

Exploring the Impact of 6-Hour Instructional Engagement Policy on Teachers' Wellbeing

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Publication Date: 2026/01/23

Abstract: This study examines the impact of the six-hour instructional engagement policy on the well-being of public-school teachers in the Philippines. Using a qualitative approach, the research explores how the directive influences instructional practices, workload management, and work-life balance. Data were collected from teachers in schools with varying levels of policy compliance. Findings indicate that structured implementation supported by administrative mechanisms enhances instructional focus, accountability, and emotional well-being. Teachers reported improved time management and professional satisfaction when expectations were clear and non-teaching duties were minimized. However, persistent challenges such as administrative overload, rigid scheduling, and inadequate resources compromise policy effectiveness and teacher autonomy. While the directive generally promotes a healthier balance between professional and personal responsibilities, its success depends on consistent enforcement, manageable workloads, and institutional support. Recommendations include flexible scheduling, streamlined documentation, wellness programs, and harmonized guidelines to ensure equitable implementation. The study contributes to educational policy discourse by highlighting the interplay between workload structures and teacher welfare outcomes, offering actionable insights for improving instructional quality and retention in the Philippine public school system.

Keywords: Teacher Well-Being, Instructional Engagement Policy, Workload Management, Educational Policy, Public School Teachers.

How to Cite: Mariel Joy G. Calubiran; Danilo E. Despi (2026) Exploring the Impact of 6-Hour Instructional Engagement Policy on Teachers' Wellbeing. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(1), 1609-1642. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26jan666>

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession remains one of the most demanding occupations globally, and in the Philippines, public elementary school teachers bear a significant share of the educational system's challenges. With increasing expectations brought by the K to 12 curriculum, administrative workloads, and socio-emotional responsibilities, ensuring the well-being of teachers has become both a professional and policy concern. In response to workload issues, the Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalized the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy, outlined in DepEd Memorandum No. 291, s. 2008 - Guidelines for the Implementation of CSC Resolution no. 080096 on working hours for public school teachers, and reinforced in DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2009 - Addendum, and most recently in DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 - Rationalization of Teachers' workload in Public Schools and Payment of Teaching Overload.

This directive mandates six hours of actual classroom teaching daily, with the remaining two hours reserved for teaching-related tasks such as lesson preparation and learner assessment. While the intention is to provide structure, fairness, and protection to educators, the actual impact of this

policy on the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of teachers has not been sufficiently explored, especially at the elementary level.

Teachers are pivotal in shaping young minds and must function at their best to deliver quality instruction. However, anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that many teachers continue to experience stress, fatigue, and burnout. The rigid implementation of the 6-hour directive, differing interpretations by school heads, and lack of support mechanisms could exacerbate these issues. Thus, this study aims to explore the consequences of the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy on teachers' overall well-being and provide recommendations to enhance teacher support and policy implementation.

In the context of the Philippine education system, public school teachers often go above and beyond their mandated roles. They are not only educators but also mentors, counselors, community organizers, and sometimes even surrogate parents. In low-resource schools, especially in rural or underserved areas, teachers often deal with issues such as the lack of instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, unstable internet connectivity, and insufficient support for learners with special needs. These challenges are

compounded by systemic limitations, including slow bureaucratic responses and unclear operational policies.

The 6-hour teaching policy was originally introduced to ensure that teachers' work schedules are balanced and to prevent excessive workloads. The policy aligns with the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670), which stipulates that the working hours of teachers should not exceed six hours of actual classroom teaching per day. It also complies with Civil Service Commission rules regarding humane working conditions for government employees. However, despite the legal and policy safeguards, implementation remains inconsistent across schools and regions.

In some schools, administrators enforce an extended physical presence requirement, interpreting the policy as requiring eight full hours on campus regardless of teaching load. In others, teachers are granted flexibility to use their remaining two hours for planning and preparation at home or in quiet spaces. These inconsistencies lead to confusion, resentment, and feelings of unfairness among teachers. What was designed to be a supportive policy has, in some cases, contributed to stress and dissatisfaction.

Moreover, many teachers report that even with the six-hour cap on teaching, the actual demands of the job far exceed the allotted time. Lesson planning, paper checking, administrative reports, communication with parents, and participation in school programs often spill over into evenings and weekends. As a result, teachers find themselves constantly juggling professional responsibilities and personal commitments, leading to a diminished sense of work-life balance.

