

## IMPACT OF LARGE CLASS SIZE ON TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*Large class size is foreseen to be one of the concerns in different countries including the Philippines. As such, to give solutions in a growing school population, the Department of Education has coped with these shortages by allowing the large class sizes in some areas in the country. It is found that it gives difficulties to students and to teachers. This study aimed to determine the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions and if there are significant relationships between the common teaching strategies (classroom management & discipline and instructional materials) and to teacher's emotional and physical conditions. It also sought to find if there is a significant difference in the strategies used by the primary and intermediate teachers in handling large class sizes. The subjects of the study are the primary and intermediate public-school teachers in chosen schools of Batangas Province. The finding showed that the teacher-respondents' emotional and physical conditions are sometimes affected by the large class sizes. Statistically, there are significant relationships between the common strategies used by the teachers in handling large class sizes to their physical and emotional conditions, that explains why the subjects of this study are not that totally affected by large class sizes while teaching. More so, the findings also revealed that there is no significant difference on the strategies used by the primary and intermediate teachers.*

*Keywords: large class size, strategies, emotional condition, physical condition, classroom management, instructional materials, discipline*

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers are in a unique position to have a direct impact to their students. Teachers can cater the mind and touch the lives of every pupil. On the other hand, teachers should have passion and dedication in teaching to achieve these things.

As a teacher, they experience many displays of emotions when facing the class. Undeniably, emotion is a great involvement for teaching, the feelings and emotions shown to a particular situation, understanding how and why these happen, recognizing once own feelings and

those of others, and developing effective ways of managing them.

The feelings of a teacher inside the classroom are important to easily recognize what they are up to. Likewise, being a teacher is not that easy, sometimes they may leave the building with a head hanging low but act in front with their colleagues and students like nothing is wrong. They smile inside the classroom just to show their little pupils that they are okay and they are strong enough to conquer all the circumstances. A little appreciation for teachers will have a huge impact on their lives.

However, emotion should not only be the focus of teachers but they also need to know their physical conditions. A teacher having a healthy body could also have a healthy mind. If that so, they can teach very well and share all the knowledge they have. But according to Zimmerman, et.al (2010) burnout symptoms have received a lot of attention in many professions because of their potential negative consequences on individual's health, job turn over, absenteeism, and work performance. In connection to this, teachers should give focus to their health to give the best service to cater well the mind and soul of their students.

As it is, teaching is a wide variety of trade for learning especially in a large class. Some teachers would define teaching as helping students to understand, to cause change or to cognitively agitate but for the researchers, teaching in a large class should always know the difference between what was taught and what the students have learnt. There are different reasons for overcrowded classroom at school level that includes; limited resources of schools, rapid increase in population, popularity of some schools, lack of schools in locality and sometimes lack of teachers in schools. As stated by Amarat (2011) one of the most serious problems faced by teachers in public schools in overcrowded classrooms.

On this part, the researchers were prompted to conduct this study to know the impact of large classes to teachers' emotional and physical conditions and what could be the strategies they can use to handle large class sizes. The results gathered are beneficial to them in a way that they would have background knowledge on how to handle their own classes.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to determine the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions as well as the commonly used strategies for classroom management & discipline and instructional materials. The researchers were guided by the following questions: 1) To identify the teachers' profile in terms of Age; Educational Attainment; and Length

of teaching experience/years of teaching experience; 2) To determine the effects of large class size on teachers in terms of Emotional condition; and Physical condition; 3) To analyze the strategies commonly used by teachers in handling large class sizes in terms of Classroom management and Classroom discipline; and Use of Instructional materials; 4) To discover the significant relationship between the common teaching strategies used by teachers in handling large classes and their emotional and physical conditions caused by handling large class sizes; 5) To find if there is a significant relationship between the profile of respondents and the effect of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions; 6) To find if there is a significant difference on the strategies used by primary and intermediate level teachers in handling large class sizes.

