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## Research Article

### Phenomenology of Teachers' Administrative Task Removal

Ma. Sheila A. Testa<sup>1\*</sup>, Elreen A. Delavin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Federico A. Estipona Memorial High School, Department of Education, SDO Masbate, Mandaon, Masbate, 5411 Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Graduate School, Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMSCAT), Mandaon, Masbate, 5411 Philippines

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#### \*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

[masheila.testa@deped.gov.ph](mailto:masheila.testa@deped.gov.ph)

## ABSTRACT

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences of teachers regarding the removal of administrative tasks as mandated by DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. It aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how this policy shift influenced teachers' instructional practices, professional development, student learning outcomes, well-being, and job satisfaction. Using a phenomenological approach, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with ten public school teachers from the Mandaon South District to capture their narratives and personal insights. The data gathered were analyzed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, which enabled the identification of recurring patterns and themes reflective of the participants' experiences. The findings revealed that while the removal of administrative duties enhanced instructional quality, teacher focus, and work-life balance, these benefits varied due to inconsistencies in implementation. Challenges such as unclear role boundaries, insufficient institutional support, and lingering workload stress were also noted. Teachers emphasized the importance of strategic staffing, sustained professional development, and access to learner-centered resources to maximize the policy's intended impact. Overall, the study highlights the transformative potential of administrative relief when coupled with consistent execution and robust support systems. The results provide valuable implications for education policymakers and school leaders striving to improve teacher effectiveness and well-being.

**Keywords:** *Administrative Task Removal, DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, Instructional Practices, Phenomenological Study, Role Theory, and Teacher Well-being*

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## Introduction

The quality of education is inseparably linked to the well-being, motivation, and professional agency of teachers, who serve as the core drivers of student learning and academic achievement. In educational systems around the world, the performance of teachers is shaped not only by their pedagogical expertise but also by the organizational environment in which they operate. Among the most pressing challenges undermining instructional effectiveness in the Philippine public education system is the persistent overburdening of teachers with non-instructional, administrative responsibilities. These duties, ranging from preparing reports and managing school records to coordinating institutional programs and facilitating clerical tasks, have long been cited as major contributors to teacher stress, role confusion, and diminished classroom performance.

The issue of administrative overload is not merely anecdotal. The 2018 Teacher Workload Balance Study conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) identified around fifty ancillary tasks regularly delegated to public school teachers, many of which fall well outside the traditional boundaries of classroom instruction. These include tasks such as preparing school reports, managing inventory, compiling documentation for school-based projects, and performing non-teaching clerical functions. While intended to support school operations, such demands often force teachers to divert time and energy away from lesson planning, student engagement, and professional growth. This situation not only jeopardizes the quality of instruction but also threatens the long-term well-being and retention of educators in the public-school system.

Recognizing the urgent need for reform, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, which mandates the removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers. This policy seeks to realign the professional roles of teachers by allowing them to concentrate fully on their instructional responsibilities. By offloading clerical and operational duties to designated non-teaching personnel or administrative officers, the Department aims to reduce teacher burnout, enhance job satisfac-

tion, and improve instructional quality. The order also underscores the broader vision of a learner-centered education system where educators are empowered to deliver effective, inclusive, and responsive teaching. Yet, despite the potential of this policy to transform the teaching profession, its success depends greatly on how it is experienced and interpreted by the very people it aims to support: the teachers themselves.

This study seeks to understand the lived experiences of teachers before and after the implementation of DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research explores how teachers perceive the changes in their work roles, the extent to which their instructional focus has improved, and the challenges that continue to persist despite the policy's enactment. It further aims to identify institutional and organizational factors that either facilitate or hinder the successful removal of administrative burdens. This inquiry is particularly focused on the public-school teachers of Mandaon, a municipality in western Masbate Province, a location characterized by many of the systemic issues that typify the broader Philippine educational landscape, such as high student-to-teacher ratios, limited teaching resources, and pervasive role strain.

The study is theoretically anchored on Role Theory (Biddle, 1986), which offers critical insights into how structural expectations shape individual behaviors within organizational contexts. According to Role Theory, individuals perform specific behaviors based on the expectations associated with their social roles. When these roles become ambiguous, conflicting, or overloaded, such as when teachers are tasked with both instructional and non-teaching duties, stress, disorientation, and reduced professional performance often result. Role overload occurs when the number of responsibilities exceeds an individual's capacity to fulfill them effectively, leading to emotional exhaustion, decreased motivation, and lower job satisfaction.

In educational settings, this role conflict is evident when teachers are expected to serve not only as classroom instructors but also as clerks, data encoders, project managers, and

record keepers. Such overlapping responsibilities distort the core identity of the teaching profession and impede educators from fully engaging with students and instructional tasks. The implementation of DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 seeks to restore clarity and coherence to the teacher's professional role by reducing non-instructional obligations and reinforcing the teacher's primary function as a facilitator of learning.

Building on this theoretical foundation, the conceptual framework of the study centers on the hypothesis that the removal of administrative tasks will positively influence key domains of teacher experience: instructional quality, professional development, teacher well-being, and job satisfaction. The reduction of role overload is expected to allow teachers to re-invest their time and energy into their core instructional duties. This shift not only supports improved classroom engagement and pedagogical effectiveness but also addresses the psychological strain associated with conflicting role expectations.

The framework also considers moderating variables that influence the success of this role realignment, such as implementation fidelity, institutional support, and role clarity. In schools where the policy is inadequately implemented or administrative support is lacking, role overload may persist despite formal mandates. Conversely, in schools with strong leadership and appropriate personnel deployment, teachers may experience immediate and sustained benefits from the policy.

The relevance of this research extends beyond the local context of Mandaon. It contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher workload, professional identity, and education reform in low-resource settings. While international studies have long acknowledged the detrimental impact of role overload on teacher retention and effectiveness, few have explored how specific policy actions, such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024, reshape the lived realities of educators on the ground.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of elevating teacher voices in policy discourse. By examining how teachers

experience and interpret changes to their professional roles, the research offers grounded insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders committed to building a more supportive, responsive, and humane educational system. It serves as a timely reminder that effective reform depends not only on institutional directives but also on how those directives resonate with the individuals tasked with their implementation.