Globally, teacher well-being has gained increased attention in educational research and policy discussions. Studies from countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Finland, and Japan show that prolonged exposure to high workloads, minimal autonomy, and limited institutional support contributes significantly to teacher burnout and attrition. While developed countries have begun instituting mechanisms to safeguard teacher well-being, such as reduced teaching loads, mental health programs, and professional coaching, developing countries like the Philippines are still grappling with basic workload management and enforcement of existing policies.

In a comprehensive study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020), teacher stress was identified as a global issue directly linked to workload, classroom management difficulties, and lack of recognition. The study emphasized the importance of providing teachers with manageable workloads and emotional support systems in order to sustain their performance and improve student outcomes. Philippine studies echo similar sentiments. David (2019) and Reyes (2021), for example, concluded that teachers under excessive workloads showed higher levels of stress, reduced job satisfaction, and increased absenteeism.

Another factor often overlooked in discussions about teacher workload is the emotional labor required by the profession. Teachers are constantly expected to remain positive, supportive, and nurturing, sometimes at the cost of their own emotional health. They must manage classroom dynamics, respond to the needs of diverse learners, and deal with crises such as student trauma or family dysfunction. These responsibilities often leave teachers emotionally drained, especially when institutional mechanisms for counseling and psychological support are inadequate or nonexistent.

A teacher's well-being is not only an individual concern but a systemic one. When teachers are stressed, exhausted, or demoralized, the quality of instruction suffers. This, in turn, affects learner outcomes, school climate, and overall educational quality. A growing body of evidence suggests that supporting teacher well-being contributes directly to better classroom environments, higher student achievement, and more sustainable education systems. Within this backdrop, the need for empirical data on the lived experiences of Filipino teachers under the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy becomes urgent. While the policy is framed as a protective measure, its effectiveness can only be assessed by examining how it is interpreted and implemented at the school level and, more importantly, how it is experienced by those on the ground.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore how public elementary school teachers interpret, experience, and respond to the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy. It seeks to document the policy's physical, emotional, and psychological impacts on teachers; understand how teachers cope with its demands; and identify areas for improvement in its implementation. By capturing the lived experiences of educators, the study aims to generate policy recommendations that are grounded and responsive to the actual needs of teachers.

Additionally, this research hopes to fill the existing gap in literature regarding how national workload policies, even when well-intentioned, may falter at the implementation level. It intends to serve as a foundation for further studies on how workload regulations can be aligned with teacher well-being, effectiveness, and long-term professional development.

Ultimately, this study did not merely aim to critique the 6-hour teaching policy but to contribute to the broader conversation on how to build a more humane and sustainable teaching profession in the Philippines. A profession where teachers are not only efficient deliverers of content but also fulfilled, respected, and empowered individuals who thrive in both their personal and professional lives.

➤ Objectives

- Examine how public elementary school teachers perceive and experience the 6-hour face-to-face teaching directive in their daily professional responsibilities.

- Identify the stressors and emotional, physical, or psychological challenges associated with the implementation of the policy.
- Explore the coping strategies employed by teachers in managing both teaching and non-teaching duties under the 6-hour schedule.
- Assess the perceived effects of the policy on teachers' physical and mental well-being, job satisfaction, and work-life balance.
- Investigate variations in policy implementation across schools and how these affect teacher experiences and perceptions of fairness.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the impact of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy on teachers' well-being in the Irosin II District in relation to the implementation of the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy.

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the impact of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy on teachers' well-being in the Irosin II District in relation to the implementation of the 6-hour face-to-face teaching policy. Phenomenology, as a qualitative research tradition, is particularly suited for examining phenomena as they are consciously experienced by individuals in their everyday lives. Its central aim is to uncover the essence of human experiences—how people perceive, interpret, and derive meaning from situations.

In the context of this study, phenomenology is appropriate because it allows for a deep and nuanced understanding of how teachers make sense of their work-life realities under the 6-hour directive. Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring predefined variables, this approach prioritizes the subjective perspectives of teachers—their feelings, reflections, and interpretations of workload, autonomy, stress, and well-being. Teachers are not treated as passive recipients of policy but as active meaning-makers whose insights are vital in evaluating how policies manifest on the ground.

