



Coping Strategies of Public-School Elementary Teachers in Dealing with Paperwork

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Abstract

This study examined the coping strategies of public school elementary teachers in managing school paperwork, a growing concern that affects both teaching performance and teacher well-being. Specifically, it aimed to (1) identify the types of paperwork required, (2) explore teachers' preparation strategies, (3) determine the perceived impact on teaching performance, (4) identify challenges encountered, and (5) examine how teachers cope with these challenges. A single case study design was appropriate for providing an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences in a specific context. Eight elementary teachers were purposively selected from five public schools in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, based on their teaching experience and involvement in paperwork-related tasks. Data were collected through structured interviews and analyzed using categorical aggregation to identify recurring patterns. Findings revealed that in addition to teaching duties, teachers handle various paperwork, including school forms, ancillary reports, and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) documentation, records essential for monitoring the development of kindergarten and early primary learners. Preparation strategies involved data gathering, time planning, and document organization. Key challenges included limited digital literacy, time constraints, and delayed task execution. Coping strategies included collaborating with colleagues, practicing effective time management, acting promptly on tasks, and maintaining systematic records. Teachers reported that these strategies helped them balance administrative and instructional responsibilities. The study recommends adopting streamlined paperwork systems by schools and the Department of Education to reduce workload-related stress and support teaching quality.

Keywords: *Coping Strategies, Public-School Elementary Teachers, Paperwork, Teaching Performance, Challenges Encountered*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a vital role in shaping education and are often regarded as second parents, nurturing not only the cognitive but also the social and emotional development of children (Alson, 2019). Their responsibilities extend far beyond the classroom walls. In addition to delivering lessons, teachers are expected to manage discipline, model ethical behavior, and foster meaningful learning experiences through differentiated instruction, technology integration, and innovative pedagogical strategies (Keiler, 2018). These practices reflect a broader professional commitment to lifelong learning and continuous improvement (Burroughs et al., 2019).

However, in the context of Philippine public schools, the role of the teacher is increasingly burdened by non-instructional responsibilities. Teachers are expected to perform various administrative tasks such as preparing instructional materials, planning curricula, checking assessments, and maintaining records (Ancho & Bongco, 2019). According to DepEd (2024), ten standardized school forms must be submitted throughout the academic year, each with specific data and documentation requirements. These demands add layers of complexity to an already

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demanding profession.

Moreover, teachers are often required to take on leadership roles within departments, organize school events, and participate in program implementation (Villanueva et al., 2022). These responsibilities are frequently compounded by urgent requests from district offices, leaving little room for negotiation or reprieve. The district often orders the immediate submission of these documents. Teachers could only accept the task in front of them without complaints (Helplineph, 2021). The Department of Education could only list all the tasks teachers had and reduce the amount of administrative work; however, there were some administrative tasks that teachers had to complete on their own (Llego, 2024).

The cumulative workload often pushes teachers to work beyond their contracted hours, including during weekends and school breaks, to meet administrative deadlines (Joy, 2019). Such excessive demands can result in chronic stress, burnout, and workaholism, all of which have long-term consequences for teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness (Hosseini et al., 2016). When administrative responsibilities encroach upon teaching time, both educators and students ultimately suffer the consequences.

While existing research has documented the heavy workload and administrative burdens experienced by teachers, especially in public schools, and their links to stress, burnout, and reduced instructional quality, there is limited understanding of how teachers themselves cope with these pressures on a day-to-day basis. Specifically, studies have not adequately explored context-specific strategies used by public elementary teachers in the Philippines to manage extensive paperwork while maintaining their teaching responsibilities.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the coping strategies employed by selected public-school elementary teachers in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, during the 2024 academic year. The study focused on teachers' experiences in handling various documents while balancing their instructional responsibilities and addressing students' needs.

This study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the different types of paperwork that teachers need to comply with?
2. What are the preparation strategies of public-school elementary teachers in doing school paperwork?
3. What is the perceived impact of school paperwork on public-school elementary teachers' teaching performance?
4. What are the challenges encountered by public-school elementary teachers in dealing with paperwork?
5. How do they cope with these challenges?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In public schools, teachers dedicate significant time not only to classroom instruction but also to extensive paperwork and administrative duties, often spending over eight hours daily to fulfill their responsibilities, including six hours of teaching and additional time for administrative tasks (Llego, 2018). This workload contrasts with that of private school teachers, where factors such as administrative support, disciplinary procedures, class size, pay, and teaching opportunities differ markedly (Pendon, 2023). The administrative tasks teachers are required to complete include a variety of mandated school forms, such as attendance records, learner progress reports, and health profiles, all crucial for compliance and student monitoring as outlined by DepEd (2024).