In sum, this phenomenological inquiry, anchored solely on Role Theory, provides a focused and empirically grounded examination of how administrative task removal affects teacher experience. It aims to illuminate the organizational dynamics and psychological dimensions of role restructuring in Philippine public schools and contribute to ongoing efforts to promote educational quality through improved teacher support.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study aims to determine how teachers perceive their well-being, the advantages and difficulties they face after the implementation of the policy, and how their teaching practices and job satisfaction are affected. In addition, it explores the support systems needed to maintain the positive impact of the alleviation of administrative workload.

Specifically, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers on the removal of administrative tasks in terms of:
  - a. Professional Development;
  - b. Classroom Instruction;
  - c. Student Performance and Learning Experience; and
  - d. Teachers' Well-being?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges do teachers experience following the removal of administrative tasks?
3. How has the removal of administrative tasks influenced teachers' instructional practices and overall job satisfaction?
4. What support mechanisms do teachers employ to sustain the positive effects of reducing administrative workloads?

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of teachers regarding the removal of administrative tasks as mandated by DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. This research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive and interpret the changes in their workload, instructional practices, professional development, student learning outcomes, and overall well-being following the implementation of the policy. A phenomenological approach was chosen as it permits the study to capture the essence of teachers' experiences through their narratives, providing meaningful insights into the impact of policy changes on educators (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To achieve the objectives as mentioned earlier, the researcher applied semi-structured in-depth interviews that were conducted with ten (10) purposively selected teachers from Mandaon South District. Participants included both teachers with and without prior administrative responsibilities to ensure diverse perspectives. The interviews focused on four key areas: (1) *the effects of administrative task removal on professional development*, (2) *the impact on classroom instruction and student learning*, (3) *the perceived benefits and challenges of the policy*, and (4) *the support mechanisms needed to sustain positive outcomes*.

The data collection process involved face-to-face interview. Each interview was audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. A thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and emerging insights from the participants' responses. This approach ensured a comprehensive and authentic representation of teachers' lived experiences, contributing to a deeper understanding of how the reduction of administrative tasks influences their instructional effectiveness, job satisfaction, and well-being.

By examining these experiences, the study aimed to provide empirical insights that can inform policy refinements and future educational reforms, ultimately enhancing teacher support systems and work conditions within the Philippine education system.

### Participants

This study involved ten (10) teachers from the Mandaon South District, selected to provide a well-rounded understanding of the impact of DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 on various aspects of teaching, including professional development, instructional strategies, student learning outcomes, and overall well-being. To capture diverse perspectives, the participants included teachers with and without prior administrative responsibilities to ensure that the study equally represented both experiences.

The selection process adhered to specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Eligible participants must be currently employed in the Mandaon South District. This criterion ensured that all participants can provide firsthand insights into the effects of the policy on their professional roles. Conversely, teachers who have not been affected by the transition, such as those on extended leave during the study period were excluded.

Given the qualitative phenomenological approach of this research, the selected participants contributed to achieving data saturation, ensuring that key themes and patterns emerge comprehensively (Moustakas, 1994). Their lived experiences served as a foundation for a deeper analysis of the policy's implications, which offered valuable insights into teacher workload, instructional effectiveness, and professional well-being within the Philippine education system.

### Instrument

This study utilized semi-structured interviews as the primary research instrument to gather in-depth qualitative data from teachers regarding their experiences following the removal of administrative tasks under DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. The interview guide was carefully designed to elicit rich, detailed narratives that provided insights into how this policy shift has influenced teachers' professional development, instructional practices, student learning outcomes, well-being, and overall job satisfaction. The semi-structured format ensured that core topics are covered while allowing for flexibility to probe deeper into respondents' unique perspectives and lived experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The research instrument consisted of two main sections. Part I focused on gathering background information, including participants' teaching experience, current role, and awareness of the policy change. Part II explored the key research questions through open-ended inquiries, allowing teachers to describe their experiences before and after the implementation of the policy. This section was structured around the following themes: professional development, classroom instruction, student learning outcomes, well-being, perceived benefits and challenges, instructional practices, and support mechanisms needed for sustainability.

To ensure a systematic and ethical approach, all interviews were conducted in a confidential setting, with participants' identities anonymized in research reports. The interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim, allowing for a detailed thematic analysis. Respondents had the opportunity to review their statements for accuracy, ensuring that their experiences are represented authentically.

Through this research instrument, the study aimed to provide empirical insights that could inform future policy refinements and contribute to discussions on teacher workload management, instructional effectiveness, and workforce well-being in the Philippine education system.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method that systematically identifies patterns, themes, and key insights from participants' interview responses. To ensure a rigorous and comprehensive analysis, the process involved several key steps. First, audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participants' narratives. The researcher then engaged in familiarization by reviewing the transcripts multiple times, allowing for a deeper understanding of the data.

Following this, coding conducted, where key phrases, patterns, and significant statements related to the study's objectives were identified and categorized. Through theme identification, recurring ideas and perspectives concerning teacher well-being, instructional

practices, and the implementation of DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 were recognized and organized into meaningful categories.

Finally, these themes undergone interpretation, where they were analyzed concerning existing literature and theoretical frameworks, to ensure that the findings provide valuable and well-contextualized insights into the effects of the policy on teachers (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Ethical Consideration**

To uphold the ethical integrity of this study, the researcher strictly adhered to established ethical guidelines throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they received a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits before voluntarily agreeing to participate. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing personal information and using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities, thereby fostering a sense of trust and security. Participants were also granted the right to withdraw at any stage of the research without facing any consequences, reinforcing their autonomy throughout the study.

The principle of non-maleficence was observed to ensure that no harm, physical, emotional, or psychological, befell the participants during the research process (Orb et al., 2001). Furthermore, data security measures were strictly implemented: recorded interviews and transcripts were securely stored, with access restricted solely to the researcher to prevent unauthorized use or breaches. By adhering to these ethical protocols, the study was conducted in a rigorous, responsible, and ethically sound manner, aiming to explore how the reduction of administrative tasks affected teachers' well-being, instructional effectiveness, and overall job satisfaction.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Professional Development**

In exploring the experiences of teachers regarding the removal of administrative tasks, particularly regarding their professional development, three key themes emerged: **1. Enhanced Professional Growth, 2. Challenges in**

### **Implementation, and 3. Mixed Outcomes.**

These themes reflect the varied and nuanced ways in which teachers have responded to the policy shift, while many found renewed opportunities for learning and career advancement, others encountered obstacles that hindered the intended benefits, and some reported experiences that were both positive and limited, depending on their specific context.