## METHODOLOGY

To determine the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions, the researchers made use of the descriptive method research. Thus, it allows to determine the difference between the existing variables in the research using the process of description, analysis, interpretation of data and recording of data. The researchers considered this method as the most applicable because according to Castillo (2007) descriptive studies may include present facts, current conditions concerning the nature of a group of persons, a number, a project, as much as class of events and may involve the procedure of analysis, classification, enumeration, and measurement to the given. Moreover, the study was based on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks showing the relationship of the teachers' perception on the impact of large class size on their condition and strategies in teaching.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Effects of Large Class Size on Teachers' Emotional and Physical Conditions

#### 1.1. In terms of Emotional Condition



The impact of large class on teachers' emotional and physical conditions was shown in the Tables below.

**Table 1**  
*Emotional Condition*

Emotional Condition	Mean	V.I.
1. I feel frustrated when teaching in a big class	3.07	S
2. Being a teacher in a large class is more demanding and emotionally exhausting	3.54	O
3. I feel ineffective and less dynamic in a large class size	2.88	S
4. When I am in an overcrowded classroom, I tend to experience low morale due to the concerns created by my students	2.81	S
5. I feel weighed down when handling large classes.	2.80	S
6. I feel that I spend much time in organizing class activities and not enough time on meeting students' needs individually	3.30	S
7. I end up lacking self-confidence when teaching large classes	2.50	S
8. The stress of handling large class gets on my nerves and draws out negativity which manifests in my voice	3.12	S
9. I feel different types of emotions when teaching in a large class	3.33	S
10. Handling large class gives me second thoughts on my choice of profession	2.54	S
<b>Area Mean</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>S</b>

The table below shows the impact of large class size in the emotional condition of the primary and intermediate teachers.

It is shown in Table 1 that the overall impact of large class size on teachers sometimes affects their emotional condition which had an area mean of 2.99. Surprisingly, the impact of large size on teachers' emotional condition is not that high, yet, it should be noted that even the premise of having a large class would result to high level of impact on their emotional conditions. As what is mentioned, the impact of large class on their emotional condition is not that tremendous. Majority of the respondents answered that they were only

sometimes emotionally affected. It should be also noted that even all the other signs of emotional conditions, being emotionally exhausted was the top answer having a mean of 3.54 percent compared to the others and this is probably because, facing a crowded classroom takes a lot of effort just to handle it wisely. Being a teacher needs to embrace the diversity in class especially in handling some elementary students. Different challenges that a teacher is experiencing in teaching could not only affect their strength but would results to the use of all their emotions.

On the other hand, teachers sometimes end up lacking self-confidence when teaching in a large class which obtained the lowest area mean of 2.50. This is probably because, as a teacher, there's no room for the educators to lose their self-confidence because this would help them to become an effective teacher. This is supported by this statement, handling a small or large class is not an excuse to the teachers for them to lose their effectiveness and especially their self-confidence because having this attribute would totally help teacher to show his/her very best.

According to Carson, et. al (2010), positive emotions, such as joy, are associated with flexibility, adaptability and creativity, in that they can broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire (broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions,) which is especially useful when facing obstacles. Teaching is often characterized by the necessity of quick responses to student behaviors or questions. If students do not initially understand the teacher's explanation of the learning material, the experience of joy could provide the teacher with the necessary readiness to provide an alternative explanation.

## 1.2 In terms of Physical Condition

Table 2 shows the impact of large class size on teachers' physical conditions. According to Carson (2010), physical condition is a body condition having a quality of life that allows people to get through daily activities with or without experiencing fatigue and physical stress. Additionally, the impact of large class size sometimes affects the physical condition of the teachers which had an area mean of 2.96 which



indicates that sometimes, teacher-respondents were suffer from Physical condition problems due to large class size.

