



MANAGING TEACHERS' REASSIGNMENT AND EXCESS STAFFING: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND MORALE IN FOCUS

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra28151>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra28151

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers undergoing reassignment due to excess staffing and its implications for school performance and teacher morale. Specifically, it aimed to examine teachers' experiences during reassignment, their adjustment strategies, and their reflections on reassignment practices. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved selected teachers who experienced reassignment due to excess staffing. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's method of analysis. The findings revealed that reassignment is a complex process affecting teachers' instructional practices, emotional well-being, workload, and professional responsibilities. Three major themes emerged: Navigating Reassignment due to Excess Staffing, Adjusting to Reassignment due to Excess Staffing, and Reflecting on Reassignment Practices. Teachers experienced instructional disruption, emotional strain, and challenges in adapting to new school environments, which influenced both school performance and teacher morale. To cope with these challenges, participants utilized adaptive strategies such as instructional adjustment, peer support, self-care practices, and emotional regulation. The study concluded that while reassignment helps address staffing imbalances, its implementation significantly affects teachers' motivation, engagement, and effectiveness. It is recommended that school leaders and educational authorities adopt balanced and context-responsive reassignment practices, strengthen support systems, and provide transition assistance to help teachers adjust effectively and sustain positive school performance and morale.

KEYWORDS: *Managing Teachers' Reassignment, Excess Staffing, School Performance, Teacher Morale*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher reassignment and excess staffing are common administrative practices designed to address staffing imbalances and improve the efficient distribution of teachers across schools. Despite their widespread implementation, limited attention has been given to how teachers personally experience reassignment and how these experiences affect teacher morale and school performance, particularly in resource-constrained settings. Existing studies have largely focused on policy implementation and staffing efficiency rather than the lived experiences and adjustment challenges of reassigned teachers.

International evidence indicates that reassignment without adequate support often results in emotional strain, reduced morale, and instructional challenges. Teachers in the United Kingdom experienced demoralization and increased attrition when reassigned without mentoring and professional support (See et al., 2020). Similarly, studies conducted in Australia and China found that reassignment policies frequently overlooked teacher well-being and professional dignity, contributing to stress and reduced instructional effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). UNESCO (2024) further emphasized that ineffective staffing practices can undermine teacher morale and educational equity.

Within the Philippine context, teacher reassignment has been associated with disrupted teaching routines, logistical difficulties, and adaptation challenges across various regions (Quiambao, 2024; Panay News, 2024; Perico, 2020). In the Laak North District of the Division of Davao de Oro, teachers reassigned due to excess staffing encountered emotional stress, professional uncertainty, and adjustment difficulties that affected instructional continuity and workplace relationships (Postrero & Chieng, 2024).

Despite the growing literature on teacher reassignment and staffing practices, there remains limited understanding of how teachers experience and manage reassignment and excess staffing in relation to their morale and school performance, particularly in remote and underserved contexts (See et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024; Tindowen et al., 2023; Quines, 2022). This study seeks to address this gap by examining the lived experiences of teachers in Laak North District and generating insights that may inform context-sensitive staffing policies, strengthen teacher support systems, and promote more effective and humane educational management practices.



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers managing reassignment and excess staffing in the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. It examined the effects of reassignment on teacher morale and school performance, the coping strategies teachers employed, and the insights that could inform more effective and supportive staffing practices. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of teachers in managing teachers' reassignment and excess staffing in relation to school performance and morale?
2. What coping strategies do teachers employ in managing teachers' reassignment and excess staffing to sustain school performance and morale?
3. What educational management policies can be drawn from teachers' experiences in reassignment and excess staffing to enhance school performance and morale?

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodological procedures employed in the study to explore the lived experiences of teachers managing reassignment due to excess staffing in relation to their morale and school performance in the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. Specifically, it describes the research design, research participants, research instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations observed throughout the conduct of the study.

Research Design and Procedure

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of teachers managing reassignment due to excess staffing in relation to their morale and school performance. Phenomenology was deemed appropriate because it enabled an in-depth understanding of how teachers perceived, interpreted, and adapted to reassignment within varying school contexts. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, environmental triangulation was employed by selecting participants from schools that differed in size, location, and resource availability. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide composed of open-ended questions that explored participants' experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and insights regarding reassignment. Probing and follow-up questions were utilized to clarify responses and encourage deeper reflection. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and supplemented with field notes to support data interpretation.

Research Participants

The study involved fourteen (14) elementary public-school teachers from the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro, who had experienced reassignment due to excess staffing. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on established inclusion criteria to ensure direct experience with the phenomenon under study. Their varied school assignments and teaching contexts provided diverse perspectives on reassignment experiences.