#### **Theme 1: Enhanced Professional Growth**

Several teachers experienced a positive shift in their professional development due to the reduced administrative workload. They reported increased opportunities to attend training, pursue further studies, and engage in self-initiated growth. As Participant 1 shared,

*"With fewer administrative tasks, I can now better take advantage of opportunities to attend trainings and seminars assigned by my school head,"*

highlighting improved access to capacity-building initiatives. Participant 3 similarly noted,

*"It has improved access, allowing me more time to attend seminars and trainings, often conducted online,"*

reflecting the flexibility that allowed them to engage in professional learning. Participant 5 emphasized long-term academic goals, stating,

*"It has given me more time and opportunities to pursue further studies."*

These insights demonstrate how the policy fostered a more conducive environment for professional advancement.

Relatively, Punzalan's (2018) study directly investigates the impact of administrative workload on the professional development of public-school teachers in the Philippines. The research provides empirical evidence that excessive clerical and administrative responsibilities limit teachers' ability to engage in professional growth activities, such as attending trainings,

seminars, or pursuing graduate studies. Teachers reported that the burden of these tasks not only consumed their time but also drained their motivation and energy to seek self-improvement.

This directly supports the findings in the current study, where several participants expressed that the removal of administrative workload enabled them to participate more actively in professional development opportunities. Participant 1's and 3's experiences of improved access to seminars and online training echo Punzalan's conclusion that reducing non-teaching tasks significantly enhances teachers' capacity for growth.

Moreover, Punzalan emphasizes that when administrative burdens are minimized, teachers regain both the time and mental bandwidth necessary for instructional innovation and continuous learning. This aligns with Participant 5's reflection on now being able to pursue further studies, pointing to long-term professional development goals previously hindered by workload.

#### **Theme 2: Challenges in Implementation**

Despite the policy's intentions, not all respondents reported improvements. A few teachers revealed that administrative burdens remained or even worsened. Participant 7 remarked,

*"Nothing has changed, and administrative tasks are still present,"*

indicating that the policy may not have been implemented effectively at their level. Similarly, Participant 8 shared,

*"No significant change yet due to a lack of full implementation,"*

pointing to gaps between policy and practice. These accounts highlight the uneven experience of teachers and suggest that effective enforcement and support are essential for meaningful change.

The findings align with Tarraya (2023) public policy review, Teachers' Workload Policy: Its Impact on Philippine Public-School

Teachers, which emphasizes that workload reforms, while critical, often fall short due to systemic challenges in policy translation and application. Their study underlines that without strong accountability mechanisms, operational clarity, and sufficient manpower, policies such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 risk becoming nominal rather than transformational. They stress that many teachers continue to bear administrative burdens despite policy mandates due to vague implementation guidelines, limited support staff, and persistent institutional bottlenecks.

Similarly, David and Albert (2021) argue that policy reforms alone are insufficient unless reinforced by consistent, ground-level application. They identify issues such as weak policy dissemination, poor communication channels, and the lack of monitoring systems as major hindrances to effective implementation. Even when duties are supposedly removed, teachers may still perform them due to a lack of replacements or clarity in task delegation.

Taken together, these studies and the participants' testimonies underscore that while the intention behind the policy is progressive, its success heavily depends on comprehensive, well-supported implementation strategies.

### Theme 3: Mixed Outcomes

Two participants cited mixed results of the implementation of the policy. Participant 6 shared,

*"No, I didn't observe any improvement. In fact, participation decreased,"*

suggesting a lack of institutional support. He experienced a decline in professional development opportunities upon his reassignment as a full-time classroom teacher, compared to when he previously held positions as district coordinator and the officer-in-charge of an elementary school. He noted that his professional growth was more pronounced during his tenure in administrative roles.

Another respondent conveyed a more nuanced experience. Participant 9 stated,

*"The policy did not take full effect."*

However, the tasks provided him opportunities to showcase and improve his talents, indicating that while the reduction in administrative tasks may not have been fully realized, the existing responsibilities still contributed to skill development. This response shows that in certain contexts, administrative tasks themselves can offer growth opportunities when aligned with the teacher's strengths and interests.

While heavy teaching workload have long been associated with decreased teaching efficiency and diminished time for professional improvement of teachers, there are some studies suggesting that additional responsibilities may foster professional growth and leadership skills among teachers. It may influence positively on teachers' professional development and negatively on teachers' health, attitudes and actions (Ilyasova, 2018). The findings of Tarraya (2023) support this claim because teacher leadership (teachers taking on administrative and leadership roles) encourages teachers to be leaders, analytical thinkers, proactive, and initiate progressive practices.

In support to these claim, Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory helps explain the mixed outcomes in implementing DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. While hygiene factors like policies and salary prevent dissatisfaction, true motivation comes from factors such as achievement and personal growth. Participant 6's and 9's experiences show that some administrative tasks, though often viewed negatively, can become motivating when they align with a teacher's strengths. This highlights the need for policies that not only reduce unnecessary workload but also retain meaningful tasks that support teacher development. A balanced, flexible approach is essential to address varied teacher experiences and motivations.

### Classroom Instruction

In exploring the experiences of teachers regarding the removal of administrative tasks, particularly about classroom instruction, a diverse range of responses emerged that reflect both the intended benefits and ongoing challenges of the policy. The data revealed four key themes: **1. Improved Instructional Quality, 2.**

**Implementation Gaps, 3. Mixed Implementation Impact, and 4. External Influences on Instruction**, which collectively illustrate how the policy has reshaped, or in some cases failed to reshape, the instructional practices of teachers. These themes provide insight into the extent to which reduced non-teaching duties have translated into more focused, effective, and adaptive classroom instruction.