While these administrative duties are essential for school operations, they add considerable burdens beyond teaching. Teachers are often expected to lead departments, develop curricula, and manage programs, which amplifies their workload (Villanueva et al., 2022). The

immediate submission demands imposed by districts leave teachers little choice but to accept these tasks without complaint (Helplineph, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these challenges. With the academic calendar shortened and vacation time reduced, teachers faced increased tasks during breaks, including report preparation and community activities, in addition to managing dual evaluation systems like RPMS and PPST (Chi, 2023)

Research consistently documents the high levels of stress experienced by educators due to their extensive workload (Demjaha et al., 2015; Desouky & Allam, 2017) Teachers prefer to focus on direct student engagement and instructional activities but are frequently overwhelmed by lesson planning, curriculum development, class supervision, and administrative responsibilities (David et al., 2019; Nemenzo, 2018) In specific districts such as Mahayag South, teachers juggling multiple roles report significant role overload, with emotional exhaustion and burnout being major consequences, negatively impacting personal performance and overall effectiveness (Yilmaz et al., 2015; Rahman & Avan, 2016)

The severe implications of this burden were tragically underscored by the 2018 suicide of a teacher overwhelmed by workload stress, prompting the Department of Education to promise reductions in administrative demands, though detailed measures remained pending (Mateo, 2018) Studies confirm that excessive paperwork correlates with decreased job satisfaction, higher burnout rates, and lower instructional quality, which adversely affects student outcomes (Spector et al., 2019) In response, DepEd's 2024 policy on the Immediate Removal of Administrative Tasks aims to delegate administrative duties to school personnel, enabling teachers to prioritize classroom teaching and improve educational quality (Duterte, 2024)

Despite extensive documentation of teacher workload and stress, there remains a lack of comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of these policy interventions and workload reduction initiatives.

The existing research has primarily focused on the heavy workload and administrative burdens faced by teachers, particularly in public schools, but has not sufficiently examined the effectiveness of strategies aimed at reducing these challenges. Consequently, this study aims to explore the coping strategies employed by public-school elementary teachers in managing school paperwork, thereby addressing the gap in understanding how administrative reforms impact teacher well-being and instructional quality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded in John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, which explains how the brain processes information and how excessive demands can hinder learning and performance. The theory identifies three types of cognitive load: intrinsic (task complexity), extraneous (external factors affecting processing), and germane (integration of new knowledge) Applied to teaching, the theory highlights how excessive paperwork can overwhelm teachers' cognitive capacity, affecting their instructional effectiveness (Sweller, 2011; Wilson et al., 2023) This framework guided the study in exploring the coping strategies of public-school elementary teachers in managing school paperwork while balancing their teaching responsibilities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative single case study design following Merriam (1998) to explore coping strategies of public-school elementary teachers managing paperwork alongside teaching duties. The research focused on understanding the coping strategies of public-school elementary teachers in handling school paperwork while fulfilling their instructional responsibilities. The study was conducted in five selected central public elementary schools in

Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur. These schools were identified due to their high administrative demands and frequent paperwork requirements from the Division Office through their respective school heads.

The participants comprised eight (8) teachers selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: each had a minimum of five years of teaching experience and was actively engaged in managing substantial paperwork responsibilities. The researchers served as the primary data collection instruments, assisted by a semi-structured interview guide composed of open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in settings convenient for the participants, ensuring a comfortable environment for open dialogue. Field notes and audio recordings were used to capture data accurately.