Data Collection

Data collection began with securing the necessary permissions from relevant educational authorities and school administrators. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling and were provided with information regarding the study and their rights as participants. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, allowing teachers to share their experiences and perspectives in detail. Audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes served as the primary sources of data.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's Method, a systematic approach for examining lived experiences. Significant statements were identified, meanings were formulated, and related ideas were clustered into themes representing teachers' experiences, coping strategies, and insights regarding reassignment due to excess staffing. To enhance credibility and trustworthiness, member checking was conducted by allowing participants to validate selected interpretations and findings.

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Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants (2022) and was guided by the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data



collection. Confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any stage of the study were strictly observed. All data were securely stored and handled in accordance with ethical research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study on the lived experiences of teachers managing reassignment due to excess staffing in relation to their morale and school performance in the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. The findings are organized into three major themes: Navigating Reassignment due to Excess Staffing, Adjusting to Reassignment, and Reflecting on Reassignment Practices. These themes capture teachers' experiences of transition, the strategies they employed to maintain their well-being and professional effectiveness, and their insights for improving reassignment practices. The discussion integrates participants' narratives with relevant literature to provide a deeper understanding of how reassignment influences teacher morale, instructional performance, and workplace experiences.

Navigating Reassignment due to Excess Staffing

Navigating reassignment due to excess staffing emerged as a significant aspect of teachers' lived experiences, reflecting the adjustments required when transitioning to a new school assignment. Participants described reassignment as a complex process involving adaptation to unfamiliar school systems, instructional demands, workplace relationships, and changing responsibilities. The subthemes of *school adjustment*, *instructional disruption*, *emotional impact*, and *workload changes* illustrate the multifaceted challenges teachers encountered while maintaining their professional responsibilities.

The subthemes of school adjustment and instructional disruption highlight teachers' efforts to adapt to unfamiliar school environments, procedures, and learner needs. Participants described difficulties in understanding new systems, building relationships with colleagues, and modifying instructional strategies to accommodate different student abilities and learning contexts. These experiences suggest that reassignment requires teachers to reconstruct established teaching routines while simultaneously adjusting to new organizational and instructional demands. Similar studies indicate that adapting to unfamiliar systems and learner contexts can affect teachers' confidence, instructional continuity, and classroom effectiveness during transition periods (Nguyen, 2022; Patel, 2023).

Participants also reported significant emotional impacts and workload changes during reassignment. Feelings of stress, uncertainty, anxiety, and discouragement emerged as teachers adjusted to unfamiliar expectations and responsibilities. At the same time, expanded workloads, additional administrative tasks, and role ambiguities increased pressure and contributed to physical and mental fatigue. These findings support previous studies suggesting that abrupt transitions and increased role demands may negatively affect teacher well-being, motivation, and professional engagement (Kumar, 2023; Tan, 2025).

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated resilience and adaptability through communication, collaboration, and continuous adjustment to their new environments. Over time, many teachers regained confidence and viewed reassignment as an opportunity for professional growth and improved adaptability. Taken together, the subthemes of school adjustment, instructional disruption, emotional impact, and workload changes demonstrate that reassignment extends beyond an administrative process and significantly influences teachers' professional, emotional, and instructional experiences. These findings underscore the importance of structured transition support, clear role expectations, equitable workload distribution, and emotional support systems to help sustain teacher morale and school performance.

Adjusting to Reassignment

Adjusting to reassignment emerged as a crucial process through which teachers managed the challenges associated with excess staffing while sustaining their morale and instructional performance. Participants described adjustment as a gradual process that required flexibility, resilience, and continuous adaptation to unfamiliar environments and responsibilities. The subthemes of *instructional adaptation*, *peer support*, *self-care practices*, and *emotional regulation* reveal the various strategies teachers employed to maintain effectiveness and well-being throughout the transition.

The subtheme of instructional adaptation highlights teachers' efforts to modify lesson plans, teaching strategies, instructional materials, and classroom practices to meet the needs of new learners and school contexts. Rather than relying on previously established routines, participants emphasized the importance of flexibility, creativity, and continuous reflection in responding to varying learner abilities, resource limitations, and classroom conditions. These adaptive practices enabled teachers to maintain instructional effectiveness despite disruptions brought about by reassignment. Similar studies suggest that adaptive teaching enhances instructional continuity and supports learner engagement, particularly in unfamiliar and resource-constrained educational settings (Garcia, 2021; Mendoza, 2025).

Equally important was the role of peer support, which provided both professional guidance and emotional reassurance during the adjustment process. Participants described how collaboration with colleagues helped them understand school procedures, clarify expectations, access instructional resources, and gain confidence in their new roles. Beyond practical assistance, supportive relationships with co-teachers reduced feelings of isolation and stress, making the transition more manageable. These findings



reinforce the importance of collegial relationships in facilitating adjustment, promoting professional learning, and strengthening teacher well-being during periods of change (Morales, 2024; Lopez, 2023).