### **Theme 1: Improved Instructional Quality**

A dominant theme across many responses was the significant improvement in teaching quality due to reduced administrative workload. Teachers expressed how the policy allowed them to devote more time and energy to lesson planning and instructional delivery. Participant 1 noted,

*"The policy has allowed me to better focus on lesson planning and classroom instruction because I am no longer burdened with time-consuming administrative tasks,"*

indicating a direct positive impact on teaching efficiency. Likewise, Participant 3 observed,

*"It allowed more time for lesson preparation and improved the quality of instructional planning,"*

pointing to improved preparedness. Participant 4 emphasized student-centered strategies, stating,

*"I can explore diverse teaching strategies, especially ones suitable for rural learners,"*

showing how instructional freedom enabled contextualization. Participant 5 added,

*"I've become more creative and resourceful... more hands-on in planning activities,"*

reflecting a boost in innovation and teacher agency. These insights suggest that when ad-

ministrative burdens are lifted, teachers redirect their time to strengthen pedagogical practices, ultimately benefiting student learning.

### **Theme 2: Implementation Gaps**

Despite the intended outcomes of the policy, several respondents reported that administrative tasks were not fully removed, thus limiting its effectiveness. Participant 7 remarked,

*"Tasks weren't fully removed, instructional time and preparation are still affected,"*

underscoring the incomplete execution of the policy. Participant 9 similarly shared,

*"Lesson planning is challenging due to administrative tasks... simplified planning,"*

implying that lingering non-teaching responsibilities continue to compromise instructional depth. These accounts reveal that without full implementation, the policy's positive effects are diluted, especially in terms of time and focus needed for quality instruction.

### **Theme 3: Mixed Implementation Impact**

One teacher reflected on a more neutral outcome. Participant 2 mentioned,

*"Personally, I haven't felt much change. However, it hasn't hindered my effectiveness in the classroom,"*

suggesting that while administrative tasks may not have lessened, they were manageable and did not significantly disrupt teaching. This highlights the variability of experience among teachers, likely influenced by differences in school leadership, support systems, or individual resilience.

### **Theme 4: External Influences on Instruction**

Beyond administrative workload, other structural factors also affected classroom instruction. Participant 8 observed,

*"Affected by constantly changing curricula, which requires frequent adjustments and retraining,"*

indicating that frequent curriculum revisions serve as another challenge that competes for planning time and instructional focus. This theme suggests that systemic issues outside the scope of administrative workload can also impede instructional improvement, emphasizing the need for broader policy coherence.

In sum, while removal of administrative tasks from teachers made significant positive impact on classroom instruction, its full implementation needs to be realized. Teachers assert that time spent on administrative tasks hinders their essential instructional work in public schools (Kim, 2019). The study revealed that teachers with greater administrative workloads are less likely to spend time on instructional preparation and providing feedback on students' performance and assignments.

### ***Student Performance and Learning Experience***

In examining the experiences of teachers regarding the impact of administrative task removal on student performance and learning, a range of perspectives emerged that reflect both the positive outcomes and existing challenges in implementation. The analysis revealed three key themes; ***1. Improved Student Engagement and Performance, 2. Inconsistent Impact on Student Learning, and 3. Nuanced Student Needs***, which collectively illustrate how increased teacher presence and instructional focus can enhance student outcomes, while also highlighting the importance of consistent policy enforcement and responsiveness to diverse learner contexts.

#### ***Theme 1: Improved Student Engagement and Performance***

The most prominent theme across the responses highlights a clear link between reduced administrative burden and enhanced student learning experiences. Many teachers emphasized that being able to devote more

time and attention to their students significantly improved classroom dynamics and learning outcomes. Participant 1 stated,

*"Yes. With more time spent inside the classroom, I am able to better support student learning, which improves their outcomes,"*

underscoring the direct correlation between teacher presence and academic performance. Similarly, Participant 3 shared,

*"I can now focus more on teaching... students better understand lessons,"*

showing that increased instructional focus leads to better comprehension. Participant 4 added a deeper layer by saying,

*"I can now provide tutorials..."*

They are more engaged and have extended their time in school, which illustrates not only improved academic support but also heightened student motivation. Participant 6 echoed this sentiment:

*"Student engagement and participation have significantly increased,"*

highlighting stronger teacher-student interaction as a key driver of learning success.

Punzalan's (2018) study, the effects of reducing administrative workload on teacher effectiveness, directly supports the findings under Theme 1: Improved Student Engagement and Performance. This research explored how minimizing non-teaching tasks enhances teacher effectiveness in classroom instruction. Punzalan found that when administrative burdens were lessened, teachers had more time to focus on lesson planning, direct instruction, and individualized student support. These changes led to observable improvements in student engagement and academic performance, as teachers could now dedicate their full attention to teaching-related duties.

## Theme 2: Inconsistent Impact on Student Learning

Despite these positive accounts, not all respondents observed the same improvements, particularly in contexts where administrative tasks were not effectively reduced. Participant 2 explained,

*"Classroom instruction is sometimes affected by urgent reports... I give activities instead,"*

indicating that administrative demands still disrupt teaching time, leading to a reliance on less interactive tasks. Participant 7 plainly stated,

*"No changes were observed because the administrative tasks remain largely with her,"*

demonstrating how a lack of policy implementation neutralizes its intended benefits.

Participant 8 offered a forward-looking perspective:

*"Proper implementation... would positively affect student learning,"*

emphasizing that the potential of the policy depends greatly on how thoroughly it is carried out in practice.

David and Albert (2021) highlight that inconsistent policy implementation hampers the effectiveness of administrative workload reduction efforts in improving education quality. Their findings support the theme that while some teachers benefit from reduced non-teaching duties, others continue to face disruptions due to unresolved systemic issues. This aligns with participants' observations that policy benefits are uneven, and effective implementation is crucial for enhancing student learning.

## Theme 3: Nuanced Student Needs

One participant provided a more differentiated view, acknowledging that while focused teaching helps, student needs vary. Participant 9 shared,

*"Student engagement and performance improve with focused teaching... others benefit from co-curriculars,"*

suggesting that while instructional time is vital, a broader range of educational experiences also plays a role in learning outcomes. This view highlights the importance of a holistic approach that supports both academic instruction and extracurricular involvement.