The data collection process began with the distribution of formal letters signed by the adviser and addressed to the participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with full disclosure of the study's objectives, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature. After gaining approval, interviews were conducted and recorded. The responses were then transcribed and analyzed using Merriam's (1998) method of categorical aggregation, which involved organizing data into themes and patterns. This method enabled the researchers to identify key coping strategies and recurring challenges across participants. The researchers collected data over two months beginning in 2024.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, all personal data was kept confidential, and no information was used in a way that could harm or identify participants. These measures ensured the integrity of the study and the protection of its participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and interpretation of the results were presented based on the data gathered from selected teachers in central elementary schools about the coping strategies of elementary teachers in dealing with paperwork. This study aimed to explore the diverse coping strategies used by teachers in central elementary schools in Pagadian City. Only 8 selected elementary teachers participated in this study. The research participants were coded as teacher 1 (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, and T8)

Different Types of Paperwork That Teachers Need to Comply With

The researchers explored the types of paperwork that elementary teachers were required to complete. Three main categories emerged: school forms, ancillary documents, and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) forms.

School forms.

Teachers were required to submit ten official school forms mandated by DepEdPH (2024) throughout the academic year. These included School Form 1 (School Register), Form 2 (Learner's Daily Class Attendance), Form 3 (Books Issued and Returned), Form 4 (Summary Enrolment and Movement of Learners), Form 5 (Report on Promotion), Form 6 (Summary Report on Promotion), Form 7 (Inventory Report on Promotion), Form 8 (Learner Basic Health Profile), Form 9 (Learner Progress Report Card), and Form 10 (Learner's Permanent Academic Record) The research participants shared the following:

"SF 10 is the student's permanent record, while SF 5 contains the students' grades, encoded online. SF 9 serves as the report card. The information on the students' live birth certificates

must align with what is on the SF 10. After each school year, we compile these records; however, we also prepare monthly reports for the students, interacting with this information every month.” T1

“The SF1 and SF2 are our primary standard operating procedures (SOP) tailored specifically for student-related processes.” T2

“SF 10, SF 1, SF 2, and SF 9 are basic forms teachers must complete. Some are monthly, some are quarterly, and some are yearly. SF 10 is for yearly accomplishment checks, SF 9 is for quarterly updates, and SF 2 is for monthly reports. SF 1 is filled out upon enrollment and printed immediately since we now use electronic forms.” T3

“We are currently dealing with paperwork because the Department of Education has removed some extra tasks, and now we only have to handle school forms. School Form 1 is for the school register, School Form 2 is for attendance, School Form 9 is for report cards, and School Form 10 is for permanent records”. T4

“As part of the Department of Education (DepEd), we must complete the following Paperwork: SF-10, SF-9, and SF-2”. T5

“The 'SF-9' typically refers to the grades or report cards of the pupils, whereas the 'SF-10' pertains to their permanent records”. T6

Teachers managed various mandated forms like School Form 10, essential for tracking student progress and meeting DepEd requirements (Monsalve, 2024). While these forms support accountability and instructional planning (Smith, 2018), the findings indicate they also increase teachers' workload. This reflects Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, where excessive administrative tasks contribute to extraneous cognitive load, potentially hindering teaching effectiveness. Balancing documentation with support is crucial to maintain instructional focus.

Ancillary paperwork.

According to DepEd Order No. 005, series of 2024, the teacher ancillary task refers to work incidental to the teachers' teaching duties. The following tasks were considered ancillary: Curriculum Planning, Curriculum Delivery and Pedagogy, Assessment of Learners' Progress, and the Action Cell (LAC) Coordinator/In-Service Training (INSET) Coordinator. The research participants shared the following:

“As a Property Custodian, I handle various paperwork, including conducting inventories of books and other materials. These are our ancillary tasks, additional duties given to us aside from teaching, like being a property custodian”. T1

“I used to have much paperwork to complete, especially before our ancillary tasks were reassigned. I handled many coordinator roles, such as RRM Coordinator, Brigada Eskwela, Oplan Balik Eskwela, and Early Registration. I was also involved with RRM, which includes Disaster Risk Management activities like earthquake drills and similar tasks”. T2

“Aside from our normal forms, we also have this Nutritional Status Report as one of the

ancillary tasks or coordinators for teachers, where they monitor the pupils' weight, height, and BMI. This monitoring is conducted twice, during the 1st and 2nd semesters of the school year". T5

"The goal of the 'Gulayan sa Paaralan' is to raise awareness of every pupil to get involved or to have the 'Gulayan sa Paaralan' even in their houses". T7

Participants reported that, beyond teaching, they managed ancillary tasks like inventory, disaster preparedness, and health monitoring, which increased their workload and diverted focus from instruction. Despite some tasks being delegated, teachers remained overburdened (Dinero & Oco, 2024). While such paperwork supports legal compliance and school operations (Smith, 2018), the findings suggest that excessive non-teaching duties strain teachers' capacity to deliver quality instruction, highlighting the need for better task distribution and support systems.

