



Unveiling Key Stressors on Teachers' Instructional Competence: A Narratological Study of Experiences and Challenges in the Workplace

Pearl Angelie C. Bendol¹, Salahudin D. Solaiman²

¹Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology (CFCST), Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines xhianne.ashi23@gmail.com

²Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology (CFCST), Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines sdsolaiman@cfcst.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between key stressors and instructional competence among teachers, focusing on the dimensions of work environment, work-life balance, heavy workload, and lack of resources. Quantitative findings revealed that teachers generally perceived their work environment positively, attributing low stress levels to open communication, supportive relationships, and a collaborative atmosphere.

In contrast, moderate stress levels were reported in relation to work-life balance, primarily due to extended working hours and blurred boundaries between personal and professional life. Heavy workload emerged as a moderate stressor, with overtime work and mental fatigue contributing to teacher stress. Meanwhile, the lack of resources was a minor stressor, though inadequacies in printed materials like textbooks were noted.

In terms of instructional competence, teachers demonstrated strong capabilities across innovative, technical, and knowledge-based domains. A significant negative correlation was found between lack of resources and both technical and innovative competence, highlighting that insufficient resources hinder the integration of technology and innovative teaching strategies.

A positive work environment was significantly associated with higher levels of both innovative and technical competence. However, work-life balance was found to significantly affect knowledge competence, suggesting that personal-professional imbalance can impede effective knowledge application in teaching.

Qualitative findings further emphasized that teachers face stressors related to workload, classroom management, financial constraints, and limited institutional support, which impact their emotional well-being and instructional competence. Teachers employed various coping strategies, including time and classroom management, self-care, peer support, and professional development. Despite these efforts, inadequate resources and support systems continue to pose challenges.

The study recommends policy interventions focused on reducing workload, enhancing mental health support, providing continuous professional development, and improving school-parent collaboration. Strengthening leadership practices and ensuring resource adequacy are essential to fostering teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Teachers play a very crucial role in the shaping of a student's learning; yet, many stressors hamper their instructional competence. Administrative demands, resource restrictions, workloads, and large class size strain their teaching abilities. Increasing educational expectations push the teachers to adapt quickly for diverse needs. The problem is to address these issues to improve the quality of the instruction and, therefore the positive outcomes for students.

Teaching profession on a global scale is fraught with challenges that significantly impact educators' well-being and professional instructional competence. Teachers are often burdened with increasing demands, diverse student needs, and rapidly changing educational landscapes. These issues contribute to stress, burnout, and diminished instructional effectiveness. Addressing these global challenges is crucial for sustaining educational quality (Anthony, 2021).

In the Philippine context, teachers face unique challenges that further complicate their professional roles. Overcrowded classrooms, insufficient resources, and low compensation exacerbate the stressors experienced by teachers. These conditions often hinder their ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Understanding and addressing these localized issues is vital for enhancing teachers' instructional competence (Gideon, 2019).

At the local level, teachers confront specific stressors that are often overlooked yet critical to their professional performance. Addressing these key stressors is essential to support teachers in their roles, ensuring they can thrive and effectively contribute to student learning. A focused examination of these localized challenges is necessary to provide targeted solutions (Besan, 2020).

Despite extensive research on teacher stress, significant gaps remain. Crez (2021) and Byrne (2020) highlight the cumulative impact of multiple stressors on teaching competence, advocating for a holistic view beyond isolated factors. However, Smith (2019) and Lee (2021) contend that these impacts are exaggerated, emphasizing instructional resilience among teachers. This divergence underscores the need for further studies and targeted interventions that address workplace stressors comprehensively, as well as research to validate or refute the challenges teachers face, thereby enriching our understanding of stress management and instructional competence.

The objectives of this study were to identify key stressors impacting teachers' instructional competence. It also explored educators' narratological experiences in facing these challenges. The study aimed to propose strategies for mitigating stressors to enhance teaching effectiveness. Policy briefs will be drawn from the study's findings.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study examined the key stressors impacting teachers' instructional competence, experiences and challenges in the workplace within selected schools in President Roxas Central and South District, North Cotabato Division.

Specifically, it sought answer the following research questions:

Study 1: Teachers Key Stressors toward Instructional Competence.

1. What is the level of teachers' key stressors in terms of work environment, work-life balance, heavy workloads, and lack of resources.
2. What is the level of teacher instructional competence when analyzed according to innovative, technical, and knowledge skills;
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' key stressors and teaching competence;

Do teachers' key stressors significantly influence teaching competence

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Theory by Demerouti and Bakker (2016), which asserts that job demands and resources shape employee performance.

For teachers, stressors such as the work environment, work-life balance, heavy workloads, and limited resources constitute job demands that can lead to stress and burnout. A negative work environment and imbalanced work-life demands diminish instructional competence (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Heavy workloads and scarce resources further strain teachers, reducing performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Hakanen et al., 2006). However, adequate resources and professional growth opportunities can enhance instructional competence, as they support innovation and technical skill development (Hobfoll, 2018). This study leverages the JD-R Theory to examine how these stressors impact teaching effectiveness and explores how sufficient resources could mitigate these effects, improving both performance and well-being.

2. Methods

This chapter discusses the research design, study variables, population and sampling, place of study, research instrument, data collection, scoring interpretation, and statistical treatment to evaluate the teachers' key stressors towards teaching instructional competence and their experiences and challenges for the school year for the school year 2024-2025.

2.1 Research Design

This study used a mixed-methods design, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive approach to understanding teachers' key stressors and their impact on instructional competence. Mixed-methods research is recognized for its ability to capture a wide range of data and insights, making it ideal for addressing complex research questions.

