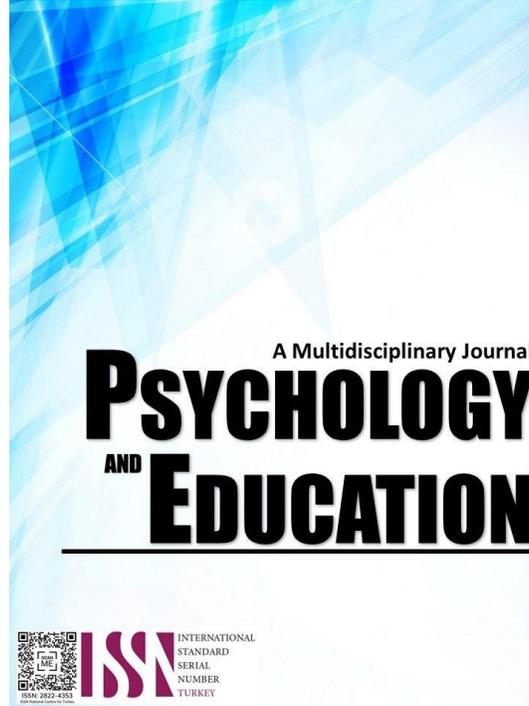


PAIN AND JOY IN TEACHING LARGE CLASS SIZE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY



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Pain and Joy in Teaching Large Class Size: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

In overcrowded classrooms where resources are limited, teachers' roles extend beyond instruction to encompass innovation, adaptability, and emotional endurance. This study explored the lived experiences of ten (10) teachers from the Shariff Aguak District in the Maguindanao del Sur Division who manage the realities of teaching large class sizes. The participants, comprising ten teachers, underwent individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) conducted by the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. Using a descriptive phenomenological approach, the research uncovered five central themes that characterize their professional experiences. Teachers described the ongoing challenge of sustaining classroom order through consistent routines and proactive management strategies. They highlighted the importance of fostering student engagement despite limited instructional materials and physical constraints. Another prominent theme centered on balancing fairness and care, as teachers struggled to provide individualized attention while maintaining equity among students. Emotional resilience emerged as a core response, driven by a strong sense of vocation and commitment to learners. Equally vital was collegial collaboration, which served as a source of shared problem-solving and emotional support. Over time, teachers reframed these challenges as opportunities for professional growth and advocacy for educational reform. Collectively, these themes reveal that teaching in overcrowded classrooms requires not only pedagogical skill but also deep emotional and moral commitment. The study highlights the importance of sustained institutional support, professional development, and policy interventions in enhancing teacher well-being and instructional quality in resource-constrained educational environments.

Keywords: *large class size, classroom management, teacher experiences, coping strategies, phenomenology, educational challenges, professional resilience*

Introduction

In classrooms where every seat was occupied and resources were stretched thin, the role of the teacher transcended mere instruction. It became a daily act of innovation and resilience. This dynamic landscape introduced challenges that significantly shaped both the teaching process and student learning.

The persistent issue of large class sizes continues to challenge teachers' ability to deliver quality education, particularly in resource-constrained environments. As classrooms grow more crowded, teachers are required to extend beyond traditional instruction, employing creativity and resilience to maintain meaningful learning experiences. This ongoing challenge influences not only instructional practices but also the overall quality of student learning outcomes.

Globally, large class sizes remain a pressing concern, especially in developing regions where education systems are under strain. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, an estimated nine million additional trained teachers will be needed by 2030 to meet educational demands (World Bank, 2021). Overcrowded classrooms, often exceeding 50 students, hinder individualized instruction and student engagement (Brookings, 2023). Studies suggest that cooperative learning, structured routines, and targeted teacher training can help mitigate these challenges (Anderson, 2023).

In the Philippines, the problem persists despite the Department of Education's (DepEd) guidelines, which limit class sizes to 30–40 students. Many public schools continue to exceed this range due to teacher shortages and urban population growth (Clofified, 2023; DepEd, 2023). Research indicates that such overcrowding negatively affects teaching quality and learner achievement (PIDS, 2021). Consequently, reforms aimed at teacher development and resource allocation have been recommended to improve classroom conditions (Basilio, 2023).

In Shariff Aguak District, the issue is further intensified by inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and socio-economic constraints. Schools in this area often experience shortages in classrooms, materials, and personnel (Ramos, 2022). While initiatives like the Learning Institutions as Zones of Peace (LIZoP) have sought to promote community involvement and psychosocial support (UNICEF, 2021), challenges related to overcrowding and insufficient funding persist (GMA News, 2022).

Conceptually, while numerous studies have explored the impact of large class sizes on student achievement, there is a notable lack of research examining how teachers themselves navigate and adapt within these environments (World Bank, 2021; Anderson, 2023; Basilio, 2023). Contextually, little is known about how teachers in low-resource and conflict-affected areas, such as Shariff Aguak, specifically cope with these classroom realities. This dual gap highlights the need for localized, experience-based inquiry into the adaptive strategies teachers employ under such conditions (Brookings, 2023; PIDS, 2021).

Therefore, this phenomenological study seeks to explore the lived experiences of teachers handling large classes in Shariff Aguak

District, Division of Maguindanao Del Sur. By documenting their strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms, the study aims to inform policies and interventions that enhance instructional effectiveness in overcrowded settings. Ultimately, it contributes to the broader discourse on improving educational quality and equity in under-resourced contexts.

Research Questions

The study examined the challenges and strategies employed by teachers in managing large class sizes in the Shariff Aguak District during the 2024-2025 school year. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching large class size?
2. How do teachers cope with challenges they encountered?
3. What insights do teachers have on teaching large class size based on their experiences?

Literature Review

Challenges in Teaching Large Class Size

Teaching large classes has been widely recognized as a complex and multidimensional challenge that affects both instructional quality and teacher well-being. Across various contexts, researchers have identified recurring difficulties in maintaining discipline, promoting engagement, and providing individualized attention—issues that are exacerbated by limited resources and overcrowded learning spaces (Anderson, 2023; Akinbode et al., 2021; Duke Learning Innovation, 2024).

In the Philippine context, Manlongat et al. (2021) found that large classes created emotional and physical strain for teachers; however, effective management and resource use alleviated some of these effects. Similarly, Solomon (2024) reported that overcrowded classrooms in Jolo District hindered instruction and called for targeted interventions. Both studies highlight that teacher preparedness and professional development significantly influence how educators cope with large-class conditions.

International findings mirror these observations. Studies in Nigeria, China, and other developing contexts reveal similar difficulties: teachers struggle to give individualized feedback, sustain participation, and manage behavioral challenges (Barde et al., 2021; Liu & Zhu, 2023; Nduudee & Shedrack, 2024). While digital tools have been proposed to aid instruction, Bai, Wang, and Chai (2021) found that insufficient training often limits their effectiveness. Collectively, these studies converge on a shared pattern—large class environments compromise instructional quality and teacher well-being, regardless of geographic or cultural setting.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with Classroom Management Theory, which posits that effective learning depends on teachers' ability to establish structure, maintain engagement, and manage student behavior within available resources. Large class sizes disrupt this balance, compelling teachers to develop adaptive strategies. Concurrently, Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizes that meaningful learning emerges through active participation and interaction—processes that become increasingly difficult to sustain in overcrowded classrooms. The intersection of these theories highlights a tension between the need for structure and the goal of interaction: teachers must balance managerial control with opportunities for student-centered engagement.

Conceptually, most literature focuses on the effects of large classes—stress, reduced attention, and declining performance—but offers limited insight into the adaptive strategies teachers employ to address these conditions. Contextually, in rural, low-resource settings such as Shariff Aguak District, these challenges are compounded by material scarcity, infrastructural constraints, and socio-economic disparities. Investigating teachers' lived experiences in this setting is thus crucial to addressing both the conceptual gap (insufficient theory on teacher adaptation) and the contextual gap (lack of localized evidence in the Philippine educational landscape).

Strategies in Teaching Large Classes

Effective management of large classes demands strategic, theory-informed approaches that emphasize structure, engagement, and adaptability. Research identifies four interrelated domains: planning and organization, classroom management, active learning, and adaptive assessment.