Early Childhood Care and Developmental (ECCD)

The checklist was conducted based on the ECCD Council's (2020) recommended schedule: every four months for ages 0–1, every six months for ages 1.1–3, and annually for ages 3.1–5.11. The following evidence statement is shown below:

"I am handling the Early Childhood Developmental Checklist (ECCD) and do not have Form 137. Form 137 is with the graders, but since our students are still in kindergarten level, we use ECCD instead of SF-10 or Form 137." T2

A participant noted that kindergarten teachers use the ECCD Checklist instead of Form 137, reflecting the use of age-appropriate assessment tools. The ECCD form aids in evaluating school readiness for Grade 1 (Doctor & Macalisang, 2024). This aligns with Black et al. (2017), who emphasized that quality early childhood assessment supports long-term academic success. Similarly, UNICEF (2019) highlights ECCD's role in addressing children's educational, social, and health needs. These findings underscore the importance of tailored assessment in ensuring effective early learning transitions.

Public-School Elementary Teachers' Preparation in Doing School Paperwork

The preparation for handling school paperwork was crucial for public elementary teachers, alongside their teaching duties. Data showed varied approaches to completing paperwork, including collecting data, managing time, and organizing documents.

Collecting necessary data.

The subcategory of collecting necessary data involved gathering information on students' academic performance, attendance, demographics, and other relevant details. The research participants shared the following:

"The first step is to gather data because when dealing with paperwork, the initial requirement is to have the data required to fill out the forms." T3

"Ensure that the data for all pupils, particularly those enrolling in Grade 1, is comprehensive and complete. This guarantees a smooth data entry process without missing details that could cause delays. Addressing this prevents work from accumulating, allowing for timely

completion when necessary.” T5

The data highlighted that complete student records simplify paperwork and support informed teaching. These records help teachers identify learners’ strengths and needs, enabling targeted instruction. This aligns with [Dam et al. \(2018\)](#), who emphasized data-driven strategies, and [Swain et al. \(2021\)](#), who noted that effective data collection is essential for addressing individual student goals, particularly in IEP implementation.

Allocating time.

This referred to managing time to prepare for school paperwork or reports that had to comply with the given schedule. The following statement is shown below:

“I effectively manage my time by setting a schedule and prioritizing tasks accordingly. Whenever I need to prepare reports, I tackle them immediately, especially if there are no other pressing tasks. Upon request, I ensure that these reports are submitted promptly.” T4

“When completing paperwork, effective time management is crucial. Whenever you receive assigned paperwork, it typically comes with a deadline that you must meet.” T6

“It is important to diligently plan and be aware of your paperwork deadlines, enabling you to prioritize tasks effectively. By doing so, you can manage your time efficiently, allocating it appropriately based on the predetermined order of tasks.” T7

“To ensure I can submit the task before the eleventh hour, it's essential that I manage my time effectively. Time management is the key.” T8

The data showed that effective time management was key to managing paperwork, helping teachers reduce stress and meet deadlines. This supports [Muhammad et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Ngwenya \(2014\)](#), who found that time management directly influences teaching performance. [Tracy \(2014\)](#) emphasized that efficient time use boosts productivity, while [Dagnaw \(2023\)](#) underscored time as a limited resource requiring careful planning. These findings highlight that managing time well is essential not just for paperwork but for overall teaching effectiveness.

Sorting the document.

The subcategory identified was sorting documents, which involved organizing tasks and materials to prioritize what needed to be done first. This approach helped teachers save time, complete tasks efficiently, and meet deadlines. The following statement is shown below:

“Being organized with paperwork, you should know what reports to do to make your work easier. When everything is organized, you will not be confused or scrambling”. T4

The data indicated that organizing materials made paperwork more manageable, reducing confusion and errors. This aligns with [Bay et al. \(2014\)](#), who emphasized that an organized work environment enhances productivity and supports institutional efficiency. These findings suggest that systematic organization is a practical strategy for improving teachers’ workflow and task accuracy.