To capture these complex lived experiences, the study utilized Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as its primary data-gathering method. FGDs are well-suited for phenomenological research because they facilitated open dialogue, interaction, and the co-construction of meaning among participants who shared common contexts. In this study, teachers were grouped according to relevant demographic or contextual factors (e.g., teaching level, years of service, school location) to promote candid conversation and comparative reflection.

Through FGDs, the researcher aimed to gather rich, descriptive data that went beyond surface-level responses. Teachers were encouraged to recount specific instances, feelings, and reflections related to their experience of the 6-hour policy, whether they feel eased in their workload or added new pressures, how it affected their physical and

emotional health, and whether it supported or disrupted their work-life balance. These narratives provided contextualized insight into how the policy operated within the unique educational, administrative, and cultural landscape of Irosin II.

Additionally, the interactive nature of FGDs allowed participants to validate, challenge, or expand upon each other's experiences, often leading to the emergence of collective themes that revealed patterns across individual stories. This method enhanced the credibility and depth of the findings, as it not only captured isolated perspectives but also identified shared realities and common concerns within the teaching community.

Ultimately, this research design enabled the study to uncover the underlying meanings and emotional dimensions of teacher experiences under the 6-hour directive, dimensions that are often overlooked in policy evaluation. The expected outcome was a set of thematic insights that reflected both the individual voices and the collective consciousness of teachers, which formed the basis for evidence-informed policy recommendations and targeted interventions that addressed teacher well-being holistically.

The participants in this study were public elementary school teachers within the Irosin II district under the Department of Education, Schools Division of Sorsogon Province. Respondents were selected based on the following criteria:

- Must be currently employed as a full-time public elementary school teacher in the Irosin II district.
- Must have been teaching under the 6-hour face-to-face policy for at least one academic year.
- Willing to participate in an FGD and share personal insights regarding the policy.
- To ensure representativeness, participants came from various grade levels (kindergarten to grade 6), teaching both core and non-core subjects. A total of 16 participants from 16 schools of the Irosin II district were selected and divided into smaller FGD groups (e.g., 5 participants per group) for manageability and depth of discussion.

III. RESULTS

This presents the findings of the study, addressing the research questions posed in the earlier chapters. The data gathered from various sources were carefully analyzed and interpreted to provide meaningful insights into the key trends, patterns and relationships observed in this study. The primary question guiding this analysis is: The results are organized into sections based on the themes that emerged during the analysis, providing a comprehensive overview of the study's findings.

➤ *The Status of Compliance of the School in Implementing the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement of Teachers*

• *Structured and Fully Implemented Instructional Engagement*

This theme captures the perspectives of participants who reported a high degree of fidelity and institutional structure in the implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. These accounts emphasize clear planning, full compliance, and a sustained effort across changes in school administration, suggesting that the policy is successfully integrated into the daily school operations.

Several participants indicated that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy is well-structured and fully implemented in their schools. Participant 1 described it as “a well-structured and thoughtfully planned school day.” Participant 3 stated it is “well implemented,” while Participant 4 affirmed it is “fully implemented.” Participant 6 noted, “It is respectfully implemented by our former school head and continued by our present school head.” Participant 10 provided a detailed account: “Teachers devote six full hours of actual teaching and learning activities... including learner-centered activities such as guided discussions, collaborative tasks, and performance-based outputs.” The Master Teacher (Participant 16) confirmed, “Teachers render 6 hours actual classroom teaching daily and complete other tasks in remaining 2 hrs.” These responses reflect adherence to the policy’s intent and structured execution.

• *Partial Implementation and Ongoing Adjustments*

In contrast to the fully compliant reports, this theme highlights experiences where the 6-hour instructional policy is either not yet fully in effect or is undergoing a difficult transitional phase. Participants cited operational challenges, inconsistencies with existing timekeeping systems (like biometrics), and new leadership efforts to enforce the directive, indicating that the policy framework exists but is not universally or smoothly executed across all institutions.

Some participants reported that the policy is not yet fully implemented or is undergoing transition. Participant 8 stated, “As of now, our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.” Participant 9 added, “The policy has not been fully implemented... but our new principal is committed to enforcing it.” Participant 13 noted, “We’re still following the time on our biometrics... it has already been set to 8 hours, so we have to wait.” Participant 14 simply stated, “Not fully implemented,” and Participant 15 explained, “The 6-hour instructional policy is not fully observed... workload extends beyond the prescribed 6 hours.” These responses suggest that while the policy framework exists, operational challenges and transitional leadership are affecting full compliance.