Planning and organization provide the foundation for successful instruction. Detailed lesson designs with clear objectives help reduce downtime and sustain focus (Marzulina et al., 2021; Liu & Zhu, 2023). Rooted in Instructional Management Theory, structured planning allows teachers to maintain control while accommodating diverse learner needs.

Classroom management strategies are equally vital. Establishing clear expectations, routines, and positive reinforcement builds a predictable learning climate that minimizes disruptions (Koç & Koç, 2021; We Are Teachers, 2021). Studies show that proactive management—rather than reactive discipline—reduces stress and fosters a cooperative classroom environment (Nature, 2024). Flexible grouping techniques, such as small teams or rotating peer groups, replicate the benefits of smaller classes and encourage collaboration (American English, 2021).

Active learning approaches further enhance engagement. Peer instruction, cooperative projects, and discussion-based activities promote social interaction and collective problem-solving—core principles of Social Constructivism (Pham & Renshaw, 2020; Anderson, 2023). Technology integration complements this by enabling participation and feedback through online platforms, though its success

depends on teachers' digital competence (Mushaandja-Mufeti & Molosiwa, 2021).

Lastly, adaptive assessment practices address the grading and feedback challenges inherent in large classes. Peer and self-assessment promote learner autonomy and reduce teacher workload (Ahmed & Gul, 2022). These methods align with Formative Assessment Theory, which prioritizes continuous improvement and reflection over summative evaluation. Schools that invest in training teachers on adaptive assessment and management techniques report improved student outcomes and higher teacher morale (Adeyemi, 2023).

This review integrates insights from Classroom Management Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory to form the conceptual basis of the study. The literature suggests that successful instruction in large classes depends on teachers' ability to balance structure (as emphasized by classroom management theory) with interaction (as underscored by constructivism). Within this framework, teacher adaptation emerges as the central process linking external constraints (e.g., class size, resources) to instructional outcomes (e.g., engagement, learning quality). In essence, effective large-class teaching is not merely about control or creativity in isolation but the synergistic balance between structured management and active participation. This conceptual linkage informs the present study's focus on exploring how teachers in Shariff Aguak District implement, modify, and sustain these adaptive strategies within their socio-educational realities.

Synthesizing these perspectives reveals that while large class size presents significant instructional and managerial challenges, teachers can mitigate these through strategic planning, proactive management, active learning, and adaptive assessment. However, the successful implementation of these strategies depends heavily on contextual realities, including resource availability, administrative support, and teacher preparedness. In under-resourced contexts such as Shariff Aguak District, understanding how teachers internalize and modify these approaches within their lived conditions remains crucial. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the literature by examining how teachers in this locality navigate, adapt, and sustain effective teaching practices in large class settings.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design, focusing on understanding individuals' experiences and the meanings they attached to those experiences. This approach aligned with the essence of the study, which aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers assigned to large class sizes. By employing the qualitative phenomenological approach, the study sought to uncover the intricate layers of how these teachers viewed and felt about their experiences in this phenomenon.

As noted by Aspers and Corte (2021), qualitative research is an iterative process that contributes to the scientific community by revealing new insights and distinctions through a closer examination of the phenomenon under study. Sawatsky et al. (2024) emphasized the value of qualitative research on how individuals navigate identity and how their realities are constructed in context.

A transcendental rather than hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen because the goal of this study is to describe the universal essence of teachers' lived experiences rather than to interpret them through philosophical reflection. Hermeneutic phenomenology, influenced by Heidegger and van Manen, focuses on interpreting the meanings of lived experiences in the context of human existence. In contrast, the transcendental approach, as articulated by Husserl and Moustakas, prioritizes what teachers experience and how they experience it, while minimizing researcher subjectivity. This makes transcendental phenomenology more appropriate for capturing the authentic voices of teachers without filtering their experiences through prior theoretical lenses.

Numerous studies have utilized the transcendental phenomenological design, a methodological approach grounded in the works of Moustakas. Researchers such as MacTaggart and Lynham (2019) employed this design to explore the essence of a Responsible Leadership experience, offering insights into the perspectives of middle school teachers. Similarly, Cahapay (2021) employed transcendental phenomenology to investigate how parents attributed meaning to their involvement in their children's remote learning during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic. In another context, Grey (2019) applied this approach to understand the perceptions of private high school educators regarding the implementation of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. Furthermore, Hawes and Nelson (2021) explored the lived experiences of rural, experienced middle school teachers through transcendental phenomenology. Lastly, Becker and Schad (2022) utilized this approach to unravel the lived experiences of online learners, presenting a framework for phenomenological research in the context of distance education.

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of ten (10) public elementary school teachers from the Shariff Aguak District during the school year 2024–2025. The inclusion criteria for selecting participants were as follows: teachers must have been employed in public elementary schools within the district and must have had direct experience managing large classrooms with at least 60 or more students. This ensured that participants had relevant firsthand knowledge of the challenges associated with overcrowded classrooms. Additionally, teachers were required to have at least two years of teaching experience to provide sufficient exposure to the dynamics of large class environments. Furthermore, participants needed to be proficient in Filipino or English to ensure clear communication during data collection, which included interviews and surveys.

Teachers who had worked in specialized classroom settings, such as special education or alternative learning systems, were excluded

from the study, as their experiences might not have aligned with those of general classroom teachers. Similarly, teachers working in private schools or those with less than two years of teaching experience were also excluded to maintain the study's focus on experienced public-school educators in large class settings. These inclusion and exclusion criteria were designed to ensure a relevant, focused, and credible sample capable of providing rich insights into the challenges and management strategies employed in large classroom environments (Manlongat et al., 2021; Mahmood et al., 2022; Solomon, 2024).

Instrument

To ensure the quality and relevance of the interview questions, content validity was rigorously applied. The researcher meticulously drafted the interview questions, taking into account the specific context of teachers handling large class sizes. The initial draft was subjected to careful scrutiny and evaluation by the researcher's adviser to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

Following the adviser's review, a panel of validators was carefully selected to further assess the pertinence and suitability of the interview questions. The panel consisted of four (4) experts, all of whom possessed either a Master's or a Doctorate degree. This rigorous inclusion criterion ensured that the validators had extensive knowledge and expertise in the field, making them highly qualified to evaluate the interview instrument. The use of semi-structured interviews, combined with a rigorous validation process, enhanced the study's robustness, ensuring that the collected data provided comprehensive insights into the lived experiences of teachers. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of their realities, thereby contributing valuable knowledge to the field of language teaching in challenging educational contexts.

Procedure

In this transcendental phenomenological study, data collection followed a systematic and rigorous process to explore the essence and meaning of participants' lived experiences. The steps of data gathering in a transcendental phenomenological study, based on Creswell (2013), are as follows:

First, the researcher purposefully selected participants who had experienced the phenomenon of interest. Participants were chosen for their ability to provide rich and insightful descriptions of their experiences related to the research question. Second, participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. They are given the opportunity to give voluntary and informed consent to participate.

Third, the researcher conducts in-depth interviews with each participant, using open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences in their own words. The interviews were audio-recorded to capture participants' responses accurately. Subsequently, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, ensuring the preservation of participants' original expressions and nuances.

