encounter in checking outputs, managing classrooms, and completing administrative tasks in large classes. The experiences of public secondary school teachers in large class sizes illustrate the combined effect of time pressures, heavy workloads and administrative demands. The pressures from these challenges force teachers to simplify the planning, assessment and feedback of lessons that otherwise would be more thoughtful and complete, as teachers focus on efficiency rather than depth. Teachers also find their workload becomes considerably more exhausting due to the additional tasks involved in managing behavior, monitoring participation and checking student output due to a large number of learners in their class, as well as administrative demands taking away from time needed to plan lessons. This illustrates the need for stronger and more systematic support for teachers to adapt to ongoing changing challenges, as well as for improving the quality of instructional delivery and their overall well-being. Strategies teachers use to cope with time pressure and heavy workloads while maintaining instructional quality. Teachers demonstrate effective ways to manage time constraints and load through their strategy(s) used to prioritize, plan, and create routines that support efficient lesson delivery. Teachers use collaboration, delegation, and basic structures like group work and assessments to help reduce their workload, while keeping students engaged. These examples show how teachers adapt, as well as show the need for schools to create structures to help teachers deliver with quality instruction in high numbers of students. School-level factors that influence teachers' ability to manage time effectively. It has been demonstrated that teacher's success in effectively managing time in large groups depends upon the instructional supportiveness of their school and level of cooperative partnerships. Supportive leaders provide clear guidance, enabling teachers to organize activities and reduce ambiguity regarding their responsibilities. By collaborating and continuing to develop relationships with others, teachers share resources and lessen their personal Load thereby increasing their effectiveness. Therefore, the degree to which an individual manages his/her own time will be directly influenced by his/her support systems and the cooperative learning environment that exists in their school. Teachers' reflection on their experiences in

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managing time with large class sizes and the insights or lessons they gain from these experiences. While there were significant issues faced, they are crucially useful for further developing their professional skills. Many teachers stated that being able to handle big classes has allowed them to build their resiliency, ability to adapt, and organizational skills so that they can deal with a variety of classroom needs more effectively than they could before. Many teachers stated that they have improved their patience, resourcefulness, and flexibility in meeting student needs. The majority of teachers see these types of challenges not just as difficulties, but more importantly, as opportunities to continue learning and growing as a teacher.

Reccomendations

Curriculum Planners. Design and refine curricula that consider realistic instructional pacing, reduced content overload, and flexible assessment requirements suited to large-class environments. Streamline learning competencies to prevent teachers from oversimplifying lessons because of time constraints. School Administrators/Principals. Strengthen policies that reduce unnecessary administrative workload and promote balanced task distribution among teachers. Provide clear guidelines, reasonable deadlines, and supportive scheduling systems that allow teachers to focus on lesson preparation and instructional quality. Head Teachers. Promote collaborative structures within departments, such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and shared instructional planning. Implement monitoring systems that emphasize instructional support and help teachers improve efficiency in managing large classes. Master Teachers. Play an active role in mentoring and coaching teachers on effective time-management strategies for large classes. Share best practices in lesson planning, classroom management, and output checking to strengthen instructional efficiency among colleagues. Teachers. Continue to apply and refine effective strategies such as prioritization, structured routines, collaboration, and simplified systems for managing workload. Engage in reflective practice and professional sharing to enhance teaching efficiency and manage workload pressures in large-class settings. Future Researchers. Conduct further studies that explore intervention-based strategies and policy implementation related to time management in large classes. Examine the long-term effects of workload reduction and collaborative systems on teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

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