• *General Affirmation without Specific Detail*

This theme comprises responses from participants who expressed a general positive sentiment or provided broad scheduling information without delving into specific details about the implementation, challenges, or fidelity of the 6-hour policy. These affirmations suggest a level of acceptance or

satisfaction, but they lack the operational depth provided by other participants.

A few participants expressed general approval or acknowledgment of the policy without elaborating on its implementation. Participant 2 described the school day schedule: “The school day typically runs from 7:30 AM to 3:15 PM, including short breaks and a lunch period.” Participant 5 responded, “Sakto lang po,” indicating adequacy or acceptability. Participant 7 simply said, “Nice,” and Participant 12 noted, “Gives enough time to prepare for tomorrow’s class.” These responses suggest a positive perception but lack specific operational details.

• *Extended Workload Beyond Instructional Hours*

This theme isolates the finding that even in schools where the 6-hour instructional policy is formally in place, teachers often render more than the mandated time. This indicates a practical tension where the formal policy is undermined by institutional expectations or ancillary responsibilities that extend the actual working hours.

Participant 11 acknowledged that while the policy is implemented, “some teachers... rendered more than 6 hrs. in school.” This indicates that despite formal adherence, actual practice may involve extended hours due to ancillary responsibilities or institutional expectations.

• *Reduction of Administrative Burden*

A strong consensus emerged across several participants recommending a reduction or removal of non-teaching and administrative duties. This theme highlights the perception that administrative overload is the primary obstacle to the policy's intended benefit of allowing teachers to focus solely on instructional duties.

A recurring recommendation involves minimizing non-teaching responsibilities to allow teachers to focus on instructional duties. Participant 9 proposed to “minimize the administrative tasks for teachers,” while Participant 12 stated, “Remove non-teaching-related tasks for teachers so they can focus on teaching only.” Participant 13 added, “Minimize the administrative load tied to its implementation,” and Participant 15 concluded, “No more non-teaching-related reports for teachers.” These responses reflect a strong consensus that administrative overload undermines the directive’s intended benefits.

• *Technology Integration and Process Efficiency*

This theme focuses on a forward-looking suggestion that advocates for using digital solutions to enhance the policy's efficiency. The recommendation to automate tracking and documentation reflects an interest in reducing manual workload to ensure the successful realization of the 6-hour instructional focus.

Participant 10 suggested a refinement rather than a full revision, recommending “automated tracking systems and paperless documentation.” This reflects a forward-looking approach to policy enhancement through digital solutions that reduce manual workload and improve efficiency.

- *Flexible and Output-Based Alternatives*

This theme captures proposals that move away from rigid, time-based monitoring in favor of performance-based accountability. Participants advocated professional autonomy and trusting teachers to manage their time, provided that all required learning outcomes and professional tasks are met.

Some participants proposed more flexible models that prioritize outcomes over rigid time structures. Participant 6 stated, “Teachers should be trusted to manage their time as long as learning outcomes and tasks are met,” and Participant 7 recommended “a flexible output-based system.” These responses advocate professional autonomy and performance-based accountability rather than fixed instructional hours.

- *Focus on Teacher Welfare and Professional Support*

This theme emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to policy success, advocating that the well-being of teachers must be central to the implementation. Participants suggested that ensuring teacher welfare and eliminating unnecessary tasks is crucial for maintaining productivity and job satisfaction alongside instructional quality.

Participant 2 emphasized the importance of centering teacher well-being: “It would be focusing on teachers’ welfare so they could be productive.” Participant 11 suggested maintaining the instructional core of the policy while eliminating “unnecessary tasks to ensure the satisfaction of teachers.” These responses highlight the need for a more holistic approach that supports both instructional quality and teacher morale.

- *Evaluation Before Revision*

This theme reflects a cautious and data-driven approach to policy refinement. The participant advised against immediate changes, stressing the necessity of allowing the current scheme to operate for a defined period, followed by a thorough evaluation and data analysis before any recommendations for revision are made.

Participant 5 advised caution, stating, “No suggestions yet. Let us try this scheme first and evaluate after some time and analyze the data before having recommendations.” This reflects a data-driven perspective, emphasizing the importance of evidence-based policy refinement.