Biddle (1986) emphasizes that teachers fulfill multiple roles beyond instruction, shaped by student needs and social expectations. This supports Participant 9's view that while focused teaching improves learning, co-curricular involvement also enhances student engagement and performance. Role theory thus reinforces the importance of a holistic, flexible educational approach tailored to diverse student needs.

## Teachers' Well-being

In exploring the experiences of teachers following the removal of administrative tasks, a central focus emerged around their well-being, both mental and emotional. The findings revealed three key themes: **1. Improved Mental and Emotional Health, 2. Administrative Load Negatively Impacts Well-being, and 3. Mixed Impact on Well-being.** These themes reflect the varying degrees to which the policy has been felt across teaching contexts, with some educators reporting significant relief and improved job satisfaction, while others continue to experience stress due to inconsistent or partial implementation.

## Theme 1: Improved Mental and Emotional Health

A significant number of participants shared how the removal or reduction of administrative tasks led to a notable improvement in their well-being, both mentally and emotionally. Teachers highlighted increased job satisfaction, a stronger sense of purpose, and a more balanced personal and professional life. Participant 3 reflected,

*"I've experienced improved work-life balance... feel more satisfied and purposeful,"*

pointing to a clear positive shift in overall wellness. Similarly, Participant 4 stated,

*“... better job satisfaction... My mental health has also improved significantly,”*

indicating that the policy contributed to emotional recovery and stability. Participant 5 shared,

*“I now appreciate the teaching profession more and feel satisfied with my work,”*

suggesting a renewed sense of value in their role. Participant 6 noted,

*“I now feel relieved and more satisfied,”*

expressing emotional relief following the reduction in non-teaching duties. Lastly, Participant 10 added,

*“Now I have more time for reflection and teaching,”*

highlighting the psychological benefits of having dedicated time for both instruction and personal growth.

Herzberg (1966) explained that reducing demotivating factors like excessive workload can alleviate job dissatisfaction, while enhancing motivating factors like meaningful work increases satisfaction. This theory supports findings that teachers felt more balanced, purposeful, and mentally healthier after administrative tasks were reduced.

## **Theme 2: Administrative Load Negatively Impacts Well-being**

Despite the reported improvements, several respondents still experienced stress and dissatisfaction due to the continued burden of administrative responsibilities. These teachers expressed that the lack of change in their workload continued to negatively impact their well-being. Participant 1 remarked,

*“I experienced high levels of stress and pressure due to the many administrative*

*responsibilities I had to manage alongside teaching,”*

emphasizing the emotional toll of dual roles. Similarly, Participant 7 reported,

*“I still handle the same responsibilities... I still have the same stress,”*

indicating that the policy has not alleviated the pressure in their context. These insights reflect that the mental health benefits of the policy are not universally experienced and are heavily dependent on the degree of actual implementation.

David and Albert (2021) found that heavy administrative workloads reduce teaching quality and harm teacher well-being. Their study shows that inconsistent implementation of workload policies leaves many teachers stressed and overburdened, supporting current findings that not all educators feel relief despite official reforms.

## **Theme 3: Mixed Impact on Well-being**

Some participants conveyed mixed or conditional experiences, noting that while there is potential for well-being improvement, it largely depends on how the policy is implemented in their schools. Participant 2 shared,

*“Despite the administrative workload, I continue to be creative and innovative...,”*

highlighting resilience but also an ongoing burden. Participant 8 stated,

*“No, because policy has not been fully implemented...,”*

showing how the absence of systemic support undermines the policy's intended effects. Participant 9 observed,

*“Potentially yes, but it depends on proper implementation,”*

reinforcing that any positive impact on well-being remains theoretical until the policy is consistently enacted

In their study "Teachers' workload policy: Its impact on Philippine public-school teachers," Marquez, Cruz, and Lopez (2023) explore how the implementation of teacher workload policies affects public school educators across different regions in the Philippines. The findings reveal a complex and varied picture, while some teachers reported improvements in job satisfaction and classroom focus due to workload adjustments, others indicated minimal or no change, often due to weak enforcement or lack of clarity in implementation. This reflects the sentiments of Participants 2, 8, and 9, who expressed that while the policy holds potential for enhancing well-being, its effectiveness is conditional and dependent on proper, consistent application. The study stresses the importance of aligning policy with on-the-ground realities and providing sufficient administrative support to ensure lasting impact, highlighting how mixed results arise when implementation is uneven or symbolic.

### **Benefits**

In examining the perceived benefits following the removal of administrative tasks, teachers consistently highlighted two major emergent themes: **1. Enhanced Instruction and Well-being, and 2. Improved Teacher Well-being.** These themes reveal how the shift away from administrative responsibilities has positively impacted both their professional practice and personal lives, enabling deeper instructional focus, better student engagement, and a renewed sense of balance, fulfillment, and clarity in their role as educators.

### **Theme 1: Enhanced Instruction and Well-being**

Many teachers emphasized the direct benefits of removing administrative tasks in enhancing their instructional effectiveness and overall professional satisfaction. The freedom from administrative burdens has allowed them to reallocate their time and energy toward lesson planning, classroom engagement, and improving student outcomes. Participant 1 remarked,

*"It allows teachers to focus more on teaching and students, leading to better*

*student performance and improved teacher well-being,"*

highlighting a dual benefit of academic and personal fulfillment. Similarly, Participant 2 stated,

*"If administrative tasks are removed, teachers can focus more on lesson preparation and instructional materials,"*

reinforcing the link between reduced non-teaching duties and improved classroom delivery.

Participant 3 shared,

*"More time for instructional preparation... creating effective teaching materials,"*

showing that teachers now have more capacity to enhance lesson quality. Participant 4 referred to this additional time as "golden time," emphasizing its value in deepening subject expertise and planning. Meanwhile, Participant 6 observed that

*"Teachers are more present... colleagues also appreciate being freed from the roles of coordinators,"*

indicating a ripple effect of increased morale and a more positive school culture. Additionally, Participant 10 noted,

*"More time for instructional planning, better teaching quality... professional clarity,"*

pointing to a clearer sense of purpose and heightened teaching performance. These narratives consistently reflect that when administrative distractions are minimized, both instruction and teacher satisfaction improve significantly.