Perceived Impact of School Paperwork on Public School Elementary Teachers' Teaching Performances

Educators influenced students beyond academics, serving as mentors, motivators, and guides in shaping both intellect and emotional resilience. The subcategories were: Pupils are left unsupervised, and Lessons are left behind.

Pupils are left unsupervised.

This referred to periods during scheduled academic hours when students were not directly supervised by the teacher, typically due to the teacher's involvement in administrative tasks, like completing paperwork or attending meetings. The following statement is shown below:

"Occasionally, there appears to be a neglect towards the students, which weighs heavily on us. This is because the focus shifts from the students to other tasks, rather than prioritizing their needs." T1

"I find it to be negative because it is time-consuming, which leads to neglecting the students while trying to catch up on the tasks". T6

"Handling small children while simultaneously needing to complete reports was an incredibly stressful experience. Providing activity sheets is challenging because they invariably require assistance, as children are naturally curious and full of questions. This necessitates constant vigilance and attention, which can be particularly burdensome when faced with many reports to complete. Balancing the need to closely monitor and engage with the children with the requirement to focus on and finish these reports made it much more work to manage both responsibilities effectively." T2

Participants shared that excessive paperwork and ancillary tasks often lead to unintentional student neglect, as administrative demands reduce time for instruction. This reflects ongoing concerns about how non-teaching duties affect classroom engagement. Aligned with the findings of [Rose & Sika \(2019\)](#) and [Jomud et al. \(2021\)](#), the study shows that heavy workloads contribute to teacher stress, exhaustion, and diminished teaching quality.

Lessons are left behind.

The category referred to delayed learning among students because teachers' paperwork or administrative tasks disrupted the intended lesson schedule for class learning. The following evidence statement is shown below:

"Students are struggling to keep up with their courses as the lessons planned for the current week are not being completed within the allotted timeframe, indicating that the duration intended for each lesson is not being adhered to." T2

"If we cannot cover the planned lesson in the time we have, there is an increased likelihood that seatwork will be assigned instead". T3

Participants noted that limited instructional time often hindered lesson completion, resulting in increased reliance on seatwork. This indicates a pacing mismatch that may impact student engagement and understanding. Supporting this, [Nemenzo \(2018\)](#) identified time

constraints, fatigue, and learner challenges as key factors complicating lesson planning and delivery, highlighting the need for better time management and support to improve teaching effectiveness.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Dealing with Paperwork

Teachers, while primarily focused on instruction, also managed extensive administrative duties and monitored student progress, often facing challenges such as the digital divide, delayed task execution, and time constraints.

Digital divide among educators.

The challenge was posed by teachers needing to be proficient in using technology for educational and administrative purposes, hindering teachers' ability to integrate digital resources effectively into teaching and administrative tasks. The following evidence is stated below:

"It is challenging to adapt to the current generation because the approach now is digital, like our LIS, where we input the students' data, whereas before, we used handwritten methods".
T6

A participant highlighted the challenge of transitioning from handwritten to digital systems like LIS, reflecting the adjustment needed for "digital immigrants" with limited tech proficiency and a preference for traditional methods. This shift also requires educators to critically evaluate and select suitable digital tools for effective teaching (Min et al., 2017), underscoring the need for targeted technology training.

Delayed task execution.

This referred to the tendency of elementary teachers to postpone or defer professional responsibilities until the last minute. Following the evidence stated below:

"When I cram, particularly during 'Brigada Eskwela,' I manage multiple committees. Despite distinct committees for 'Program Implementation' and 'Record of Recognition,' I often take on their tasks as well, doing all the work myself." T2

A participant described managing multiple committees during activities like Brigada Eskwela, often taking on extra tasks that led to work overload and delayed execution. This highlights the impact of procrastination on professional duties. Klassen et al. (2008) emphasize the role of self-efficacy in self-regulation, suggesting that boosting teachers' confidence can improve their task and time management skills.

Time constraints.