- *No Recommended Changes*

This theme represents the view that the current policy framework is functioning adequately in certain contexts or that stakeholders are satisfied with the status quo. These participants expressed no immediate need for revision, suggesting stability and general contentment with the current policy implementation.

Participants 4 and 14 expressed no immediate need for revision. Participant 4 simply stated, “None,” while Participant 14 added, “None so far. This is enough.” These responses suggest that in some contexts, the directive is functioning adequately or that stakeholders prefer to observe longer-term outcomes before proposing changes.

- *Affirmation of Guidelines and Monitoring Systems*

A significant finding is the widespread acknowledgment that specific institutional guidelines and monitoring systems are in place to ensure compliance with the 6-hour instructional policy. Participants detailed the use of class schedules, regular classroom observations, and attendance checks, reflecting structured oversight and institutional accountability.

Most participants confirmed the existence of specific guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. Participant 2 stated, “Yes, our school follows specific guidelines and monitoring systems,” while Participant 10 elaborated, “Class schedules are carefully designed to allocate exactly six hours of instructional time per day. School heads and department coordinators regularly conduct classroom observations, attendance checking, and time monitoring.” Participant 6 added, “Teachers must teach 6 hours every day beginning from 7:30 in the morning. Locator slip is ensured once the teacher plans to go out during his/her vacant time.” Participant 15 noted, “The usage of logbooks and the biometric system is evident. When it comes to guidelines, teachers follow the DepEd memorandum backing this rule.” The Master Teacher (Participant 16) also affirmed, “Yes.” These responses reflect structured oversight and institutional accountability.

- *Use of Biometrics and Attendance Systems*

This theme focuses on the specific tools used for monitoring, particularly the use of biometrics and attendance logs. A key tension is highlighted here: while the policy mandates a 6-hour instructional day, the automated timekeeping systems often remain set to traditional 8-hour schedules, forcing teachers to stay longer and creating inconsistencies between policy intent and operational monitoring.

Several participants referenced biometric systems and attendance logs as key tools for monitoring compliance. Participant 13 explained, “We’re still required to follow the time on biometrics, or else you will be marked absent or under time because it is already set to 4:30–5:00 pm out.” Participant 14 added, “We follow the 6-hour teaching policy, but we’re still asked to wait for 4:30–5:00 pm for biometrics, or we will be marked absent or missed.” These responses suggest that while the policy aims to limit instructional time to six hours, biometric systems may still reflect traditional 8-hour schedules, creating inconsistencies in monitoring.

- *Administrative Oversight and Policy Reference*

This theme confirms the presence of dedicated personnel and formal regulatory documents guiding the policy’s enforcement. Participants cited the involvement of Administrative Officers (AOs) in monitoring and referenced specific official directives (e.g., DM No. 291 s. 2008), which underscore a clear chain of administrative accountability and a formal regulatory basis for the implementation.

Participant 9 shared that “Our Administrative Officer (AO) is assigned to monitor and ensure that teachers are

following the guidelines,” indicating direct administrative involvement in enforcement. Participant 11 referenced a formal directive: “The DM No. 291 s. 2008,” which likely serves as a regulatory basis for implementation. Participant 1 added that “Teachers are expected to plan their day around this requirement, and those plans are often submitted in advance or reviewed periodically,” suggesting procedural alignment with policy expectations.

- *Uncertainty or Lack of Implementation*

This theme consists of participant responses that directly indicate that the policy's guidelines and monitoring systems are not yet applicable due to the policy not being fully implemented in their respective schools. It also highlights the previously mentioned discrepancies between formal guidelines and the current operational practice of biometric monitoring.

A few participants expressed uncertainty or noted that the policy is not yet fully implemented in their schools. Participant 8 stated, “Sorry, I can't answer this question since our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.” Participants 13 and 14 also highlighted discrepancies between policy and biometric monitoring, indicating a gap between formal guidelines and actual practice.

- *Affirmative Compliance with the 6-Hour Instructional Schedule*

This theme reflects a dominant finding: a strong institutional and personal commitment among teachers to adhere to the mandated 6-hour face-to-face instruction schedule. Participants affirmed compliance due to regulatory requirements, school policies, and a belief that the measure benefits both students and staff, often expressing a willingness to render extra hours for non-instructional tasks.