After the interview, the researcher practiced bracketing. (Finlay, 2009). Fourth, Data collection continues until data saturation is achieved, meaning that no new significant information or themes emerge from the interviews. Fifth, the researcher conducted a systematic analysis of the interview transcripts to identify common themes and patterns in the participants' experiences. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the researcher engaged in member checking, where participants were given the opportunity to review and validate the researcher's interpretations of their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Lastly, throughout the data gathering process, the researcher emphasized the importance of rich description in reporting the participants' experiences, providing detailed and vivid accounts that allow readers to understand the essence of the phenomenon.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher employed strategies that encompassed credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, all of which aimed to ensure rigor and validity in exploring participants' lived experiences. Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings are believable and accurately represent participants' perspectives. To establish this, the researcher employed member checking, wherein participants reviewed and validated the interpretations of their experiences, supported by a transparent and systematic data analysis process (Accad, 2015). Dependability pertains to the consistency and stability of findings over time and across contexts; thus, the researcher maintained a detailed audit trail documenting research decisions, data collection, and analysis procedures to ensure reliability and replicability. Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts. Therefore, the researcher provided rich, thick descriptions of the participants, the research setting, and the phenomenon under study, enabling readers to determine the relevance of the results to their own situations, while also acknowledging the study's limitations. Finally, confirmability ensures that the findings are grounded in data rather than in the researcher's bias. This was achieved through reflexivity, where the researcher continuously reflected on personal assumptions and values throughout the research process to promote transparency and objectivity, thereby strengthening the overall credibility and integrity of the study (Finlay, 2009).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2016), was systematically employed to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data, ensuring a rich and coherent interpretation of participants' lived experiences. The process involved six structured steps. First, the researcher immersed themselves in the data by reading and re-reading transcripts, allowing emerging meanings and significant patterns to surface. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying key segments of text, condensing raw data into



meaningful categories that captured essential ideas. Third, these codes were organized into overarching themes that reflected the shared essence of participants' experiences. Fourth, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure their alignment with both the data and the study's conceptual framework. Fifth, each theme was clearly defined and named, emphasizing its phenomenological significance and contribution to understanding the phenomenon. Finally, the researcher synthesized the findings into a coherent narrative, supported by direct participant quotations and thematic coding to ensure authenticity and depth. Member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of interpretations, reinforcing the study's credibility. A visual diagram was also developed to illustrate the progression from initial coding to thematic synthesis, providing a concise representation of the analytical process.

Ethical Considerations

A permission letter from the researcher, duly signed by the research adviser, was obtained prior to the commencement of the study on February 9, 2025. The researcher submitted a letter of permission to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent dated February 10, 2025. Participants were required to submit a signed consent form or waiver prior to the commencement of data collection. To ensure privacy, aliases were used for all participants (Ang Karugasik, 2016).

Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and were free to skip any questions that made them feel uncomfortable. The study was designed and conducted in accordance with the ethical principles established by Sultan Kudarat State University. The researcher built trust with the participants by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, within the bounds of the law. For the continuation of data gathering, the researcher received both verbal and written informed consent from the participants regarding the research topic.

Results and Discussion

Emerging Theme on the Challenges in Teaching Large Class Size

Ten (10) clustered codes were organized and analyzed to formulate five (5) emerging themes that surfaced through a thorough process of data analysis and interpretation.

The findings revealed the following major challenges encountered by teachers: Classroom Management Challenges, Limited Individualized Attention and Feedback, Communication Barriers, Time and Resource Constraints, and Challenges in Facilitating Group Activities. These themes reflect the complexities and limitations teachers face when handling large class sizes, highlighting areas that require targeted support and intervention.

Table 1. Challenges in Teaching Large Class Size

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Classroom Management Challenges	-managing classroom behavior -handling disruptions and distractions	disruptions, classroom management, behavior, distractions, discipline
Limited Individualized Attention and Feedback	-providing individualized feedback	individual attention, personalized feedback, individualized instruction, individual needs
Communication Barriers	-struggling with cross-cultural communication	language barrier, cannot understand, mother tongue, language mismatch
Time and Resource Constraints	-managing time constraints -sacrificing time for administrative tasks	time-consuming, limited time, resources, sacrifice, printing activity sheets, extra work
Challenges in Facilitating Group Activities	-managing group dynamics -encouraging active participation in group work	group discussions, collaborative activity, group work, activities, participative, not attentive

Emerging Theme 1: Classroom Management Challenges

Participants shared their experiences.

"the difficulties in handling large class sizes are disruptions, individual attention, less participation, giving feedback to my pupils, and also the noise and distractions." (T1)

"Ah...the difficulties in handling large class sizes, actually the first one is the individual attention limited individual attention. It is a struggle for teachers because ... teacher can't control the focus of the child..." (T2)

"Pupils have different attitudes because they come from different families, and having a large number of pupils focus and engage can be difficult because disruption and distractions are more common." (T3)

"Maintaining discipline and engagement in a large class can be challenging. It's easier for some students to become disengaged or disruptive, which can affect everyone's learning environment." (T5)

"The classroom management, ma'am. It is so hard to manage a large class size." (T7)

"My problem is in terms of classroom management. It was so hard to manage a class with so many learners." (T8)

"My problem is about classroom management and the language barrier. Since I am Illonggo and my pupils are Maguindanaoan. So, there are some words that I can't understand." (T9).

Teachers describe difficulties in keeping the classroom orderly when managing many students at once. The responses revealed that managing student behavior, handling frequent disruptions, and dealing with various distractions make it hard to maintain focus. Teachers noted that the diverse attitudes and noise levels in the class interfere with smooth instruction. 7 out of 10 participants express they encountered difficulties in keeping the classroom orderly when managing many students at once. This finding supports Bored Teachers (2024), who highlighted those larger classes often lead to increased student misbehavior and diminished instructional quality.

From a theoretical perspective, the results align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learning thrives through structured social interactions. Overcrowded environments disrupt the formation of collaborative learning spaces, limiting students' opportunities to engage within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Without meaningful peer interactions, the development of higher cognitive processes becomes constrained.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for systemic reforms, such as hiring additional teachers, reducing class sizes, and implementing professional development programs focused on classroom management and differentiated instruction. Studies like those from the National Center for Education Statistics (2023) and the Education Policy Institute (2019) advocate for strategic class-size reduction initiatives, supporting Maslow's view that a safe and supportive environment is foundational for learning, and reinforcing Vygotsky and Bandura's theories that social contexts and learner agency are vital for cognitive and emotional growth.

Emerging Theme 2: Limited Individualized Attention and Feedback

In large classes, teachers express that it is nearly impossible to give each student the individual attention they need. The responses point to the struggle of offering personalized feedback to match the varied learning levels of students. This theme is driven by the challenge of addressing every student's unique learning base amid overwhelming numbers.

This theme is characterized by two (2) clustered themes; providing individualized feedback; and addressing diverse learning needs. Teachers in large class size describe their challenges in limited individualized attention and feedback when they said:

"The difficulties in handling large class sizes are disruptions, individual attention, less participation..." (T1)

"Ah...the difficulties in handling large class sizes, actually the first one is the individual attention limited individual attention. It is a struggle for teachers ..." (T2)

"For me, ma'am, the difficult thing due to their large number of students is giving feedback, like checking their quizzes at that time..." (T6)

"Give personalized feedback or address unique learning. I think one specific aspect of my performance is the ability to provide individualized instruction and feedback..." (T1)

"One specific aspect of teaching in a large class size that significantly affects my performance is the ability to provide individualized feedback and support to students. ..." (T5)

Approximately 6 out of 10 participants point to the struggle of offering personalized feedback to match the varied learning levels of students.

In large classes, teachers faced significant difficulties in providing individualized attention and personalized feedback to students. The high student-to-teacher ratio made it nearly impossible to address each learner's specific needs, hindering academic progress and engagement. Research suggested that students in overcrowded classrooms received less direct support from their teachers, which negatively impacted their motivation and learning outcomes (National Education Association, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory highlights the importance of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), which suggests that students learn best with appropriate guidance tailored to their specific developmental needs. In large classrooms, the ability to offer this scaffolding becomes limited, leaving many students without the support necessary to reach their full potential.

Additionally, the challenge of tailoring feedback to diverse learning levels meant that some students struggled without timely intervention, contributing to widening achievement gaps (Edutopia, 2024). This aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), which emphasizes that students must feel a sense of belonging and esteem before they can achieve academic success; in overcrowded classrooms, many students may feel overlooked, undermining their motivation and self-confidence.

As a result, teachers in large classes often resorted to generalized assessments rather than in-depth, personalized feedback, limiting opportunities for students to improve based on their individual strengths and weaknesses. This issue underscored the urgent need for educational policies that promote smaller class sizes, provide increased instructional support, and encourage the integration of technology-assisted feedback mechanisms to enhance individualized learning experiences. The Implications of this results it needs

policies in promoting smaller class size and differentiated instructions.