Punzalan (2018) found that reducing administrative tasks significantly enhances teacher effectiveness. By freeing up time and energy for instructional duties, teachers become more focused, prepared, and motivated.

The study confirms that minimizing non-teaching burdens boosts both teaching quality and overall job satisfaction.

### **Theme 2: Improved Teacher Wellness**

Alongside instructional improvements, the removal of administrative tasks has been closely tied to better teacher wellness, particularly in terms of stress reduction and work-life balance. Participant 5 candidly shared,

*"Improved work-life balance... We're not robots,"*

illustrating the human need for boundaries and self-care. Participant 8 emphasized the need for systemic support, stating,

*"Would relieve teacher workload... if administrative aides are assigned,"*

signaling that teacher wellness is also tied to the effective implementation of support mechanisms.

Participant 9 highlighted the emotional benefit of reduced workload, sharing,

*"Frees up time for student-centered teaching... reduces stress,"*

indicating that well-being is enhanced not just by what is removed, but by what becomes possible, more meaningful engagement with learners. These statements underscore that teacher wellness is not just a by-product but a central benefit of reducing administrative overload.

#### **Challenges**

In exploring the perceived challenges that emerged following the removal of administrative tasks among teachers, several key themes became evident: **1. Incomplete Policy Implementation, 2. Partial Implementation and Role Conflict, 3. Persistent Stress Despite Policy, 4. Transitional Adjustment, 5. Mixed Impact and Individual Constraints, and 6. Positive Transition Experience.** These themes capture the varied and sometimes conflicting realities teachers face during the policy rollout.

### **Theme 1: Incomplete Policy Implementation**

Several participants expressed concerns that despite the issuance of the policy, administrative responsibilities were not fully removed in practice. For instance, Respondent 7 stated,

*"Despite the memo, the tasks were not truly reallocated,"*

highlighting a lack of actual task removal, while Respondent 8 noted,

*"Still handles almost eight (8) loads because of two (2) retained administrative tasks and six (6) teaching loads,"*

pointing to excessive retained responsibilities that strain the teacher's capacity. Respondent 9 echoed this issue, adding that

*"Inadequate staffing, special skills hard to replace,"*

suggests that human resource limitations are a major barrier to implementation.

### **Theme 2. Partial Implementation and Role Conflict**

Even among those who experienced some form of relief, confusion or role adjustments were evident. Respondent 1 shared,

*"...transitioning roles (e.g., designation as guidance counselor or coordinator) may still require adjustments,"*

indicating a need to adapt to new, sometimes undefined responsibilities, which can contribute to role conflict and uncertainty in execution.

### **Theme 3. Persistent Stress Despite Policy**

Despite administrative reforms, some teachers continue to feel pressure. As Respondent 2 explained,

*"Stress and burnout have always been present. It's part of our responsibility as teachers,"*

illustrating that chronic stress remains embedded in the profession, regardless of administrative load changes.

#### **Theme 4. Transitional Adjustment**

Others encountered minor challenges primarily related to adapting to new systems. Respondent 3 noted,

*"Minimal challenges... mostly related to adjusting to new systems,"*

reflecting the natural adjustment period required to integrate changes. However, these were not perceived as barriers but rather temporary hurdles.

#### **Theme 5. Mixed Impact and Individual Constraints**

Respondent 10 described,

*"I still have some workload... health issues,"*

signaling that individual capacity, including health and personal limitations, also shapes how well one can benefit from the policy. Even with partial relief, personal challenges may still hinder full advantage.

#### **Theme 6. Positive Transition Experience**

Finally, some respondents reported an overall smooth or even joyful shift. Respondent 4 shared,

*"So far, I haven't encountered major challenges,"*

and Respondent 5 emphasized,

*"No major difficulties, just happiness and relief."*

Similarly, Respondent 6 stated,

*"...more satisfied due to the decreased burden."*

These statements reflect successful initial implementation and a welcomed change among a subset of teachers.

In examining the influence of the removal of administrative burdens on teachers' instructional practices and overall job satisfaction, the following emergent themes surfaced from the lived experiences of teacher participants: **1. Improved Instructional Practice and Job Satisfaction, 2. Enhanced Engagement with Students, 3. Dependent on Full Implementation, 4. No Perceived Change, and 5. Implementation Gaps and Role Clarity Issues.** These themes reflect the varying degrees of impact that administrative relief, whether fully implemented or not, has had on the teaching profession.

#### **Theme 1. Improved Instructional Practice and Job Satisfaction**

A recurring theme across multiple respondents was that the reduction of administrative responsibilities allowed teachers to redirect their focus toward core teaching functions and personal growth. Respondent 1 shared,

*"Yes. With fewer distractions, I now dedicate more time to lesson preparation, student engagement, and personal development,"*

indicating a renewed instructional focus and professional development. Similarly, Respondent 5 stated,

*"I'm more motivated to work with dedication and perseverance,"*

highlighting a boost in motivation and commitment. Respondent 6 also emphasized,

*"Teachers now have more time to support struggling learners and enhance instruction,"*

illustrating increased instructional responsiveness. Respondent 10 added,

*"Able to devote time to instructional material development and research on effective methods,"*

pointing to innovation and deeper pedagogical engagement.

## Theme 2. Enhanced Engagement with Students

Some respondents noted that the policy change positively influenced their interaction and collaboration with students and colleagues. For instance, Respondent 3 said,

*"It has improved teachers' engagement with learners and participation with school activities,"*

signaling a more active and involved professional presence. Respondent 4 further supported this,

*"noting, it has improved collaboration, student interaction also improved due to increased availability,"*

suggesting that teacher availability fosters a more connected learning environment and stronger collegial relationships.

## Theme 3. Dependent on Full Implementation

Despite the intended outcomes, not all respondents reported immediate benefits. Some perceived the policy's potential but acknowledged that its effects were contingent on proper implementation. Respondent 2 stated,

*"Not yet, but I believe that if the policy is fully implemented, it will lead to better work-life balance and job satisfaction,"*

suggesting that anticipated improvements remain unrealized due to implementation delays or inconsistencies.