Most participants affirmed that teachers in their schools strive to comply with the 6-hour face-to-face instruction schedule. Participant 2 stated, “Teachers in our school strive to follow the 6-hour face-to-face instruction schedule as mandated by DepEd and school policies.” Participant 3 cited regulatory compliance: “Yes, because of the DepED order.” Participant 5 emphasized, “Yes, it's a must,” while Participant 6 added, “Yes, because it is for the welfare of the pupils and also of the teaching staff.” Participant 11 noted, “They are also instructed to have 6 hours full contact to their pupils and the remaining 2 hours is for their ancillary task.” Participant 15 confirmed, “All teachers in our station are obliged to follow this 6-hour face-to-face instruction... and they are willing to render extra hours to do their ancillary tasks.” These responses reflect a strong institutional commitment to policy adherence and instructional integrity.

- *Partial or Conditional Compliance Due to Contextual Factors*

This theme details the practical realities that temper strict adherence to the 6-hour schedule. Participants acknowledged that while compliance is generally the goal, real-world teaching factors, such as unpredictable events, student activities, or institutional responsibilities, necessitate

flexibility. This suggests that the policy is treated as a core guideline, but with necessary, context-driven exceptions.

Several participants acknowledged that while the policy is generally followed, there are exceptions due to practical constraints. Participant 1 explained, “Not every teacher... follows the 6-hour face-to-face instruction schedule to the letter... because teaching isn't always predictable.” Participant 10 provided a detailed account: “While the majority comply, there are instances when unavoidable factors such as class suspensions, student activities, school programs, or emergencies affect the continuity of the schedule.” They added that missed time is compensated through “make-up classes, modular tasks, or extended learning activities.” The Master Teacher (Participant 16) noted, “Not always due to varying school contexts and responsibilities.” These responses suggest that flexibility is sometimes necessary to accommodate real-world teaching conditions.

- *Non-Compliance Due to Systemic or Procedural Issues*

This theme highlights specific institutional and systemic challenges that lead to non-adherence to the 6-hour instructional schedule. Factors cited include reduced teaching loads for some teachers, the procedural conflicts created by traditional biometric time-in/time-out requirements, and the need to conduct remedial instruction outside of scheduled hours.

Some participants reported inconsistencies in compliance due to institutional procedures or scheduling conflicts. Participant 9 stated, “Not all teachers strictly follow... especially those with a reduced teaching load due to the additional number of teachers.” Participant 13 noted, “Not really because... we still need to record our time in and out following the set of our biometrics.” Participant 14 added, “Some of us follow, but mostly no... they do the remedial for slow learners while waiting for our required time out.” These responses highlight the impact of biometric systems, staffing patterns, and remedial instruction on adherence to the policy.

- *Policy Not Yet Implemented*

This theme, recurring throughout the data, serves as an explicit acknowledgment that the 6-hour instructional policy is not yet operational in all contexts. This finding points to a staggered or transitional phase in the national policy rollout, where implementation status varies across different schools.

Participant 8 indicated that the policy is not yet in effect at their school: “Sorry, I cannot answer this question since our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.” This response reflects a transitional phase in policy rollout, where implementation may vary across institutions.

- *The Perceived Impacts of the Policy on Teachers' Wellbeing.*

- *Positive Impact on Time Management and Recovery*

Participants frequently noted that the 6-hour instructional policy provided necessary structure and

predictability, which translated directly into tangible benefits for personal time management and recovery. These accounts highlight the ability to dedicate focused time for instructional preparation while simultaneously creating space for family, personal matters, and essential physical rest, thereby supporting overall physical balance.

Some participants emphasized the benefits of having structured time for preparation and personal matters. Participant 6 stated, “We were given time to prepare the instructional materials... so I can have more time for myself, family, and personal matters.” Participant 13 noted, “It is really a great help because we are having more time to prepare for our next day’s classes.” Participant 11 simply said, “We have more time to ourselves.” Participant 10 also described how better time management practices such as taking breaks and staying hydrated have helped maintain physical balance. These responses suggest that the policy, when properly implemented, can support recovery and reduce physical strain.

- *Improved Emotional Well-Being and Reduced Stress*

A major finding across the data is the positive psychological shift reported by many participants, who experienced a significant reduction in stress and an improvement in overall mental health. The consensus suggests that the policy’s clear boundaries and dedicated instructional focus fostered a “stress-free” and “very relaxing” environment, allowing teachers to prioritize learners without the constant pressure of excessive administrative duties.