Emerging Theme 3: Communication Barriers

This emerging theme describes that some teachers report that language differences and cultural variations add an extra layer of difficulty. These responses emphasize that when teachers and students do not share the same first language, or when there is a mix of cultural backgrounds, clear communication becomes a significant challenge in conveying instructions and feedback effectively. Teachers in large class size describe their challenges in Communication barriers when they said:

"My problem is about classroom management and the language barrier. Since I am Illonggo and my pupils are Maguindanaoan. So, there are some words that I can't understand." (T9)

"I found it very difficult to communicate. For instance, when they have to tell me their personal necessities. Fighting with each other, explain their side. Since I am teaching Muslim pupils and I am a Christian teacher, I cannot understand them well in their mother tongue or in their Maguindanaon language." (T4)

Approximately 3 out of 10 participants signifies that emphasize that when teachers and students do not share the same first language, or when there is a mix of cultural backgrounds, clear communication becomes a significant challenge in conveying instructions and feedback effectively

The findings revealed that differences in language proficiency and cultural background often hindered the delivery and understanding of lessons. When teachers and students did not share the same first language, instructions were frequently misunderstood, resulting in decreased participation and limited comprehension. This finding aligns with the report of the National Education Association (2024), which highlights that language diversity in overcrowded classrooms complicates communication and reduces learning engagement. Cultural variations in communication styles and classroom expectations also emerged as a source of difficulty. Teachers noted that certain behaviors—such as reluctance to speak, varying interpretations of respect, or hesitation to seek clarification—were often rooted in cultural norms. As Edutopia (2024) pointed out, such differences can lead to mismatched expectations between teachers and learners, affecting classroom interaction and inclusivity.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which underscores that social interaction and communication are essential to learning. When communication is obstructed, students' opportunities to engage within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) are constrained, limiting guided participation and peer collaboration. Similarly, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs highlights that students who feel misunderstood or excluded may experience a lack of belonging, impeding motivation and higher-order learning. In addition, Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory suggests that communication gaps weaken modeling and observational learning, thereby reducing the transfer of knowledge and skills in diverse classrooms.

The results demonstrate that communication barriers, intensified by large class sizes and cultural diversity, affect not only instructional clarity but also student engagement, confidence, and academic performance. The analysis indicates that linguistic and cultural mismatches can disrupt collaborative learning environments, increase teacher workload, and reduce overall classroom cohesion.

To address these challenges, teacher preparation programs and professional development should emphasize intercultural communication and inclusive pedagogy. Integrating visual aids, multilingual resources, and technology-assisted translation tools can help bridge communication gaps. Moreover, creating a classroom climate that fosters mutual respect and cultural sensitivity enhances both teacher effectiveness and student participation. At a broader level, these findings imply that effective communication is foundational to equitable learning. Educational policymakers should support initiatives that promote language inclusivity, teacher collaboration across cultures, and curriculum adjustments responsive to linguistic diversity. By addressing communication barriers, schools can cultivate classrooms where all learners—regardless of background—feel understood, valued, and empowered to succeed.

Emerging Theme 4: Time and Resource Constraints

This theme refers to limitations in the availability of time, materials, personnel, or other essential resources that can affect the completion of tasks, projects, or goals. This theme is characterized by two (2) clustered themes; managing time constraints; and sacrificing time for administrative tasks.

Teachers in large class size describe their challenges in time and resource constraints when they said:

"It is time-consuming because of the large number of students." (T2)

"For me, ma'am, the difficult thing due to their large number of students is giving feedback, like checking their quizzes at that time. Limited time and resources are also a challenge, ..."

(T6)

"In preparing their activity sheets and test paper, since they are 62, imagine five subjects if you are going to print all the activity sheets for them. The time, the resources. The time for teaching your pupils needs to be sacrificed for printing the activity sheets and test paper." (T8)

Approximately 3 out of 10 participants mentioned that tasks such as grading, preparing materials, or even organizing the class take much longer when the numbers are high.

Teachers consistently identified time and resource constraints as a major challenge associated with large class sizes. Managing a high number of students increased the time required for grading, lesson preparation, and administrative tasks, which in turn reduced opportunities for direct instruction and individualized support. Participants noted that balancing teaching duties with administrative responsibilities often forced them to compromise instructional quality. This finding echoes Kane et al. (2020), who found that teachers in overcrowded classrooms spend significantly more time on routine management, leaving less time for student-centered activities. Similarly, Henderson and Mapp (2020) observed that excessive workloads and limited planning time negatively affect teachers' ability to provide meaningful feedback and personalized guidance.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings align with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When teachers lack sufficient time to engage meaningfully with students, opportunities for guided learning diminish, hindering the development of higher-order thinking skills. Likewise, Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs emphasizes that teachers and students alike must have their basic and psychological needs met—such as a manageable workload and emotional well-being—to foster optimal teaching and learning conditions. Furthermore, Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory suggests that when instructional time is constrained, students are deprived of essential opportunities to learn through observation, imitation, and modeling—core processes of social and cognitive development.

The findings underscore that time and resource constraints have a cascading effect on instructional quality, teacher morale, and student achievement. Overextended teachers are less able to provide formative feedback, adapt instruction to individual learning needs, or sustain creative pedagogical practices. Consequently, the imbalance between teaching time and administrative workload not only contributes to teacher burnout but also limits students' access to quality education. To mitigate these challenges, schools should implement structural reforms that prioritize efficient time management and equitable resource distribution. This includes reducing class sizes, hiring additional support staff, and integrating digital tools that streamline grading and lesson preparation. Additionally, educational leaders must ensure that teachers receive professional development focused on time management, differentiated instruction, and the use of technology to optimize classroom efficiency.

At the policy level, addressing time and resource constraints is essential to sustaining teacher effectiveness and student success. As Darling-Hammond (2019) and OECD (2020) emphasize, long-term educational improvement requires systemic investment in teacher support systems, workload balance, and instructional autonomy. Ensuring that teachers have adequate time and resources not only enhances learning outcomes but also fosters a more equitable and sustainable educational environment.

Emerging Theme 5: Challenges in Facilitating Group Activities

Findings revealed that teachers experienced substantial difficulties in leading and managing group-based learning activities in large classrooms. These challenges primarily stemmed from diverse student abilities, conflicting personalities, and uneven levels of participation. Teachers reported that facilitating cooperation, maintaining focus, and ensuring equitable engagement required significant effort and time. This theme is characterized by two clustered subthemes: (1) Managing Group Dynamics and (2) Encouraging Active Participation in Group Work.

Teachers in large class size describe their challenges in Facilitating Group Activities when they said:

"In a large class, one of the biggest challenges I face is trying to facilitate meaningful group discussions and encourage active participation. For example, let's say I'm teaching a subject where I want students to engage in a collaborative discussion on a complex topic, like a current event. Having 50+ pupils in a collaborative activity can be chaos. Sometimes, it is a struggle on my part that in the group, there are pupils who are not participating and making noise."(T5)

"Ah...In a large class, it's hard to provide personalized guidance during group work. Some students may fall behind or disengage without me noticing..."(T6)

"I found it very difficult to conduct activities since some of my students were no longer participative because it was so crowded." (T7)

"Ah, okay. During the activities, I had a hard time giving instructions because some of my pupils were not attentive; they kept making noise, and that's it. It was a great challenge." (T8)

"For instance, I found it in group activities and teamwork because, as a grade two, they are very curious about one question. They keep questioning, unending questions. It affects the time allotted..." (T4)

Approximately 5 out of 10 participants find it difficult to manage group dynamics and control the chaos that sometimes accompanies group activities.

Under the first subtheme, teachers described difficulties in organizing balanced groups and resolving interpersonal conflicts that arose during collaborative tasks. Differences in students' motivation, communication styles, and social skills often disrupted group cohesion, resulting in unequal task distribution. These findings support Johnson and Johnson's (2017) assertion that effective collaboration



requires structured interdependence and clearly defined roles to prevent dominance or withdrawal among group members.