## Theme 4. No Perceived Change

Other teachers expressed skepticism or reported no significant changes due to incomplete or ineffective implementation. Respondent 7 bluntly stated,

*"None, because despite the policy, the expected reduction in workload has not materialized,"*

revealing disappointment and a lack of observable improvement. Likewise, Respondent 8 mentioned,

*"Not yet, due to ongoing administrative duties,"*

implying that the continuation of burdensome tasks hinders potential benefits.

## Theme 5. Implementation Gaps and Role Clarity Issues

Finally, some teachers highlighted challenges related to task delineation and policy execution. Respondent 9 remarked,

*"Mismatch between admin and teaching tasks... requests fewer loads to focus on instruction,"*

underscoring the need for clear roles and aligned workloads to ensure the policy's effectiveness.

In addressing the support mechanisms that teachers identify as necessary to sustain the positive effects of reducing administrative workloads, several emergent themes became apparent from the lived experiences of the respondents. These include ***Institutional and System Support, Clear Delegation and Implementation, Professional Development and Resource Access, and Focus on Teaching and Learner Support***. These themes highlight the critical components needed to ensure the long-term effectiveness of policies such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024.

## Theme 1: Institutional and System Support

Teachers emphasized the need for clear policy structures, accountability, and institutional backing to ensure the success of administrative task removal. Respondent 1 stressed,

*"There may be a need for better role clarity and more structured support systems to ensure consistent implementation,"*

pointing to a systemic gap in support and guidance. Likewise, Respondent 7 noted,

*"By ensuring policy implementation is enforced in practice, not just in name, and by possibly assigning dedicated personnel for planning and record-related duties,"*

underlining the importance of implementation fidelity and dedicated staff to take over non-teaching functions.

David and Albert's (2021) discussion paper provides critical insight into the systemic factors influencing teacher retention and attrition in the Philippine public-school system. One of the key issues identified is the lack of institutional support structures, which significantly contributes to teacher burnout and eventual attrition. This is directly aligned with the concerns raised by Respondents 1 and 7 in the study, who highlighted the need for clear role definitions, dedicated administrative personnel, and proper policy enforcement.

The authors further argue that administrative overload, paired with weak implementation of support mechanisms, leads to demoralization and disengagement among teachers. They emphasize that for any workload-reduction policy (like DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024) to succeed, it must be accompanied by strong institutional backing, including operational guidelines, designated administrative staff, and a functional accountability framework to ensure that non-teaching tasks are truly reassigned and not informally passed back to teachers.

## Theme 2: Clear Delegation and Implementation

Another recurring theme was the need for proper task redistribution and clarity in role delineation. Respondent 2 remarked,

*If administrative tasks are fully removed and delegated appropriately, it will create a more positive and productive teaching environment,*

signaling that partial or unclear delegation compromises impact. Echoing this, Respondent 3 emphasized,

*Total removal of administrative tasks so teachers can truly focus on teaching,*

advocating for a complete separation of administrative and instructional duties. Respondent 9 also highlighted the need for strategic staffing, stating,

*Additional teaching staff to allow removal of admin roles; redistribution of tasks aligned with teacher specializations.*

David and Albert (2021) emphasize that reducing teacher workload alone is insufficient without clear role delineation and proper task redistribution. They advocate for strategic delegation and staffing to ensure teachers can focus fully on instruction, thereby improving both teacher satisfaction and education quality.

## Theme 3: Professional Development and Resource Access

Teachers also identified the importance of continuous learning and access to instructional tools as vital to sustaining teaching quality. Respondent 4 emphasized,

*Continuous access to professional development, especially those relevant to our teaching fields, and access to instructional materials are important. More support in research and technology tools would also help,*

showing a desire for capacity building and innovation. Similarly, Respondent 5 stressed,

*Provide more training opportunities, instructional materials, and timely implementation of support programs,*

suggesting the need for institutional responsiveness to evolving teacher needs.

Punzalan (2018) highlights how administrative overload hampers teachers' access to professional development and instructional resources. He stresses that to enhance teaching effectiveness, schools must reduce non-teaching duties while also providing sustained opportunities for training and resource access, paralleling the teachers' calls for capacity building and timely support.

## Theme 4. Focus on Teaching and Learner Support

Several participants highlighted that more instructional time and learner-focused support

are essential for sustaining improvements. Respondent 6 stated,

*"More classroom presence, more instructional preparation, better support for all learners, especially those struggling,"*

calling attention to the need for deepened instructional engagement. Meanwhile, Respondent 8 suggested that

*"Availability of ready-made lesson plans and assessments helps lighten daily workload,"*

which indicates that practical resources can free up time for more meaningful teacher-student interactions.

David and Albert (2021) argue that excessive teacher workload negatively impacts teaching quality, limiting the time teachers can spend on lesson preparation and learner support. They recommend reducing non-teaching duties and providing instructional tools to help teachers focus more on classroom interaction and student needs, supporting the theme of deepened instructional engagement and resource access.

## Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of teachers following the removal of administrative tasks to understand its impact on their professional and instructional lives. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study revealed how this policy shift influenced various dimensions of teachers' work, including professional development, classroom instruction, student learning outcomes, and overall well-being. Furthermore, the research examined the perceived benefits and challenges that emerged from the implementation of the policy, its influence on instructional practices and job satisfaction, and the support mechanisms that teachers consider essential to sustain its positive effects. The findings illuminate both the transformative potential and the limitations of administrative task removal, offering meaningful insights for

education stakeholders, policymakers, and school leaders.

Based on the findings regarding the experiences of teachers concerning their professional development following the removal of administrative tasks, it can be concluded that the policy has generated a spectrum of outcomes. Many teachers experienced enhanced professional growth, with increased opportunities to participate in training, pursue further studies, and engage in self-directed development, benefits made possible by reduced administrative demands. However, the study also revealed challenges in implementation, with some respondents noting that administrative burdens persisted or worsened due to inadequate policy enforcement. These inconsistencies led to mixed outcomes, where a few teachers acknowledged both limitations and unexpected benefits, such as skill enhancement through remaining tasks. Overall, the results underscore that while the policy holds potential to support professional development, its effectiveness depends heavily on consistent and well-structured implementation across all school contexts.