2.2 Research Respondents

the respondents of the study were the **250** teachers from selected schools in President Roxas Central and Presidents Roxas South District, North Cotabato Division. The selection of the respondents will be from the public-school teachers rendered services 5 to 10 years above as my inclusion criteria of the study, while the exclusion were teachers from private schools, school administrators, and rendered serviced up to 4 years below.

2.3 Research Procedure

Sampling Procedure selected a subset of the study's target population. Most study uses a smaller sample since the whole population of interest is unfeasible. Sampling also approximates a bigger sample on essential qualities so researchers may make inferences about the population (Turner, 2020).

For the quantitative approach, Slovin's formula was used to identify the total number of respondents in this study. Specifically, a total of 250 teachers in the selected schools in President Roxas Central District and President Roxas South District, North Cotabato Division for the School Year 2024-2025 were serves as the respondents in the study.

However, for the qualitative approach, seventeen (17) teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique to consists of a kind of non-probability sampling in which researchers choose members of the public to voluntarily participate in their surveys based on their own personal preferences. This survey sampling approach required researchers to have prior knowledge of the objectives of their studies to accurately choose and contact eligible participants for online survey platforms (Birgit Keller & Udo Buscher, 2015).

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this study was adopted from various reputable sources, ensuring the reliability and validity of the instruments.

In Part 1, the level of teachers' key stressors were assessed using a questionnaire based on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), developed by Klein, Brähler, Drexler, and Schmutzer (2016). This scale was used to interpret respondents' assessments of the stressors they experience in relation to the work environment, work-life balance, heavy workloads, and lack of resources. The following grading scale were employed to categorize the responses:

Likert Scale on Teachers' Key Stressors.

Level	Range	Description	Descriptive Interpretation	Percentage
5	4.21 - 5.00	Highly Stressed	This means that the teachers are exceptionally skilled in technology within the range of 81% - 100%.	91-100%
4	3.41 - 4.20	Stressed	This means that the teachers are highly skilled in technology within the range of 61% - 80%.	81-90%
3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderately Stressed	This means that the teachers are moderately skilled in technology within the range of 41% - 60%.	71-80%
2	1.81 - 2.60	Often Stressed	This means that the teachers are slightly skilled in technology within the range of 21% - 40%.	61-70%
1	1.00 - 1.80	Not Stressed	This means that the teachers are very slightly skilled in technology within the range of 1% - 20%.	60% below

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering data of this study, the following steps were done.

First, a formal letter of endorsement was produced asking the consent of the Dean. On the day of data collection, respondents were required to sign a letter of consent to the department dean and to the different selected schools for the participation in the study, as outlined in the instrument.

Next, the researcher utilized an informed consent form and accompanying script to describe the aim of the study, what it comprises, why they were asked to participate, that participation is optional, private, and anonymous, and what would happen to the information they supply.

Third, the participants in this study were restricted to just those who completed an informed consent form. Participants would be assured that their views would remain anonymous and that their identity was not revealed in any published component of this study.

Finally, after obtaining the data, it was encoded with the corresponding label. To protect the privacy of the responses, the researcher will administer the questionnaire personally. The researcher summarized and tabulated the data in preparation for analysis and interpretation.

2.6 Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used in the study:

Mean refers to the average set of values. It is used to determine the degree of the variables in the study (Peter R. Nelson, 2022). This was used to determine the level of the teachers' key stressors in terms of work environment, work-life balance, heavy workloads, and lack of resources. Moreover, it was also used to determine the teacher instructional competence when analyzed according to innovative, technical, and knowledge skills.

Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation was used to define the significant relationships between the variables (Bishara & Hittner, 2016). This was used to determine significant relationship between teachers' key stressors and teaching competence.

Multiple Regression Analysis is a statistical method that establishes a relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. A regression model can demonstrate whether observed changes in the dependent variable are related to changes in one or more explanatory variables (Amy Galo, 2015). This was used to determine the significant influence between teachers' key stressors and teaching competence.

Thematic Analysis is a widely used and flexible method for analyzing qualitative data. It involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Chen, 2015). This was used to determine the experiences of teachers regarding to their trust-building practices and parental advocacy on community learning partnerships.

3. Results

The findings reveal a complex interplay between these stressors and teachers' professional performance.

Teachers generally reported a supportive work environment, which positively influenced their emotional well-being and teaching effectiveness. However, challenges related to work-life balance and heavy workloads remained prevalent, affecting teachers' ability to manage stress and perform optimally in the classroom.

While resource availability did not significantly contribute to stress, the lack of key materials, especially textbooks, hindered teaching effectiveness, particularly in innovative and technical competencies. The study also found weak correlations between stressors and teaching competence, with work-life balance, workload, and work environment showing limited direct effects.

However, the study emphasized that a positive work environment and adequate resources were crucial in enhancing teachers' technical and innovative teaching skills. Work-life balance and heavy workloads had more of an indirect effect, particularly on knowledge application and teaching engagement.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, several recommendations were proposed to support teachers in managing stress and enhancing their instructional competence:

1. A structured time for lesson preparation and grading may be implemented, along with ready-made teaching materials to reduce teacher stress and ensure adequate preparation time.
2. Provide on-site counselors, stress management workshops, and peer support systems to foster emotional resilience among teachers.
3. Offer continuous professional development opportunities focused on stress management and innovative teaching methods.
4. Ensure the availability of essential teaching resources, including textbooks and technology, to support teachers in delivering quality instruction.
5. Foster a collaborative work environment where teachers can share best practices and support each other.
6. Strengthen communication between schools and parents through regular meetings and home visits to improve student behavior and academic performance.
7. School leaders may model healthy work-life practices and ensure the creation of a supportive environment that prioritizes teacher well-being, thereby enhancing overall instructional competence.

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