**Table 2**  
*Physical Condition*

Physical Condition	Mean	V.I.
1. I have experienced stress on my vocal cords due to continuous loud speaking	3.54	O
2. I feel burn-out after handling large class size	3.25	S
3. Due to over crowdedness, I easily catch diseases like common cold	3.03	S
4. I experience greater fatigue when marking students work and output	3.22	S
5. There are some changes in my posture because of the different activities needed to be performed very day in the class	2.83	S
6. Standing for long period of time causes pain at my lower back	3.35	S
7. I feel body pain even during morning classes brought about consistent handling large classes	2.85	S
8. There is an increase in my number of days of absence due to physical stress	2.04	S
9. The noise created by my students increases my blood pressure resulting to decreasing of work efficiency	2.73	S
10. Due to my teaching career, I experience muscle cramps	2.77	S
<b>Area Mean</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>S</b>

The overall result of the impact of large class size on teachers' physical condition is not that high, yet, it should be considered that handling a large class would result to a high level of impact on the physical condition of teachers. As can be seen, majority of the respondents answered only that they were sometimes physically affected when teaching a large class.

Moreover, it can be gleaned that even all the other signs have an impact on teachers' vocal cords topped with a mean of 3.54 percent compare to the other signs. This is probably because teachers always tend to speak for the rest of the day with a loud and clear voice so that, students would clearly hear and understand the lesson. This

is supported by Xu, et. al (2010) which mentions that consequences of chronic voice function disorders impact every area of individual's life. It impacts their physical, social, emotional, and professional comfort. According to Jarosz (2008), diseases of vocal organ due to excessive voice effort: For teachers, voice disorder risk is five times bigger than other "voice-working. Chronic voice disorder causes long term sick leaves or leaving the job for good. Teachers have different troubles with voice such as hoarseness, speech difficulties, and even aphonia. A closer look on the table highlights those teachers sometimes experience to absent at school due to their physical stress which obtained the lowest area mean of 2.04. This is probably because teachers are not satisfied if they missed their students even once. Also, teachers were aware that if they have much absence and noticed by the higher people, they would possibly not tolerate by their school staff.

**Table 3**  
*Summary Table of the Impact of Large Class Size on Teachers' Emotional and Physical Conditions*

Impact of Large Class Size on Teachers	Area Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional Condition	2.99	Sometimes
Physical Condition	2.96	Sometimes

The table above, shows the summary results of the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical condition. It can be gleaned from the table that the results of the two types of conditions of the teachers is too close to each other garnering 2.99 percent for emotional condition and 2.96 percent for physical condition.

Surprisingly, the result is not that high, yet, so close to reach the often experience by the teacher-respondents. It is therefore concluded that, the results gained because teacher-respondents were used to experience different kinds of emotional and physical conditions. They tend to endure the problems they encounter in a large class size.

## 2. Strategies for Classroom Management and Discipline



**2.1 In terms of Classroom Management**

**Table 4**  
*Strategies in terms of Classroom Management and Classroom Discipline*

Classroom Mgt. & Discipline Strategies	Mean	V.I.
1. I use positive verbal reinforcement as opposed to shouting and screaming	3.68	0
2. I establish a code of behavior that is created by the teacher and learner together (i.e. they have to work quietly; they may talk but not loud etc.)	4.08	0
3. I exert extra effort to disruptive students for them to engage positively in the class	4.14	0
4. I talk to my students with a firm voice without establishing my authority in class	3.98	0
5. I clarify the actions that are acceptable in the classroom to prevent disruption	4.17	0
6. I discuss my "house rules" early in the school year so students know what and how to behave	4.48	0
7. I normally roam the classroom during lectures and avoid staying in one place	4.37	0
8. I use team teaching and peer teaching to create variety in the classroom	4.06	0
9. I rotate seating arrangements on a regular basis to find the best seating plan for each class	4.01	0
10. I use class time to settle dispute and soothe feelings in classroom	3.70	0
<b>Area Mean</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 4 presents the teachers' commonly used strategies to handle large class sizes with regards to classroom management and discipline and for instructional materials.