This category referred to the constant pressure teachers experienced when navigating the paperwork requirements within limited timeframes. Following the evidence stated below:

"Time constraints become particularly challenging for teachers when DepEd imposes numerous curricular activities with set deadlines, such as grade submissions within the week. Balancing these deadlines alongside additional extracurricular responsibilities, like demonstrations and other activities, intensifies the pressure. Managing to complete administrative tasks like the SF 9 form becomes even more difficult, especially if grading

hasn't been finished. So, time constraints not only encompass the limited time available for completing paperwork but also the additional burden of extracurricular activities on top of being a public-school teacher." T3

"Paperwork has become a routine task for teachers, but it may present a challenge if we are given too short a time to complete it." T6

"For paperwork with tight deadlines, that should be submitted as soon as possible." T6

"Urgent Paperwork is also one of the challenges we face as teachers. Once we're given those tasks, they often need to be completed within a few days." T7

The participant highlighted time constraints as a major challenge in balancing teaching and additional DepEd duties, leading to work intensification and stress (Thompson et al., 2023). Effective time management was crucial to prevent delays and maintain workflow (Springer et al., 2013). This aligns with Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, which explains that excessive administrative tasks increase cognitive load, potentially impairing teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Sweller, 2011).

Coping Mechanisms of Public Elementary Teachers in Dealing with Paperwork

The teachers faced numerous professional challenges, requiring various coping mechanisms to manage stress and maintain well-being. The subcategories from this category were Collaboration with co-teachers, Time management, Immediate action imperative, and Document organization and classification.

Collaboration with co-teachers.

Collaboration with co-teachers was emphasized as teachers built a strong, supportive community that enhanced teachers' professional development and enriched students' educational experiences. The following evidence statement is shown below:

"It is important not to presume that the task assigned is solely your responsibility. It is vital to engage with the teacher and your colleagues, considering the urgency of the report and the fact that you have yet to receive orientation on its completion. Collaboration with co-teachers is essential, as we must seek assistance to fulfill this requirement efficiently." T1

"Although I am confident in my main responsibilities, I often encounter uncertainties with certain forms, which leads me to seek guidance from my supervisor, even at late hours. This habitual late-night questioning has prompted them to remark half-jokingly, 'Ah, another late-night query.'" T2

"We need to ask our ICT teacher what to do and what to write. Should it be in capital letters? There are always changes, especially in the paperwork, because every year there are changes. We cannot stick to what we did last year because there are memos and new advisories. We should ask them, especially since there are changes in entering the data in our forms". T3

"In creating test questionnaires for lesson planning, we seek help from master teachers because we cannot always be sure that what we have done is correct. When we let others

review our work, we often find errors we should have noticed. So, it is better always to seek advice.” T4

“No man is an island. If you find yourself unable to handle something, seek out someone who can. That's how things work here because not everyone is knowledgeable about everything. Those who are knowledgeable attend seminars, so that's who we should turn to.” T6

“I have worked with other teachers to gain ideas and knowledge, especially when it comes to technology. I really go and ask other teachers, especially the younger ones, because they are more knowledgeable when it comes to technology.” T7

Participants stressed the importance of collaboration and support from colleagues and supervisors when managing unfamiliar tasks, especially amid procedural changes in technology and data entry. This teamwork fosters accuracy and efficiency. [Woodland et al. \(2013\)](#) emphasize that collaborative practices enhance teacher learning through sharing resources and feedback, while [Hargreaves and Fullan \(2012\)](#) highlight collaboration as key to improving instruction and student outcomes.

Time Management.

The subcategory was time management, focusing on how educators distributed the time to create a more balanced, productive, and fulfilling work life, ultimately benefiting both the teacher and the students. The following evidence statement is shown below:

“I prioritize time management because I have additional work and children to take care of. It is crucial to allocate time to complete the necessary reports efficiently.” T1

“Just manage your time to ensure this report is finished by the specified time. I work based on my mood. That's just how I am.” T2

“Time management is all about budgeting your time effectively. For instance, have a designated place to check things instead of doing it at home. When I put my baby to sleep, that's when I handle my checks and records. You can manage your time well if you plan it out properly. Even with numerous activities, as long as you manage your time wisely, you won't end up just watching Netflix. You'll accomplish your tasks with proper time management.” T3

“Manage your time in class effectively to meet the deadline for each report.” T8

Participants emphasized effective time management as essential for balancing teaching, ancillary tasks, and personal responsibilities. Key strategies included planning, setting deadlines, prioritizing, and delegating tasks to manage heavy workloads. [Harun et al. \(2015\)](#) support these findings, highlighting techniques like goal-setting and minimizing disruptions as crucial for teacher productivity and task completion.