Many participants reported a positive shift in their mental and emotional well-being following the implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. Participant 1 shared, “No more stress; I’m focused on the learners and having more time with my family.” Participant 4 described the experience as “very relaxing,” while Participant 12 stated, “Stress-free.” Participant 13 noted, “Less stress and burnout,” and Participant 14 observed, “Improved mental health because we’re having more time to rest but still inside the classroom.” These responses suggest that the policy has contributed to a more balanced and less stressful work environment, allowing teachers to focus more effectively on their instructional roles.

- *Manageable Workload and Enhanced Focus*

Several accounts detail how the policy has improved emotional resilience by making the overall professional workload more manageable. By establishing a “clear distinction between instructional and non-instructional tasks,” participants felt less pressure from multitasking, which resulted in better time management, a stronger sense of accomplishment, and a positive influence on their professional satisfaction.

Several participants highlighted how the policy has helped them manage stress and improve their focus. Participant 6 stated, “Stress has become manageable,” and Participant 7 noted, “It has lessened the take-home paperwork.” Participant 10 provided a detailed reflection:

“The clear distinction between instructional and non-instructional tasks has lessened the pressure of multitasking... I have noticed improvements in my time management, work-life balance, and sense of accomplishment.” These responses indicate that clearer task boundaries and reduced administrative load have positively influenced teachers’ emotional resilience and professional satisfaction.

- *Mixed Emotional Outcomes and Adjustment Challenges*

While many reported positive emotional impacts, other participants shared a more complex experience, acknowledging both gains in fulfillment and discipline alongside persistent challenges like stress and exhaustion. These responses highlight the emotional complexity of adapting to the directive, where high expectations and limited rest time can sometimes offset the structural benefits.

Some participants acknowledged both benefits and challenges in their emotional well-being. Participant 2 shared, “There are days when I feel fulfilled and productive, but also days when I feel drained especially when support or rest is limited.” Participant 9, drawing from prior experience, stated, “Mentally and emotionally, it can be a bit stressful to adjust, but it also provides me with a sense of discipline and fulfillment.” Participant 15 reflected on emotional growth: “I became more patient with unbearable situations... though there are times that I feel frustration.” Participant 16 added, “Sustaining 6 hours of focused teaching daily can be exhausting especially with limited breaks and high expectations.” These responses highlight the emotional complexity of teaching under the directive, where gains in structure and discipline may be offset by persistent demands and limited recovery time.

- *Physical Fatigue and Energy Demands*

A consistent finding is that the requirement for six continuous hours of active instructional engagement imposes significant physical demands on teachers. Participants frequently cited the toll of standing, moving, and maintaining “voice endurance,” which often leads to feelings of physical exhaustion, despite the inherent fulfillment derived from teaching.

Several participants reported that the continuous six-hour teaching schedule can be physically demanding. Participant 1 shared, “Standing and moving around the classroom for nearly the entire day, without much downtime, can be physically draining.” Participant 5 described the experience as “tiring but fulfilling,” while Participant 9 noted, “The 6-hour policy can be physically tiring at times.” Participant 10 elaborated, “Teaching continuously for six hours requires a lot of energy, stamina, and voice endurance... which can sometimes lead to fatigue.” Participant 15 added, “I got used to it since I love teaching. However, there are instances that are energy draining.” These responses highlight the physical toll of sustained instructional engagement, especially on days with heavier teaching loads.

- *Mixed Effects and Adaptation*

Participants indicated that the policy's effect on their physical well-being is often multifaceted and contradictory. While the reduction in in-school hours may mitigate some physical exhaustion, the lack of a corresponding decrease in the overall workload means that the physical benefits are not universally experienced.

Some participants reported experiencing both positive and challenging outcomes. Participant 2 stated, "My physical well-being has been affected in both positive and challenging ways." Participant 16 echoed this duality: "This has helped reduce fatigue and physical exhaustion, but despite the reduced in-school hours, the workload has not really decreased." These responses reflect the complexity of the policy's impact, where reduced instructional hours may not always translate to reduced overall workload.

- *Reduced Stress and Improved Well-Being*

Some participants offered brief but firm confirmations that the policy has led to tangible improvements in their physical state, primarily attributing this benefit to a reduction in stress. This indicates that for some, the policy successfully created a less strenuous and more manageable work environment.

