

PROBING CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE WORK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG EDUCATORS: EXPLORATORY APPROACH

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Abstract

This study investigated the characteristics of effective work management practices among educators using an exploratory research design. The qualitative phase involved 17 teachers from schools in Kidapawan City, with 10 participants taking part in in-depth interviews and 7 in a focus group discussion, aimed at identifying strategies for efficient time use, task prioritization, and professional balance. The analysis of qualitative data revealed nine themes: Adaptive Time Management, Strategic Prioritization for Work Efficiency, Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities, Collaborative Work Management, Supportive Peer Networks, Efficiency Through Shared Workload, Continuous Professional Development for Work Optimization, Skill Enhancement Through Targeted Training, and Practical Application of Professional Learning. These themes guided the development of a 100-item survey administered to 200 teacher-respondents in the quantitative phase. Exploratory Factor Analysis refined the scale to six validated dimensions—Adaptive Time Management, Strategic Prioritization for Work Efficiency, Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities, Collaborative Work Management, Efficiency Through Shared Workload, and Resource Management—with 49 retained items demonstrating strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.807–0.876). The study provides a validated instrument and evidence-based insights for enhancing educators' work management, offering practical implications for professional development and institutional support in optimizing teachers' efficiency and productivity.

Keywords: *Effective Work Management, Educators, Time Management, Task Prioritization, Collaborative Work, Professional Development, Kidapawan City, Philippines*

Introduction

Effective work management practices have become increasingly vital in contemporary educational settings as educators face expanding instructional, administrative, and institutional demands. Globally, teaching has evolved beyond classroom instruction to include extensive documentation, reporting, and compliance-related tasks, often resulting in role overload. Evidence from an international survey conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development indicates that difficulties in managing time negatively affect teachers' job satisfaction and professional effectiveness (OECD, 2020). Supporting this finding, the International Labour Organization reported that a large proportion of educators feel overwhelmed by

non-teaching duties, which limits their capacity to focus on instructional quality and meaningful student engagement (ILO, 2021).

Within the Philippine context, work management challenges among educators appear to be especially pronounced. Philippine Business for Education documented that a significant majority of public-school teachers experience difficulty managing their time due to excessive administrative requirements, which adversely affects teaching performance (PBE, 2021). Similarly, the Department of Education observed that limited management training among school leaders contributes to inefficiencies in task distribution and organizational support, further intensifying teachers' workload concerns (DepEd, 2022). These findings suggest that ineffective work management is not solely an individual issue but is closely tied to institutional structures and leadership practices.

Scholarly literature has identified several factors associated with effective work management among educators. For instance, Almazan and Dela Cruz found that teachers who experience a balanced distribution of instructional and administrative tasks demonstrate higher levels of job performance. Likewise, Johnson et al. reported that educators who received training in organizational and time-management skills showed improved work-life balance and overall effectiveness. In addition, White emphasized that leadership support plays a critical role in helping teachers manage professional demands. Although these studies contribute valuable insights, they tend to examine work management through isolated variables rather than as a comprehensive set of defining characteristics shaped by both individual practices and organizational contexts.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to teacher workload and well-being, a notable gap remains in the literature. Existing studies largely focus on specific components such as time management, stress reduction, or workload perception, with limited exploration of the broader characteristics that constitute effective work management practices among educators. Moreover, the interaction between individual strategies and institutional support mechanisms has not been sufficiently examined, particularly within localized educational settings. Green et al. further noted that the role of technology in supporting or complicating teachers' work routines remains underexplored, despite its growing presence in educational systems.

Understanding the characteristics of effective work management practices is crucial, as such practices have implications beyond individual productivity. Effective work management enables educators to allocate time and resources efficiently, reduce occupational stress, and sustain professional engagement, all of which contribute to improved instructional quality and positive student outcomes. Moreover, well-managed workloads are associated with higher job satisfaction and lower burnout, factors that are essential for teacher retention and organizational stability. Insights into these characteristics can therefore inform school leadership strategies, professional development initiatives, and policy interventions aimed at fostering sustainable teaching environments.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to identify the characteristics of effective work management practices among educators in schools in Kidapawan City. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the themes and underlying dimensions that define how educators manage their professional responsibilities. By generating empirically grounded findings, this investigation also intends to support the development of a reliable

measurement tool that can be used to assess work management practices among educators and guide future research and institutional interventions.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory sequential research design to examine the characteristics of effective work management practices among educators. This design was appropriate because the construct under investigation lacked a clearly defined structure and required qualitative exploration prior to measurement development, consistent with Stebbins' (2001) view that exploratory research is suited for under-theorized phenomena.

In the first phase, a qualitative approach was used to explore educators' experiences and strategies related to managing professional responsibilities. Data from interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and core characteristics, which served as the basis for item generation.

In the second phase, a quantitative approach was employed to examine the dimensional structure and reliability of the identified characteristics. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to refine scale items and establish construct validity. This sequential integration of qualitative exploration and quantitative validation aligns with the methodological framework proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and ensured that the resulting instrument was both empirically grounded and psychometrically robust.