The second subtheme, Encouraging Active Participation, highlighted issues of disengagement and unequal contribution. Teachers observed that in large classes, only a few students actively participated, while others remained passive observers. Teachers often had to spend extra time motivating reluctant students, balancing group workload, and managing off-task behavior.

Learning in large classes requires balancing social, behavioral, and instructional demands. Ineffective group dynamics and low participation levels diminish the intended benefits of collaborative learning, such as peer scaffolding, engagement, and social skill development. These challenges suggest the need for structured approaches that ensure accountability and inclusivity in group work.

To address these issues, teachers should be supported through professional development on cooperative learning strategies, conflict resolution training, and the use of digital collaboration tools that monitor participation. Additionally, establishing clear group roles, peer-assessment mechanisms, and rotational leadership can help maintain equitable engagement.

At the policy level, fostering smaller group sizes within classes, integrating social-emotional learning, and promoting classroom environments grounded in respect and inclusivity can enhance the effectiveness of group-based instruction. Ultimately, overcoming these challenges is essential to realizing the full pedagogical potential of collaborative learning.

Emerging Theme in Coping Strategies and Approaches for Managing Large Class Sizes

The themes on the coping strategies and approaches for managing large class size are depicted in table 2. Six (6) emerging themes that were found after a thorough process of data analysis and interpretation.

It was revealed that structured classroom management strategies; active and innovative teaching approaches; promoting student responsibility and peer learning; personal and emotional coping mechanisms; adapting teaching goals and expectations; and providing peer advice and encouragement are the description of coping strategies and approaches for managing large class size.

Table 2. Coping Strategies and Approaches for Managing Large Class Sizes

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Structured Classroom Management Strategies	-establishing clear rules and expectations -imposing rules and setting routines -grouping students into smaller units	clear rules, expectations, seating arrangements, divided into smaller groups, imposed rules, daily routines
Active and Innovative Teaching Approaches	-incorporating active learning techniques -using technology and creative methods -using non-verbal cues	active learning, group discussions, peer reviews, hands-on activities, TV, facial expressions, call-and-response, storytelling
Promoting Student Responsibility and Peer Learning	- encouraging peer teaching and mentoring -engaging students in group roles -assigning responsibilities	peer teaching, collaborative learning, mentoring, think-pair-share, group roles, responsibility
Personal and Emotional Coping Mechanisms	-maintaining personal motivation -seeking emotional support -practicing self-care	praying, seeking guidance, reflecting, self-care, managing stress, balancing workload, motivation
Adapting Teaching Goals and Expectations	-adjusting expectations -shifting teaching strategies -embracing flexibility	adjust, adjusted my expectation, shift, flexible approach, different forms of participation, expect the unexpected, resourceful
Providing Peer Advice and Encouragement	-sharing advice -recommending best practices -encouraging persistence	advice, be patient, not give up, avoid pressure, enjoy your work, double your patience, establish rules, active learning

Emerging Theme 1: Structured Classroom Management Strategies

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes; establishing clear rules and expectations; imposing rules and setting routines; and grouping students into smaller units. Teachers in large class size describe their coping strategies and approaches in structured classroom management strategies when they said:

"we need to establish clear rules and expectations from the start. I use seating arrangements to minimize distractions. Sometimes, I also divide them into smaller groups for their activities..." -T1

"We need to be creative and innovative in our teaching methods. We use electronics like TV so that we can get their attention. Then, we need to establish clear and consistent rules for them to find alternative ways, such as group work..." -T2

"Set clear rules and expectations from the beginning and ensure students understand them." -T7

"I imposed rules and regulations in class for them to follow."-T9

"Before, I planned by group according to their ability, but at present, I grouped them by row and gave daily classroom routines and expectations." -T3

"At the beginning of the term, I set clear behavior expectations for the class..." -T6

"I address this challenge by constantly imposing rules for my students to follow." -T8

"I address this challenge by strictly letting them follow the rules and regulations in class." -T9

Approximately 8 out of 10 participants express that they cope by creating an organized classroom environment.

Teachers coped with large class sizes by adopting structured management strategies that emphasized clarity, consistency, and relationships. They highlighted the importance of setting clear rules and expectations, arranging seating strategically, and dividing students into smaller groups to reduce distractions and ensure active participation. These strategies collectively fostered a sense of order and predictability, allowing teachers to manage instruction more efficiently.

Findings revealed that clear expectations served as the foundation of effective management, as they guided student behavior and academic engagement. This aligns with Evertson and Weinstein (2019), who noted that well-defined routines and standards establish the behavioral tone of a classroom. Similarly, the teachers' emphasis on relationship-building reflected Henderson and Mapp's (2020) findings that trust and rapport enhance cooperation and reduce behavioral issues.

Another key coping mechanism involved consistency—in enforcing rules and applying consequences—which promoted fairness and minimized confusion. Teachers also created routines that structured daily activities and transitions, leading to smoother class flow and improved time use, consistent with Marzano's (2020) framework for effective instruction. Additionally, teachers incorporated brain breaks and varied learning activities to sustain student engagement and attention, as supported by Darling-Hammond (2019) and Marzano (2020).

Teachers' strategies also reflected inclusive practices, as they adjusted instruction to meet diverse student needs, demonstrating awareness of equity in the learning environment. Modeling respectful and patient behavior encouraged similar conduct among students, while using simple tools—such as timers, signals, and group task organization—helped facilitate transitions and maintain focus.

The results suggest that teachers' ability to manage large classes depends less on strict control and more on cultivating predictability, positive relationships, and engagement-focused routines. This supports sociocultural perspectives that emphasize the social and interactive nature of learning environments. When students clearly understand expectations and feel supported, behavioral problems decrease, and learning time increases. The implications of these findings highlight the need for professional development programs that focus on classroom organization, inclusive management, and relational pedagogy. School leaders should also consider reducing teacher workload and providing supportive resources—such as collaborative planning time and classroom aides—to sustain these management practices effectively. Furthermore, integrating conceptual visuals or management frameworks into training modules could enhance teacher understanding and practical application of these strategies.

Emerging Theme 2: Active and Innovative Teaching Approaches

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes; incorporating active learning techniques; using technology and creative methods; and using nonverbal cues.

Teachers in large class size describe their coping strategies and approaches in Active and Innovative Teaching Approaches when they said:

"I encourage them to engage in collaborative learning to enhance their engagement." -T1

"We need to be creative and innovative in our teaching methods. We use electronics like TV..." -T2

"I just give my facial expressions, and I keep reminding them that they should behave..." -T4

"I also use call-and-response techniques. For example, if you hear me clap once to regain attention quickly..." -T1

"Sometimes, I used techniques like Think-Pair-Share, where I asked students to think individually... and then share with the class." -T5

"Instead of relying solely on traditional lectures... I incorporate more active learning techniques like group discussions, peer reviews, and hands-on activities." -T6

"One strategy is Think-Pair-Share... gives all students a chance to think through a problem..." -T7

"Collaborative learning." -T8

Approximately 8 out of 10 participants express that they adopt creative methods to keep students engaged.

In response to the challenges of managing large classes, teachers adopted creative methods to sustain student engagement and participation. They incorporated active learning techniques, including group discussions, peer reviews, and hands-on activities, which promoted collaboration and accountability among students. Teachers also utilized technology, non-verbal cues such as gestures and

facial expressions, and storytelling to capture attention and make lessons more interactive. These strategies reflect the shift toward more participatory learning environments, consistent with Evertson and Weinstein's (2019) view that effective classroom management fosters engagement through active involvement rather than passive compliance.

Findings indicate that active and innovative approaches encouraged student-centered learning, where learners assumed more responsibility for their progress. Teachers emphasized adaptability to cater to diverse learning styles, aligning with Darling-Hammond (2019) and Marzano (2020), who highlight the importance of differentiated and inclusive instruction. Innovative methods such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, flipped classrooms, and visual-based instruction (Kane et al., 2020; Lavy, 2019; OECD, 2020) enhanced critical thinking, creativity, and real-world problem-solving skills. These practices also supported Henderson and Mapp's (2020) assertion that engaging pedagogy builds meaningful connections between students and their learning experiences.