The primary and intermediate teachers often used the strategies for classroom management and discipline to handle large classes as shown in the area mean of 4.07.

In terms of classroom management and discipline, results showed that the respondents often used the strategies specifically in discussing the house rules early in the school year so students know what and how to behave that gained an area

mean of 4.48. Creating some rules and regulations is common to the teachers because it is an effective strategy that a teacher can do to manage the whole class. According to Thompson (2013), a large classroom can be noisy, therefore, it is important to establish the guidelines to help control the noise levels. Routines are very important in a large class and therefore students should be taught how to get into routine and establish what they are supposed to do early in the year.

In addition to this, Alber (2014) stated that assigning duties to learners is also a way of managing overcrowded classrooms. He mentioned duties such as class monitor which provides support to the teachers and also gives the learner a sense of responsibility where they feel valued and significant in the classroom. Furthermore,

Moreover, teachers often used positive verbal reinforcement as opposed to shouting and screaming which obtained the lowest area mean of 3.68.

**2.2 In terms of Instructional Materials**

The strategies that are being used by the teacher-respondents in terms of Instructional Materials was shown in the tables below.

Table 5 displays those primary and intermediate teachers often used the Instructional Strategies which had an area mean of 3.78. As Yang (2008) stated, teachers' professional development in computer technology integration is found to affect teachers' computer technology use. Inadequate teacher training is often cited as the most serious obstacles in helping teachers learn how to use computer technology in their instruction. In addition to inadequate training, the kind of training teachers receive also matters. There is an agreement that the traditional workshops or summer institutes well removed from classroom practices are often not effective in helping teachers learn to integrate computer technology into the instruction.

Adequacy of TLR refers to satisfactory or acceptable quality and quantities of material resources, physical facilities and human resources.



**Table 5**  
*Strategies in terms of Instructional Materials*

Strategies used with respect to Instructional Materials	Mean	V.I.
1. I use chalk and talk instructional method on a daily basis	3.32	S
2. I use scholastic and instructional materials in my discussions to create greater interaction in the class	4.02	O
3. I use audio-visual aids to catch the attention of my students	4.26	O
4. I use the computer to manage my student's efficiency	4.14	O
5. I attend trainings to improve my skills in the use of computer technology for effective instruction	3.90	O
6. I select and use instructional materials appropriate for large class sizes to guarantee effective teaching	4.15	O
7. I use a wireless microphone to increase the volume and projection of my voice inside the classroom	2.47	R
8. I acquire greater interest from student when using charts or traditional visual aids when teaching	3.21	S
9. I have a balanced use of variety of reading materials including environmental prints, works of fiction and non-fiction and technology	3.64	O
10. I make sure that my students have textbooks that we can use in the discussion.	4.01	O
11. I use the projector because it saves time in preparing my classroom materials	3.81	O
12. I present my lessons using a combination of modern and traditional means like PowerPoint and chalk board to keep the students' interest	4.41	O
<b>Area Mean</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>O</b>

According to Okongo et.al (2015), adequacy of instructional materials such as textbooks which is the main instruction material, is the most cost-effective input affecting student performance. In this context, adequate supply is usually assumed to be a minimum of one textbook per three students, and at primary level enough reading books so that every child has the opportunity to read at least one new book every week.

According to Idris, et. al (2018), audio-visual is defined as the combination of various digital media types such as text, images, sound and video, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey a

message or information to an audience. In other words, audio-visual means an individual or a small group using a computer to interact with information that is represented in several media, by repeatedly selecting what to see and hear next. The power of audio-visual lies in the fact that it is multisensory, stimulating to many senses of the audience. It is also interactive, enabling the end users of the application to control the content and flow of information.

It can also be gleaned from the data that teacher-respondents often used a combination of modern and traditional media likes PowerPoint and chalkboard to keep their students' interest which obtained the highest area mean of 4.41.