Research Participants

Participants in this study consisted of practicing educators from schools within Kidapawan City, Philippines. For the qualitative phase, 17 teachers were purposively selected based on their capacity to provide rich and relevant information regarding work management practices. Of these participants, 10 teachers participated in in-depth individual interviews, while 7 teachers took part in a focus group discussion. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had sufficient professional experience and direct engagement with classroom-based responsibilities.

For the quantitative phase, 200 teacher-respondents were selected using stratified sampling to ensure representation across school levels and institutional types within the city. This sample size was deemed adequate for exploratory factor analysis, as it satisfied recommended participant-to-item ratios for scale development and construct validation.

Inclusion criteria required participants to be full-time classroom teachers with at least one year of teaching experience, ensuring that respondents had developed consistent work management routines. Teachers who were on extended leave or assigned exclusively to administrative roles without teaching responsibilities were excluded, as their experiences did not align with the focus of the study.

Research Materials

Multiple research materials and instruments were utilized to ensure systematic data collection and replicability.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the study objectives and existing literature on work management, time management,

and work–life balance. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed accounts of educators’ strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms related to managing professional tasks. The interview guide was subjected to expert content validation to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the construct under investigation. Minor revisions were made based on expert feedback prior to implementation.

Audio recording devices were used during interviews and focus group discussions to ensure accurate capture of responses. All recordings were transcribed verbatim and, where necessary, translated into English prior to analysis. Transcripts were anonymized using numerical identifiers to maintain confidentiality.

For the quantitative phase, a self-administered survey questionnaire was developed based on themes and indicators that emerged from the qualitative analysis. Items were formulated to reflect the most frequently occurring characteristics identified during interviews and focus group discussions. Responses were measured using a Likert-type scale to allow for statistical analysis of item relationships.

The questionnaire data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), following assessment of sampling adequacy through the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure. Factor extraction was conducted using principal axis factoring, with items retained based on acceptable communalities and factor loadings. To assess internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were computed for each derived factor, consistent with established reliability standards (DeVellis, 2005). All statistical analyses were conducted using standard statistical software to ensure reproducibility.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the interview and focus group discussion data resulted in the identification of nine core themes that describe the characteristics of effective work management practices among educators. These themes represent recurring patterns in how teachers organize tasks, manage responsibilities, and sustain productivity in their professional roles. The emergent themes are as follows:

1. Adaptive Time Management
2. Strategic Prioritization for Work Efficiency
3. Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities
4. Collaborative Work Management
5. Supportive Peer Networks
6. Efficiency Through Shared Workload
7. Continuous Professional Development for Work Optimization
8. Skill Enhancement Through Targeted Training
9. Practical Application of Professional Learning

Based on the qualitative findings, a 100-item instrument was developed to measure Effective Work Management Practices Among Educators. The instrument underwent psychometric evaluation using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Table 1. Effective work management practices among educators Scale

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
I complete tasks within allocated time frames					
I plan daily activities before starting work					
I avoid procrastination in finishing important tasks					
I use time efficiently during work hours					
I prioritize urgent tasks over less urgent ones					
I set realistic deadlines for all assignments					
I manage multiple tasks effectively each day					
I allocate sufficient time for breaks daily					
I review completed tasks on time consistently					
I handle interruptions without affecting task completion					
I identify important tasks before starting work					
I focus on high-priority tasks first daily					
I adjust priorities when unexpected tasks arise					
I avoid spending too much time unimportant tasks					
I organize tasks based on urgency and importance					
I balance long-term and short-term task priorities					
I complete critical tasks before minor ones					
I reassess priorities regularly for better efficiency					
I delegate low-priority tasks to others appropriately					
I avoid delaying tasks requiring immediate attention					
I set clear goals for daily work					
I define achievable objectives for each task					
I track progress toward set work goals					
I adjust goals when needed for success					
I set specific deadlines for completing goals					
I align personal goals with organizational objectives					
I review goals regularly to monitor progress					
I break large goals into smaller tasks					
I write down goals to maintain focus					
I stay motivated to achieve work goals					
I prepare a weekly plan for work tasks					
I follow my planned schedule consistently each day					
I schedule tasks according to their importance level					
I use calendars or planners to organize activities					
I anticipate potential delays and adjust schedules accordingly					
I review daily schedules to ensure task completion					
I schedule time for unexpected tasks during the day					
I prioritize scheduled tasks to meet deadlines effectively					
I plan ahead before starting new projects consistently					
I stick to planned timelines for all assignments					
I delegate tasks appropriately to manage workload					
I trust colleagues to handle delegated tasks well					
I clarify instructions before delegating responsibilities to others					
I ensure delegated work meets quality expectations consistently					
I follow up on delegated tasks regularly and timely					
I provide guidance when others handle delegated tasks					
I balance delegation to prevent overburdening myself or others					
I assign tasks according to team members' strengths					
I monitor delegated tasks without micromanaging unnecessarily					
I adjust delegation based on task urgency and importance					
I practice stress-relief techniques during difficult workdays					
I manage tension without letting it affect productivity					
I stay calm when work demands are high					