The data suggest that teachers' adoption of innovative strategies represents a paradigm shift from control-oriented management to empowerment-based facilitation. By engaging students through collaboration and technology, teachers transformed classroom challenges into opportunities for creativity and deeper learning. This aligns with constructivist principles, where learners actively build understanding through experience and interaction.

These findings underscore the need for continuous professional development focused on integrating active learning and technology-based instruction. School leaders should provide resources and training that enable teachers to design engaging, student-centered lessons adaptable to large or diverse classrooms. Policymakers might also consider incorporating innovation-focused frameworks within the curriculum to support experiential learning and creativity. Ultimately, these active and innovative approaches have broad implications for improving classroom engagement, instructional efficiency, and long-term student success.

Emerging Theme 3: Promoting Student Responsibility and Peer Learning

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes; encouraging peer teaching and mentoring; engaging students in group roles; and assigning responsibilities.

Teachers in Large class size describe their coping strategies and approaches in Promoting Student Responsibility and peer Learning when they said:

"Peer teaching and collaborative learning. Why? Peer teaching helps alleviate this challenge by promoting student collaboration..." - Teacher 6

"Think-Pair-Share helps address this by giving all students a chance to think through a problem individually, discuss it with a partner, and then share their ideas..." -T7

"Collaborative learning." -T8

"Mentoring is one of my strategies. Why? In large class sizes, this is effective because I have those pupils who are fast learners. So, I assigned them the task of mentoring their classmates..." -T9

"I use various strategies, such as grouping them into specific tasks, providing reading materials, and incorporating activities like dancing, singing, and art projects. I also encourage the students to take responsibility for things such as cleaning the classroom..." -T10

"I invited them to actively participate by asking them targeted questions or having them help lead small group activities. By giving them responsibility, they became more engaged..." -T5

"I incorporated group activities where every student had a specific role..." -T

Approximately 7 out of 10 participants highlight the value of involving students in their own learning.

Teachers emphasized that fostering student responsibility and peer learning played a vital role in managing large classes and maintaining engagement. By assigning specific roles, promoting mentoring, and facilitating peer teaching, students became active participants in the learning process. This shift in responsibility not only increased participation but also allowed teachers to manage classroom dynamics more effectively (Evertson & Weinstein, 2019; Jorgensen, 2024).

To promote responsibility, teachers established clear expectations, encouraged goal setting and self-assessment, and involved students in shared decision-making. These practices cultivated ownership, accountability, and self-regulation—key traits for effective learning (Jorgensen, 2024; K12 Teacher Staff Development, 2023). In parallel, peer learning strategies such as Think–Pair–Share, the jigsaw method, collaborative projects, and peer review processes fostered cooperation and active knowledge exchange (Edutopia, 2024; ISHCMC, 2025; Mentessa, 2024).

The integration of peer learning also enhanced critical thinking, communication, and social interaction, which contributed to improved academic outcomes and classroom cohesion. Teachers noted that these approaches reduced their instructional burden while empowering students to support one another's growth.

These findings underscore the importance of participatory learning models in fostering responsibility, autonomy, and collaborative

competence among students. Embedding peer learning structures and student-led accountability systems can strengthen engagement, lessen behavioral issues, and improve learning quality in large classrooms. Schools and policymakers should therefore encourage training and curriculum designs that integrate cooperative learning frameworks, ensuring that both teachers and students benefit from shared ownership of the educational process (Evertson & Weinstein, 2019; Jorgensen, 2024).

Emerging Theme 4: Personal and Emotional Coping Mechanisms

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes: managing personal motivation, seeking emotional support, and practicing self-care.

Teachers in Large class Size describe their coping strategies and approaches in Personal and Emotional Coping Mechanisms when they said:

"I focus on maintaining my motivation by praying, seeking guidance to improve my skills, and reflecting on ways to enhance my teaching techniques." -T10

"Taking care of your own well-being—whether through breaks, exercise, or hobbies outside the classroom—helps you manage the stress of a larger workload..." -T5

"my advice is to avoid putting too much pressure on yourself. Focus on loving your work, being patient, and helping students despite the many challenges..." -T10

"I'm very thankful that I became a better teacher through that experience. I became more wide-minded and more creative..." -T2

"My advice to those teachers teaching large class sizes is to double their patience and passion in their profession..." -T 4

Approximately 5 out of 10 participants emphasized the emotional toll of handling large classes, teachers share strategies for maintaining their well-being.

Teachers also acknowledged the emotional toll of handling large classes and shared strategies for maintaining their well-being. They mentioned practices like prayer, self-care, taking breaks, and seeking support to manage stress. These personal coping methods were essential for staying motivated and preventing burnout.

Personal and emotional coping mechanisms were essential strategies that individuals, including teachers and students, used to manage stress and maintain well-being. Recent research identified several effective approaches, including self-care strategies such as regular exercise, mindfulness practices, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Jorgensen, 2024; ISHCMC, 2025). Emotional regulation techniques, such as cultivating positive emotions and engaging in self-reflection, have proven to be effective tools for managing stress and anxiety (Biber et al., 2022; Jorgensen, 2024). Building emotional awareness was also considered a foundational step in developing effective coping skills (Social Emotional Workshop, 2025).

Social support, including seeking help from colleagues, friends, or professional counselors, played a crucial role in emotional well-being (Son et al., 2020). Adaptive behaviors such as active problem-solving and cognitive reframing helped reduce stress and made challenging situations more manageable (Sharplin et al., 2011; Herman, 2023). Additionally, skill development through professional growth and practicing various coping strategies enhanced confidence and reduced occupational stress (Herman, 2023; Social Emotional Workshop, 2025). By implementing a combination of these personal and emotional coping mechanisms, individuals were able to better manage stress, improve their mental health, and enhance their overall well-being in both professional and personal contexts.

Emerging Theme 5: Adapting Teaching Goals and Expectations

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes; adjusting expectations; shifting teaching strategies; and embracing flexibility.

Teachers in Large class size describe their coping strategies and approaches in Adapting Teaching goals and Expectations when they said:

"In the case that we are not effective in the chosen strategies, we need to try another one to effectively handle the large class size." - Teacher 1

"I adjust. Maybe you will get used to it every day..." -T2

"I thought that being a teacher was just only teaching, but in reality, you have to face more challenges... I will find other strategies that suit them." -T3

"As we set our teaching goals, put in our mind to expect the unexpected. If our approach is not effective, then we should be resourceful and divert other strategies..." -T4

"Given the large number of students, I've had to shift some of my teaching strategies to include more group-based or peer learning..." -T5

"I've adjusted my expectation that every student must participate actively in every class session. I now embrace different forms of participation..." -T6

"In a large class, I've had to adjust my expectations of providing one-on-one attention to every student... I've shifted to providing more group-based learning..." -T7

"I've adjusted my expectation by understanding that in a large class, it's not always possible for everyone to actively participate..." -T8

"I've adjusted my expectations by knowing that in teaching, we have different challenges that we need to overcome..." -T9

"So I've had to adjust my teaching goals to accommodate the reality of large class sizes, ma'am. Achieving learning objectives may require more repetitions and a more flexible approach..." -T10

Teachers emphasized that managing large and diverse classes required flexibility in teaching goals and expectations. They shifted from uniform, lecture-based instruction to student-centered and group-oriented approaches, allowing for more inclusive participation and engagement. This adaptability enabled teachers to respond to varied learning needs, linguistic backgrounds, and motivation levels, ensuring that instruction remained equitable and effective (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Henderson & Mapp, 2020).

Results indicated that teachers who differentiated instruction—by assigning tasks aligned with students' readiness levels—fostered higher academic achievement and classroom participation. Providing additional support to struggling learners while extending challenges to advanced students enhanced motivation and confidence (Marzano, 2020). Moreover, teacher expectations emerged as a powerful factor influencing student behavior and performance. Educators who held high expectations demonstrated consistent belief in students' potential, employed more engaging strategies, and promoted an atmosphere of accountability and trust (Henderson & Mapp, 2020).