Immediate action is imperative.

This referred to the need for timely execution or response to tasks and actions. It emphasized the academic importance of prioritizing prompt and efficient handling of responsibilities or assignments. The following evidence statement is shown below:

"Follow the established systems or trends in the department of education and complete the tasks as requested, even if time is short. Do it first, and then raise any complaints or concerns."

T5

The data highlighted the importance of addressing tasks promptly, as supported by participants' responses. This aligns with [BA \(2024\)](#), who emphasized the Eisenhower Matrix as a tool for prioritizing urgent and important tasks. Urgent responsibilities require immediate attention to prevent delays or missed opportunities, especially in the context of an evolving educational system.

Document organization and classification.

This category refers to organizing and arranging documents in a specific order based on criteria such as date, relevance, alphabetical order, or category. The following evidence statement is shown below:

"Each of my documents has its folder with labels to keep the papers organized and prevent them from getting mixed up; this way, once the task is complete, the documents can be instantly passed on without delays." T5

"Ensure that the instructional materials (IMs) are prepared and organized separately two weeks before the demo. If you want to be thorough, place the materials for the group activity into folders and arrange them according to the sequence of your lesson plan. This will make it easier during the demo, almost like doing final touch-ups." T4

The data indicated that teachers utilized document sorting to overcome challenges associated with paperwork, including organizing documents and materials into labeled folders to streamline preparation. This method aided in timely task completion and contributed to mental well-being. Organizing paperwork enabled teachers to work effectively, enhancing productivity and reducing stress, fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning ([Austin, 2024](#)).

Public-school teachers rely on effective time management, collaboration, and organized documentation to navigate the demands of paperwork and ancillary tasks, helping them manage stress and maintain instructional focus. Collaboration fosters knowledge sharing and eases administrative burdens, while adapting to technological changes remains a critical challenge. Policymakers should consider streamlining administrative requirements to reduce non-teaching duties that hinder classroom engagement. Teacher training programs must emphasize time management, digital skills, and teamwork to equip educators for these evolving responsibilities. Ongoing professional support and clear communication are vital for teachers to confidently handle procedural updates. Future research should explore targeted interventions that lessen cognitive load and support teacher well-being, ultimately enhancing teaching effectiveness and student achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how public-school elementary teachers cope with the demands of excessive school paperwork, a challenge that often competes with their core instructional responsibilities. The purpose was to identify the strategies they employ to manage these

administrative burdens without compromising their teaching effectiveness. Teachers described using a multifaceted set of coping strategies, including collaboration with colleagues, effective time management, taking immediate action on tasks, and organizing and classifying documentation. Collaboration fostered a supportive environment for sharing knowledge and reducing individual workload. Time management allowed teachers to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines, while immediate action prevented a backlog. Systematic organization of documents helped streamline the completion and tracking of required forms. These strategies align with John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory, particularly in reducing extraneous cognitive load. By minimizing unnecessary mental strain caused by administrative demands, teachers were better able to focus their cognitive resources on meaningful teaching tasks, enhancing both instructional quality and student learning.

The findings suggest key implications for school administrators and policymakers. Schools should foster a culture of collaboration, provide time management training, and streamline paperwork processes through digital tools or administrative support. Teacher education programs should also prepare future educators with skills to manage administrative tasks efficiently. Doing so can reduce burnout, improve job satisfaction, and support a more student-centered teaching environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that administrators provide training and support for teachers to effectively use digital tools for managing paperwork and ensure dedicated time in their schedules for such tasks. Teachers should also communicate with administrators about time allocation to balance their responsibilities.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study had certain limitations. The small sample size of eight teachers may not represent the broader population of public-school elementary teachers. However, this is acceptable within a qualitative case study design, which prioritizes rich, in-depth exploration of lived experiences over broad generalizability. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study involved subjective interpretations of the participants' experiences, which may influence the consistency and reliability of the results. Future studies should explore how teachers manage classroom absences while maintaining student supervision and engagement, as well as examine the long-term effects of paperwork on teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Additional research should focus on coping strategies across different school settings and address the negative impacts of paperwork, including stress, lack of supervision, and disrupted lessons that affect teaching performance.

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