I avoid letting stress interfere with task completion
I take breaks to reduce work-related stress consistently
I maintain a positive attitude under stressful conditions
I seek help when stress becomes overwhelming at work
I plan ahead to minimize stressful situations daily
I reflect on stressful tasks to improve performance
I maintain composure when faced with work challenges
I manage available resources effectively for task completion
I allocate materials efficiently to avoid shortages
I utilize resources wisely to maximize productivity
I organize resources for easy access when needed
I plan resource usage according to task priorities
I prevent resource wastage through careful management
I adjust resource allocation based on changing needs
I coordinate resources with colleagues to ensure efficiency
I monitor resource usage regularly to avoid deficits
I maintain inventory or supplies systematically for work tasks
I organize workload to meet daily work objectives
I group similar tasks together to improve efficiency
I review task lists regularly to manage workload
I adjust workload according to available time effectively
I avoid overloading myself with too many tasks
I break large tasks into smaller manageable parts
I track progress to prevent workload accumulation issues
I prioritize tasks to maintain balanced workload daily
I schedule workload evenly throughout workdays consistently
I complete urgent tasks first to manage workload properly
I set personal deadlines to stay motivated and focused
I monitor my own performance against work goals
I take responsibility for completing tasks on time
I reflect on completed work to improve performance
I stay disciplined to achieve work-related objectives
I identify areas for self-improvement regularly and consistently
I maintain focus to avoid distractions at work
I hold myself accountable for task outcomes daily
I track personal progress toward long-term goals effectively
I adjust personal strategies to meet work requirements
I communicate progress to supervisors and colleagues clearly
I maintain records of completed tasks accurately and consistently
I evaluate results against set goals after completion
I seek feedback to improve work performance regularly
I analyze work outcomes to plan next steps
I report issues promptly to ensure task success
I reflect on lessons learned from completed tasks
I maintain transparency in work-related activities daily
I identify gaps and adjust approach for improvement
I review past performance to enhance future productivity

The dataset met the statistical assumptions required for factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure indicated acceptable sampling adequacy, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity confirmed that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor extraction.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.623
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4763.025
	df	4750
	Sig.	.0142

Exploratory Factor Analysis using principal axis factoring with Promax rotation resulted in the retention of six statistically supported dimensions, consolidating the nine qualitative themes. Of the original 100 items, 49 items met the factor loading criteria and were retained. The validated dimensions were:

1. Adaptive Time Management
2. Strategic Prioritization for Work Efficiency
3. Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities
4. Collaborative Work Management
5. Efficiency Through Shared Workload
6. Resource Management

Reliability analysis demonstrated strong internal consistency across all six dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from **0.829 to 0.876**, indicating that the retained items consistently measured their respective constructs.

Table 4. Reliability Test for Retained Themes

Dimension (Theme)	No. of Retained Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Adaptive Time Management	10	0.876
Strategic Prioritization for Work Efficiency	10	0.862
Balancing Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities	7	0.841
Collaborative Work Management	7	0.829
Efficiency Through Shared Workload	6	0.834
Resource Management	9	0.853
Total Retained Items	49	-

The findings of this study highlight that effective work management practices among educators are inherently multidimensional, encompassing time regulation, prioritization, collaboration, workload sharing, and resource utilization. Consistent with the qualitative findings, educators emphasized adaptability and strategic decision-making as essential responses to unpredictable work demands.

The prominence of Adaptive Time Management and Strategic Prioritization aligns with Time Management Theory proposed by Macan (1994), which posits that individuals who structure and adjust their time effectively experience greater control and reduced work-related stress. Similarly, the validated dimensions related to collaboration and shared workload support Work–Life Balance Theory articulated by Greenhaus and Allen (2011), emphasizing the role of organizational and social support in sustaining employee well-being and performance.

The consolidation of nine qualitative themes into six quantitative dimensions demonstrates the value of integrating qualitative insights with statistical validation. As noted by Field (2018), factor analysis strengthens construct validity by retaining only items that meaningfully contribute to measurement accuracy. Likewise, Worthington and Whittaker (2021) emphasized that scales grounded in lived experiences and refined through EFA offer stronger theoretical and empirical foundations.

The results confirm that effective work management among educators extends beyond individual discipline and includes collaborative structures, supportive environments, and access to resources. The final 49-item scale provides a reliable and empirically validated instrument that can be used for assessment, professional development planning, and future research aimed at improving educators' work efficiency and well-being.

Conclusion

The subsequent section presents the overall interpretations and insights drawn from the discussion.

1. The study concluded that effective work management practices among educators encompass multiple interrelated strategies, including time management, prioritization, workload balancing, collaboration, and resource management, which are critical for enhancing efficiency and productivity in educational settings.
2. The qualitative analysis identified nine themes, while the quantitative factor analysis confirmed six underlying dimensions, demonstrating the convergence of teachers' lived experiences with statistically validated constructs.
3. The high reliability of the scale indicates that the retained 49 items across six dimensions consistently measure each aspect of effective work management, confirming the robustness and validity of the instrument.
4. The final 100-item scale, organized into six validated dimensions, provides a practical and empirically grounded tool that can be used by schools, administrators, and researchers to systematically assess and improve educators' work management practices.

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