Participants likewise highlighted the significance of self-care practices and emotional regulation in maintaining personal well-being throughout reassignment. Teachers intentionally engaged in activities such as resting, spending time with family, setting work boundaries, and participating in relaxing pursuits to prevent exhaustion and burnout. At the same time, they managed stress by maintaining a positive outlook, accepting reassignment as part of their professional responsibilities, and consciously regulating emotional responses to uncertainty and frustration. These strategies helped teachers remain focused, emotionally stable, and effective in their interactions with students and colleagues. Consistent with previous studies, self-care and emotional regulation serve as protective mechanisms that support resilience, psychological well-being, and sustained professional performance during organizational transitions (Singh, 2024; Delgado, 2025).

The subthemes under the theme Adjusting to Reassignment demonstrate that successful adjustment to reassignment extends beyond professional competence and requires both social and psychological resources. While reassignment initially presents significant challenges, teachers' ability to adapt instruction, seek support, care for their well-being, and regulate their emotions enables them to maintain morale and instructional effectiveness. These findings underscore the importance of fostering collaborative school cultures, promoting teacher well-being, and providing supportive transition mechanisms that strengthen teachers' capacity to navigate staffing-related changes successfully.

Reflecting on Reassignment Practices

Reflecting on reassignment practices emerged as an important dimension of teachers' experiences, highlighting their insights on how reassignment due to excess staffing can be implemented more effectively. Participants emphasized that while reassignment is necessary for addressing staffing imbalances, its success depends on how policies are communicated, supported, and carried out. The subthemes of **policy transparency**, **administrative support**, **professional collaboration**, and **reassignment improvement** reveal teachers' perspectives on creating more responsive, equitable, and supportive staffing practices.

The subtheme of policy transparency underscores the importance of clear guidelines, open communication, and fairness in reassignment decisions. Participants acknowledged the existence of established policies but emphasized that understanding the rationale, process, and implications of reassignment helps reduce uncertainty and strengthen trust in management. At the same time, teachers expressed the need for more strategic planning and context-sensitive implementation to ensure that staffing decisions are perceived as fair and responsive to actual school conditions. These findings suggest that transparency must extend beyond policy awareness and include thoughtful implementation that considers teachers' lived realities (Cheng, 2023; Tanaka, 2024).

Equally important was the role of administrative support and professional collaboration in facilitating smoother transitions. Participants highlighted that supportive school leaders help teachers understand reassignment decisions, adjust to new environments, and manage both professional and emotional challenges. Similarly, structured collaboration through mentoring, teamwork, and organized support systems enables reassigned teachers to navigate unfamiliar responsibilities more effectively while maintaining instructional continuity. These findings reinforce the importance of leadership practices and collaborative school cultures in reducing transition-related difficulties and promoting teacher confidence, well-being, and performance (Morales, 2024; Hernandez, 2024). The subtheme of reassignment improvement reflects teachers' recommendations for creating more sustainable and equitable staffing systems. Participants emphasized the need for long-term staffing plans, data-informed deployment decisions, flexible policy implementation, and greater consideration of factors such as distance, workload, and family circumstances. They also highlighted the importance of distributing the impact of reassignment more equitably to strengthen perceptions of fairness and organizational justice. These insights suggest that effective reassignment practices should balance organizational efficiency with teacher welfare, recognizing that staffing decisions directly influence morale, performance, and professional commitment (Fischer, 2023; Singh, 2025).

The subthemes under the theme Reflecting on Reassignment Practices demonstrate that successful reassignment practices extend beyond staffing redistribution and require supportive leadership, collaborative environments, and equitable decision-making processes. When teachers feel informed, supported, and fairly treated, they are more likely to remain motivated, adaptable, and committed to their work. These findings underscore the importance of developing transparent, humane, and context-sensitive reassignment systems that support both teacher well-being and school performance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the lived experiences of elementary public school teachers managing reassignment due to excess staffing in the Laak North District, Division of Davao de Oro. The findings revealed that reassignment involves significant professional, instructional, and emotional adjustments as teachers adapt to unfamiliar school environments, changing responsibilities, and new learner needs. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated resilience through instructional adaptation, peer support, self-care, and emotional regulation, enabling them to sustain their morale and instructional effectiveness.



The study further highlights the importance of transparent reassignment policies, supportive leadership, and collaborative school cultures in facilitating successful transitions. Administrative support, clear communication, mentoring, and equitable workload distribution were identified as essential factors in helping teachers adjust to reassignment while maintaining their professional commitment and performance.

Overall, the findings suggest that effective reassignment practices require both teacher adaptability and strong institutional support. Strengthening context-responsive staffing policies, supportive transition mechanisms, and collaborative environments may help minimize disruption, enhance teacher well-being, and sustain instructional continuity and school performance.

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