Conversely, teachers noted that low expectations could unintentionally limit learning opportunities and reinforce achievement gaps. Continuous reflection and formative assessment were therefore vital for realigning goals and adjusting instruction based on observed progress (Evertson & Weinstein, 2019).

The findings suggest that adaptability in teaching goals strengthens classroom inclusivity and improves learning outcomes. By fostering reflective teaching practices and professional development focused on differentiated instruction and high-expectation pedagogy, schools can enhance both teacher effectiveness and student success. Encouraging teachers to remain flexible and data-informed promotes equitable learning experiences—particularly in large or heterogeneous classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Marzano, 2020).

Emerging Theme 6: Providing Peer Advice and Encouragement

This theme is characterized by three (3) clustered themes: sharing advice, recommending best practices, and encouraging persistence.

Teachers in Large class size describe their coping strategies and approaches in Providing Peer Advice and Encouragement when they said:

"My advice is to be patient when handling large class sizes." -T1

"I advise as a... I'm very thankful that I became a better teacher through that experience... To meet the needs of your pupils." -T2

"They can also apply my strategies. You have to be nice and enjoy also the stress." -T3

"My advice to those teachers teaching large class sizes is to double their patience and passion in their profession. And lastly, enjoy your work and love your pupils." -T4

"Taking care of your own well-being... helps you manage the stress of a larger workload..." -T5

"On the first day, establish your classroom rules and expectations. Be consistent in enforcing them, but also be flexible..." -T6

"Don't rely solely on lectures! Incorporate active learning strategies like Think-Pair-Share, group work, and interactive activities." -T7

"My advice to other teachers handling large class sizes is to not give up." -T8

"My advice to other teachers handling large class sizes is that you have chosen teaching as your profession. Do your work patiently..." -T9

"My advice is to avoid putting too much pressure on yourself. Focus on loving your work, being patient, and helping students..." -T10

All participants indicated that sharing experiences and advice among colleagues is another common strategy. Teachers pass on tips about patience, establishing routines, and managing workload effectively.

Complementing the adaptation of instructional strategies, sharing experiences and advice among colleagues were another common strategy that teachers used. They passed on tips about patience, establishing routines, and managing workloads effectively. This theme



showed that mutual support and the exchange of practical advice played a crucial role in helping teachers cope with the challenges of large classes.

When teachers shared successful practices and emotional support with one another, they enhanced both their instructional effectiveness and emotional resilience (Darling-Hammond, 2019). Research also suggests that collaboration among educators leads to improved teaching practices, increased job satisfaction, and reduced feelings of isolation, particularly in high-stress environments like overcrowded classrooms (Marzano, 2020; OECD, 2020).

This theme is supported by the implementation of peer mentoring programs, professional learning communities (PLCs), and informal teacher networks, which provided platforms for sharing challenges, solutions, and encouragement (Evertson & Weinstein, 2019). Such environments allowed teachers to draw from each other's experiences, celebrate small victories, and navigate difficulties collectively, leading to improved morale and instructional quality (Marzano, 2020).

This theme aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs highlights the critical role of belongingness and esteem needs, suggesting that peer support is fundamental in promoting both personal well-being and academic achievement.

Furthermore, fostering peer encouragement in classrooms among students mirrored the support networks developed among teachers. Encouraging students to mentor and motivate each other not only enhanced academic performance but also promoted social-emotional learning, empathy, and a strong sense of belonging (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Henderson & Mapp, 2020). Overall, the practice of providing peer advice and encouragement proved to be an indispensable element in fostering both teacher resilience and student success in large classroom settings.

Emerging Theme in Teacher Insights on Teaching Large Class Sizes Based on Their Experiences

The themes from the teacher insights on teaching large class sizes, based on their experiences, are depicted in Table 3. Thirteen (13) clustered themes were used to formulate the four (4) emerging themes that were found after a thorough process of data analysis and interpretation.

It was revealed that personal growth and resilience, refining teaching practices and enhancing professional effectiveness, advocacy for education reform and quality concerns, and valuing education as a tool for equity, empowerment, and the noble profession are key descriptions of coping strategies and approaches for managing large class sizes.

Table 3. *Teacher Insights on Teaching Large Class Sizes Based on Their Experiences*

<i>Emerging Themes</i>	<i>Clustered Themes</i>	<i>Codes</i>
Personal Growth and Resilience	-developing resilience -enhancing self-care -learning from experiences -refining teaching strategies	stronger, resilient, patience, flexibility, self-care, rewarding, oriented
Refining Teaching Practices and Enhancing Professional Effectiveness	-shifting to student-centered learning -developing empathy -evaluating teaching effectiveness -strengthening passion and creativity in teaching	refine my teaching strategies, student-centered, active participation, effective teacher, evaluating, creative solutions, passion for teaching
Advocacy for Education Reform and Quality Concerns	-highlighting limitations of large class sizes -advocating for smaller class sizes and reform	cannot assure quality education, distractions, overcrowded, lack of resources, reduced individual attention, standard class size, education reform
Valuing Education as a Tool for Equity, Empowerment, and the Noble Profession	-recognizing education as transformative -seeing education as a tool for equity -valuing the noble profession of teaching	education is very important, mission, tool for equity, fair chance, noble profession, leveling the playing field, advocate, access

Emerging Theme 1: Personal Growth and resilience

Three (3) clustered themes characterize this theme: developing resilience, enhancing self-care, and learning from experience.

Teachers in large class size share their insights based on teaching experiences when they said:

"My experiences made me stronger every day and made me more resilient as an educator." -T1

"The challenge of managing a large class could sometimes be overwhelming, and learning from others' experiences would reinforce the importance of self-care..." -T5

"Okay, ma'am, my experiences have touched my life because I have learned from these experiences. I have become more oriented in my work, especially in handling large class sizes." -T9

"So, how do these experiences touch my life as a teacher? Teaching a large class has been a rewarding experience. So that is the most important thing in my life. It has taught me patience, flexibility, and resilience..." -T10

"Teaching in a challenging environment would teach me patience and resilience." -T6

Approximately 5 out of 10 participants mention that the experience makes them stronger and more patient, helping them develop resilience and a deeper commitment to self-care.

Teachers' reflections revealed that managing large class sizes fostered significant personal growth and resilience. These qualities were developed as educators learned to adapt to constant challenges, maintain composure under pressure, and approach classroom difficulties as opportunities for improvement rather than barriers to success. Resilience enabled teachers to recover from setbacks and sustain motivation, patience, and optimism amid demanding teaching contexts (ReachOut Schools, 2024; TalktoAngel, 2024).

Building resilience required intentional strategies and supportive school environments. Teachers emphasized the importance of fostering positive relationships, creating emotionally safe environments, and maintaining open communication with both colleagues and students (TeachHUB, 2025). Managing workloads through structured planning and breaking tasks into manageable steps helped prevent burnout and promote confidence (Edutopia, 2025).

A growth mindset also emerged as a vital component of resilience. Teachers who reframed mistakes as part of the learning process modeled perseverance and problem-solving for their students, cultivating an atmosphere of empathy and shared learning (TeachHUB, 2025; Edutopia, 2025). This mindset not only improved teacher well-being but also encouraged students to approach challenges with determination and self-efficacy.

These findings suggest that resilience and personal growth are not merely coping mechanisms but transformative forces that enhance teacher effectiveness and emotional stability. By integrating resilience training, mentorship, and social-emotional learning into professional development programs, schools can strengthen teacher retention, instructional quality, and classroom climate. Promoting teacher resilience ultimately supports a culture of adaptability and lifelong learning—benefiting both educators and students across diverse educational settings (TeachHUB, 2025; OECD, 2020).

Emerging Theme 2: Refining Teaching practices and Enhancing Professional Effectiveness

This theme is characterized by five (5) clustered themes: refining teaching strategies; shifting to student-centered learning; developing empathy; evaluating teaching effectiveness; strengthening passion and creativity in teaching.