**Table 6**  
*Summary Table for Classroom Management & Discipline and Instructional Materials-Related Strategies*

Strategies used by Teachers in Handling large Class Sizes	Area Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Classroom Management and Discipline	4.07	Often
Instructional Materials	3.78	Often

The table above, shows the summary results of the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical condition. It can be gleaned from the table that the results of the common teaching strategies used by the teachers in handling large class sizes were often used by them. These gathered 4.07 percent for classroom management and discipline strategies and 3.78 percent for instructional materials strategies.

The results implies that teacher-respondents were often using the strategies. There it can be concluded that they know how to use effectively the strategies to settle everything while teaching in a large class.

### 3. Relationship between the Classroom Management & Discipline and Instructional Materials Strategies and the Impact of Large Class Size on Teachers' Emotional and Physical Conditions



### 3.1 In terms of Classroom Management Strategies and the Impact of Large Class size

The significant relationship between the classroom management and discipline strategy is shown in the table below.

**Table 7**  
*Relationship between Classroom Management Strategies and the Impact of Large Class size on Teachers' Emotional and Physical Conditions*

Significant Relationship between the Strategies for Classroom Management and Discipline					
Conditions	T-value	P-value	T-value	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional	6.65	0.00	2.10	Reject	Significant
Physical	6.24	0.00	2.10	Reject	Significant

Table 7 shows the significant relationship between the common teaching strategies used by the teacher in handling large class sizes and the impact of large class size on their emotional and physical conditions.

The results above denote why teacher-respondents were not that totally affected in terms of their emotional and physical conditions. This could mean that teacher-respondents were used in using classroom management and discipline strategies to handle the large classes.

Based on the results of the study, it is apparent that the teachers have been practicing effective teaching strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of handling large class sizes.

### 3.2 In terms of Instructional Materials and the Impact of Large Class Size

Table 8 shows the significant relationship between the common teaching strategies used by the teacher in handling large class sizes and the impact of large class size on their emotional and physical conditions.

The results clarify why teacher-respondents were not that totally affected relatively to their emotional and physical conditions. Expectedly, like the first strategy mentioned earlier, there was a significant relationship between the two variables wherein it answered why the

teachers were not that much affected by the impact of large class regarding to their emotional and physical conditions.

**Table 8**  
*Relationship between Strategies for Instructional Materials and the Impact of Large Class Size on Teachers' Emotional and Physical Conditions*

Significant Relationship between the Strategies for Instructional Materials					
Conditions	T-value	P-value	T-value	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional	5.16	0.00	2.08	Reject	Significant
Physical	4.75	0.00	2.08	Reject	Significant

On a further look on the results, it brings the researchers to a conclusion that, teacher-respondents were using these strategies to overcome all the possible problems they may encounter with regards to their emotions and to their physical conditions.

### 4. Relationship between the Respondent's Profile and their Emotional and Physical Conditions

Table 9 shows the relationship between the respondents' profile and the impact of large class size on teachers; emotional and physical conditions.

**Table 9**  
*Relationship between the Age of the Respondents and the Effect of Large Class on Teachers*

Effects of Large Class	Chi-Computed	Chi-Tabular	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional Condition	219.07	15.51	Reject	Significant
Physical Condition	134.74	15.51	Reject	Significant

The relationship of the respondents' age and impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions are shown in Table 9

In terms of age, revealed that the Chi-computed 219.07 is greater that the chi-tabulated 15.51, which means that there was a significant relationship between the age of the respondents and the impact of large class size on teachers'



emotional and physical condition. The results proved that the age affects the physical condition of the teachers. Moreover, the results proved that the age affect the teacher's physical condition. According to Hoy et al. (2012), stated that globally, females are more likely to suffer from Lower Back Pain (LBP) than males in the age group of 40 years and older.

**Table 10**  
*Relationship between the Educational Attainment of the respondents and the effect of large class on teachers*

Effects of Large Class	Chi-Computed	Chi-Tabular	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional Condition	11.26	9.49	Reject	Significant
Physical Condition	13.90	9.49	Reject	Significant

From the results above, Table 10 took into account the relationship of educational attainment and the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions.