Based on the findings related to classroom instruction, it can be concluded that the removal of administrative tasks has generally had a positive impact on teachers' instructional practices, particularly by allowing them to allocate more time and energy toward lesson planning, instructional innovation, and student-centered strategies. Many respondents reported enhanced teaching quality and improved preparedness as a result of reduced non-teaching duties. However, the benefits of the policy were not uniformly experienced, as implementation gaps and partial compliance in some schools continued to burden teachers, thereby limiting the policy's full potential. Furthermore, external factors such as frequent curriculum changes also emerged as barriers to sustained instructional improvement. These findings suggest that while the removal of administrative tasks creates favorable conditions for effective teaching, consistent implementation and systemic alignment are essential to fully realize its intended outcomes.

The conclusion drawn from the results concerning student performance and learning experience reveals that the removal of administrative tasks has the potential to significantly enhance educational outcomes, primarily through improved teacher focus and greater classroom presence. Teachers observed increased student engagement, better comprehension, and stronger academic support when freed from non-instructional duties. However, these benefits were not consistently experienced across all contexts, as gaps in policy implementation and lingering administrative responsibilities continued to disrupt instructional time for some. Moreover, the findings underscore the complexity of student needs, with some learners benefiting not only from improved instruction but also from co-curricular opportunities. These insights suggest that while reducing administrative burdens can lead to meaningful improvements in student learning, sustained success requires full policy enforcement and a holistic understanding of the diverse factors influencing student development.

The conclusion regarding teachers' well-being reveals that the removal of administrative tasks has the potential to significantly enhance mental and emotional health when effectively implemented. Many teachers reported experiencing reduced stress, greater job satisfaction, and improved work-life balance, attributing these changes to their renewed focus on teaching and reduced workload. However, the findings also underscore that these benefits are not uniformly experienced. Several respondents continued to face stress and dissatisfaction due to lingering administrative duties, pointing to gaps in policy enforcement. Others expressed conditional optimism, acknowledging that while the policy could improve well-being, its impact is contingent on consistent and full implementation. Overall, the results emphasize that meaningful improvements in teacher well-being require not just policy creation, but sustained and equitable application across all school contexts.

The conclusion drawn from the teachers' perceived benefits following the removal of administrative tasks reveals a strong positive impact on both instructional quality and personal

well-being. Teachers consistently reported that the reduction in non-teaching responsibilities enabled them to refocus their energy on lesson planning, student engagement, and professional clarity, ultimately leading to enhanced classroom effectiveness and deeper job satisfaction. Additionally, the newfound balance between work and personal life, reduced stress levels, and improved morale underscore the critical importance of alleviating administrative burdens to support teacher wellness. These benefits not only reflect improved conditions for educators but also suggest broader implications for sustaining high-quality teaching and fostering a more supportive school environment.

The perceived challenges that teachers face following the removal of administrative tasks reveal a complex and varied landscape marked by both systemic and individual barriers. While some educators reported a positive transition and relief from burdens, many highlighted the incomplete or partial implementation of the policy, resulting in retained responsibilities, role ambiguity, and continued stress. Issues such as inadequate staffing, unclear task reallocation, and personal constraints further complicate the policy's effectiveness. Additionally, the persistence of chronic stress and the need for transitional adjustments underscore that administrative task removal alone may not fully resolve deeper professional pressures. These insights suggest that while the policy holds promise, its impact is highly contingent on consistent execution, institutional support, and sensitivity to individual teacher contexts.

The removal of administrative burdens has had a mixed but generally positive influence on teachers' instructional practices and overall job satisfaction, as reflected in the varied experiences of the respondents. Many teachers reported enhanced instructional focus, increased motivation, deeper student engagement, and renewed professional dedication, attributing these improvements to the reduced administrative load. However, these benefits were not universally experienced; some teachers noted that the policy's effectiveness is heavily reliant on full and consistent implementation. In cases where administrative tasks persisted or were only partially reallocated, improvements in job

satisfaction and instructional quality were limited or nonexistent. Additionally, role ambiguity and implementation gaps further complicated the policy's impact, revealing that while the initiative holds significant promise, its success depends on clear guidelines, effective execution, and adequate institutional support.

The findings reveal that to sustain the positive effects of reducing administrative workloads, teachers believe that several critical support mechanisms must be in place. These include strong institutional and systemic support, such as consistent policy implementation and clear role definitions; effective delegation of administrative duties to non-teaching personnel; and strategic staffing that aligns tasks with teacher expertise. In addition, teachers emphasized the need for ongoing professional development, timely access to instructional resources, and support for research and technology integration to maintain teaching quality. Lastly, they highlighted the importance of maximizing instructional time and learner-focused strategies, such as increased classroom presence and readily available teaching materials, to ensure that the benefits of reduced administrative load translate into lasting improvements in student learning and teacher satisfaction.

In sum, this study affirms that the removal of administrative tasks can greatly enhance the professional lives of teachers, provided that implementation is consistent, support systems are full-bodied, and the focus remains on empowering educators to teach more effectively and meaningfully.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this phenomenological study, the removal of administrative tasks under DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 shows great potential in enhancing instructional quality, teacher well-being, and job satisfaction. However, its success hinges on consistent implementation, systemic support, and clear role definitions. To strengthen its long-term impact, several key recommendations are proposed. First, the Department of Education must ensure full and uniform policy enforcement by issuing clear and actionable guidelines to all schools. Clear delineation of teaching and

non-teaching roles is essential to prevent role ambiguity and reassign administrative work to qualified non-teaching staff. Adequate staffing is also critical, schools need sufficient personnel to handle clerical, compliance, and coordination duties traditionally performed by teachers. Strong institutional support mechanisms, such as task monitoring systems and feedback loops, must be established to address emerging challenges. Continuous professional development and access to updated teaching resources are equally vital to empower teachers and sustain instructional improvements.

Additionally, schools should promote teacher wellness through mental health programs, recognition systems, and flexible support during transition periods. Learner-centered strategies must also be prioritized by providing ready-made teaching tools and tailored interventions for struggling students. Finally, regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess the policy's effects and guide future refinements. These recommendations collectively aim to institutionalize support systems that allow teachers to focus fully on quality teaching and student learning.

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