Teachers in Large Class Size share their insights based on their experiences in Refining teaching Practices and enhancing Professional Effectiveness when they said:

"I keep thinking that every day. It is a new adventure for me because I learned valuable lessons about my teaching profession..." -T2

"Okay, I think, Maam, handling large class sizes would push me to refine my teaching strategies to become more efficient and effective..." -T5

"Okay Maam, the challenges of teaching large classes made me realize that a traditional lecture-based approach might not be the most effective for such diverse groups of students. I shifted my focus toward student-centered learning..." -T6

"I feel that working with a wide variety of learners in large classrooms often develops a deep sense of empathy and flexibility for me as a teacher..." -T7

"It has had a big impact on my teaching since I have learned to do more, to study different strategies to be applied, and to become an effective teacher." -T8

"It has a big impact on my teaching because I can now evaluate that I am effective in my chosen field." -T9

"The challenges have strengthened my passion for teaching. I've learned to navigate difficulties, develop creative solutions, and continue growing in my profession." -T10

Approximately 7 out of 10 participants mentioned that many have shifted toward more student-centered learning, adjusted their strategies, and become more empathetic toward their students.

Refining teaching practices and sustaining professional effectiveness were essential for improving student outcomes and maintaining instructional quality. Effective teaching required the use of evidence-based strategies responsive to diverse learner needs, the creation of collaborative and supportive classroom environments, and the continuous adjustment of instruction through reflection and assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Teachers emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development, including instructional coaching, peer observation, and participation in professional learning communities (PLCs), to remain current with pedagogical research and technological innovations (Marzano, 2020; OECD, 2020; Henderson & Mapp, 2020). The integration of technology was also viewed as vital for differentiation, engagement, and collaboration, particularly in large or diverse classrooms (Schleicher, 2020).

Moreover, fostering social-emotional learning (SEL) has emerged as a crucial dimension of effective teaching, as educators have recognized that students' emotional well-being significantly influences their academic performance (CASEL, 2020). Maintaining high expectations, employing varied instructional approaches, and providing timely, meaningful feedback were identified as essential

practices for enhancing student motivation and achievement (Marzano, 2020). Ultimately, continuous reflection, openness to innovation, and adaptability enabled teachers to refine their pedagogical approaches and sustain professional growth amid the evolving challenges of contemporary education (OECD, 2020).

Emerging Theme 3: Advocacy for Education Reform and Quality Concerns

This theme is characterized by two (2) clustered themes: highlighting limitations of large class size, and advocating for smaller class sizes and reform.

Teachers in large class size share their insights based on their experiences in Advocacy for Education Reform and quality Concerns when they said:

"I cannot assure quality education in large class sizes because of so many distractions in class." -T 1

"Seeing the limitations of overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, and reduced individual attention would make me a stronger advocate for education reform..." -Teacher 3

"Having a large class size cannot assure quality education because of difficulties in facilitating the learning process." -Teacher 4

"To attain quality education, one of the contributing factors is the class size. If more classrooms are in public schools with large numbers of pupils, I think the quality of education will be compromised..." -Teacher 1

"To give quality education, it is necessary to provide standard class size so that the teacher can manage and deliver the lessons well to the learner to eliminate non-readers." -Teacher 4

Approximately 5 out of 10 participants mentioned that many have shifted toward more student-centered learning, adjusted their strategies, and become more empathetic toward their students

Advocacy for educational reform emerged as a key driver in enhancing teaching quality and learning outcomes globally. Teachers and stakeholders emphasized that effective advocacy requires evidence-based messaging, coalition-building, policy engagement, and community mobilization to promote equitable and sustainable educational change (Global Partnership for Education, 2023).

Quality concerns persisted, including inadequate teacher preparation, poor infrastructure, low learning outcomes, and inequitable access to early childhood education (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018). Addressing these issues necessitated reforms centered on personalized learning (Darling-Hammond, 2019), continuous professional development (OECD, 2020), technology integration (Marzano, 2020), and curricular inclusivity that embeds 21st-century skills (OECD, 2020). Strengthening school-parent collaboration further enhanced student engagement and accountability (Henderson & Mapp, 2020).

The findings reveal that advocacy functions not only as a call for reform but also as a mechanism for systemic transformation. Teachers recognized their roles as both educators and change agents, championing equity, inclusivity, and innovation within their contexts. The implications underscore the importance of collaborative reform strategies, sustained teacher empowerment, and evidence-based policymaking to ensure that education systems evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

Emerging Theme 4: Valuing Education as a Tool for Equity, Empowerment, and the Noble Profession

Three (3) clustered themes characterize this theme: recognizing education as transformative, seeing education as a tool for equity, and valuing the noble profession of teaching.

Teachers said:

"Being a teacher, education is very important not only in the students but also in our profession. I learned a lot about the teaching methods for handling large class sizes ... I still see teaching as my mission and as a dream job to have." -Teacher 2

"Teaching is not about delivering content. Instead, it is...It is ensuring every student has a fair chance to succeed, regardless of their circumstances. ... the education system must evolve to be more inclusive and adaptive." -Teacher 3

"For me, teaching large classes often brings me face-to-face with the diversity of students' backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. ... made me accurately aware of how critical education is in leveling the playing field. ... education should be tailored to support all students..." -Teacher 5

"Teaching large classes has made me realize how critical education is in shaping future citizens who are capable of thinking critically, engaging in meaningful conversations, and contributing to society in positive ways..." -Teacher 6

"In large classrooms, I often see firsthand how education can level the playing field. ... can give students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, an opportunity to change their circumstances." -Teacher 7

"Teaching large classes has made me realize that teaching is really a noble profession. It can even change you as an individual and help you become good in your field. How? by becoming an effective and competitive educator." -Teacher 8

"Teaching a large class has deepened my understanding of the importance of education, especially for underserved students. It has motivated me to continually improve my skills and advocate for better resources..." -Teacher 10

Approximately 7 out of 10 participants view teaching as a means to provide equal opportunities, support disadvantaged students, and promote fairness. Many view their role not just as instructors, but as key players in shaping society and providing every student with a fair chance to succeed.

Education emerged as a powerful driver of equity, empowerment, and social progress. Teachers recognized that access to quality education ensures equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of background, aligning with findings that education reduces inequality and fosters long-term economic mobility (UNESCO, 2020; OECD, 2020; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). Beyond academics, teachers emphasized the role of education in developing critical thinking, civic responsibility, and sustainable values essential for global citizenship (United Nations, 2023; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; UNESCO, 2022).

Teaching was viewed not merely as an occupation but as a calling central to shaping future leaders and innovators. Teachers acknowledged that instructional effectiveness remains the most influential school-based factor in improving student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2019; OECD, 2020). They highlighted the profession's evolving demands, such as digital integration, cultural diversity, and emotional well-being, requiring continuous learning and reflective practice (Darling-Hammond, 2020).

Findings suggest that education and teaching function as twin pillars of societal transformation. Teachers' perspectives reflect a commitment to inclusive and value-driven education that empowers individuals and strengthens communities. The results imply a need for sustained professional development and policy support that enhance teacher quality and align educational goals with global sustainability and equity initiatives.

Conclusions

The findings of the study lead to the following conclusions:

The study revealed that teachers in large class sizes encounter multiple challenges, making it difficult for educators to maintain order, cater to individual student needs, and ensure effective instruction.

However, despite these challenges, teachers have developed various coping strategies to navigate the demands of large classrooms. These strategies highlight teachers' resilience and commitment to promoting meaningful learning experiences despite the constraints of large class sizes.

Relatively, teachers handling large classes, emphasizing personal growth and resilience, refinement of teaching practices to enhance professional effectiveness, advocacy for education reform and quality improvement, and valuing education as a tool for equity and empowerment.

The following recommendations are made based on the facts and conclusions drawn from this study:

Ministry of Education and school administrators may implement class size reduction programs or provide additional support, such as teacher aides, to help manage large classrooms more effectively.

Schools may offer professional development workshops that focus on innovative teaching methods, differentiated instruction, and technology integration.

The Department of Education (DepEd) and other educational stakeholders may create platforms where teachers can share best practices, advocate for education reforms, and receive mentorship and emotional support.

Future studies may focus on comparing different classroom management models across various educational settings can also help identify the most effective strategies for handling large classes.

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