It indicates that in terms of educational attainment, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between the educational attainment of a teacher and the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical condition garnering 11.26 for emotional condition and 13.90 for physical condition and with a tabular value of 9.49.

**Table 11**  
*Relationship between the Length of Teaching Experience of the respondents and the effect of large class on teachers*

Effects of Large Class Size	Chi-Computed	Chi-Tabular	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Emotional Condition	54.65	15.51	Reject	Significant
Physical Condition	52.00	15.51	Reject	Significant

It can be gleaned from Table 11 the relationship of teaching experience and the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions.

On the other hand, in terms of teaching experience, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between the teaching

experience of a teacher and the impact of the large class size on teachers' emotional and physical condition garnering 55 percent for emotional condition and 52 percent for physical condition with a tabular of 15.51 percent.

In a few years of a teacher in the field of teaching, it creates a big impact on how they are going to handle their emotion and physical condition in a large class for them to stay longer on the profession that they choose.

It is important to note here that being a new teacher itself already carries with it certain degree of difficulty, but when the situation is added to the adjustment that a new teacher has to endure brought about by their transfer from provincial to an urban setting or from a private school to the public school environment, it will really be, as we quote one of the teachers, a shock and their greatest challenge MacLeod, J. S., & Austin, J. K. (2003). Their challenges that mentioned are teacher preparation and workload, school facilities, professional relationships, and parent's support Maligalig, et al.(2010)

**Table 12**  
*Significant Difference on the strategies used by the primary and intermediate teachers in handling large class size*

Strategies	F-Computed	P-Value	F crit	Decision Ho	Verbal Interpretation
Classroom Discipline	0.05	0.82	4.41	Accept	Not Significant
Instructional Materials	0.02	0.88	4.30	Accept	Not Significant

Table 12 shows the comparison of responses when grouped according to category. Based from the results, researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there was no significant difference that exists. This implies that the responses do not differ significantly among the teaching strategies category because the teacher respondents were used to some of the emotional and physical stress/problems that brought by the large class size.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

In terms of the age of the respondents, there is an equal number of teacher-respondents from the age brackets of 21-30 years old, 31-40 years old and 41 years old and above. Out of 299 respondents, majority are with bachelor's degree and falls within the bracket of 11 years and above in terms of year of service.

Teaching in a large class has an impact on teachers' emotional and physical conditions. It is concluded that the emotional condition of the respondents is more affected than their physical condition, this is because teachers are habituated to endure physical activities and posture imbalance.

As to the response of the teachers in the strategies they commonly used, evidently, classroom management together with classroom discipline were always performed by the teachers, that is why they are not that affected by the large class sizes.

There is a significant relationship between the teacher's classroom management and discipline and instructional materials and to their emotional and physical condition caused by handling large class sizes.

There is a significant relationship between the respondents' profile in terms of their age, educational attainment, length of teaching experience and the impact of large class size on teachers' emotional and physical conditions.

There is no significant difference on teaching strategies used by the primary and intermediate teachers to deal with their emotional and physical conditions when handling large class sizes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researchers came up with the following recommendations:

Teachers should be aware on their conditions as a teacher. Being aware on the emotional and physical condition of a teacher would greatly help them to be an effective and efficient teacher.

Teachers must be confident at any angle when teaching to gain enthusiasm and to catch the attention of the whole class.

Teachers should at least give their self-time to unwind and have a break so they will not tend to have a physical stress and suffer from burn-out.

Teachers should use a wireless lapel as a tool for teaching-learning to have a clear, loud and better projection of their voice and for them to avoid any vocal fatigue.

Teachers must know how to manage their emotions especially when teaching and facing a large number of misbehaving students inside the classroom for them not to end up in emotional exhaustion.

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## AUTHORS' PROFILE



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