A few participants noted improvements in physical well-being due to reduced stress. Participant 3 stated, "Not stressed," and Participant 7 added, "Lessened the stress." These brief but affirming responses suggest that the policy may contribute to a more manageable and less physically taxing work environment.

Participant 12 responded with "None," indicating no perceived impact on physical well-being. Participant 4 noted, "I can do more worksheets," which may imply increased productivity but does not directly address physical health. Participant 14 shared, "We are not asked to do the face-to-face upon exceeding 6 hours, but we are required to stay," suggesting that while instructional time is capped, physical presence requirements may still affect well-being.

Participant 8 stated, "Sorry, I cannot answer this question since our school is not yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy." This response reflects a lack of direct experience with the policy's physical implications due to delayed implementation.

- *Positive Impact on Work-Life Balance*

The most frequently cited positive outcome of the policy is the marked improvement in work-life balance. Participants overwhelmingly affirmed that the policy resulted in greater time for family, reduced exhaustion, and enhanced motivation to return to school, indicating a healthier integration of professional and personal responsibilities.

Many participants reported that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy has led to improvements in their work-life balance. Participant 1 simply stated, "Yes," while Participants 3, 7, 12, and 16 echoed similar affirmations. Participant 4 elaborated, "Yes, more time with family," and Participant 11

added, "Yes. I have more time for my family." Participant 6 noted, "Yes, I'm not as exhausted as before," and Participant 13 shared, "Yes. I'm being more motivated to go to school since the implementation of that policy." These responses suggest that the policy has helped reduce fatigue, increase family time, and enhance motivation, contributing to a healthier balance between professional and personal responsibilities.

- *Conditional Benefits and Ongoing Challenges*

While acknowledging the structural improvements of the policy, several participants stressed that its effectiveness in improving work-life balance is conditional. They emphasized that the full realization of the benefits depends heavily on the provision of adequate institutional support, realistic class sizes, and protected planning time, without which teachers still feel compelled to extend their work hours.

Some participants acknowledged improvements but emphasized that the benefits are contingent upon adequate support and realistic workloads. Participant 2 explained, "The 6-hour policy is manageable, but only if schools and teachers are given enough support, manageable class sizes, and protected planning time. Without those, it puts pressure on teachers to work beyond official hours." Participant 10 provided a nuanced view: "Instructional time is now clearly set... I can focus solely on teaching, although there are still times when preparation or paperwork extends beyond regular hours; the policy has generally allowed me to maintain a healthier balance." These responses reflect that while the policy offers structural improvements, its effectiveness depends on implementation quality and support systems.

- *Persistent Workload Pressures*

Despite the policy's intent to create better work-life balance, a consistent barrier reported by participants is the ongoing pressure from non-instructional and administrative responsibilities. Workload spillovers, the need for nightly preparation, and time-in/time-out requirements due to biometrics continue to infringe upon personal time, preventing the complete realization of the policy's intended benefits.

Some participants reported that additional responsibilities continue to affect their work-life balance. Participant 9 stated, "Yes, because of the additional loads, I need to spend time preparing every night before facing my students." Participant 15 added, "Yes, in the sense that I do not have ample time to finish other tasks." Participant 14 noted, "More time for our family, but some go back to school for biometrics from 4:30 to 5:00 pm," indicating that procedural requirements may still interfere with personal time. These responses suggest that workload spillovers and administrative obligations remain barriers to fully realizing the policy's benefits.

- *No Perceived Change*

A small number of participants indicated that the policy has not yet caused any significant alteration in their emotional or mental state. These responses suggest that for some individuals, external factors or established coping

mechanisms may be mitigating the policy's intended effects on their well-being.

A few participants reported no noticeable change in their emotional well-being. Participant 5 stated, "Nothing's changed po," suggesting that the policy has not significantly altered their mental or emotional state. These responses may reflect individual coping styles or contextual factors that moderate the policy's impact.

Participant 8 responded, "Sorry, I cannot answer this question since our school is not yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy." This indicates that the emotional effects of the policy cannot be assessed in schools where implementation is still pending.

➤ *Extent of Influence of the Teaching Directive on Teachers' Satisfaction*

• *Positive Impact on Job Satisfaction Through Structure and Focus*

The policy's defined structure allows teachers to fully dedicate their energy to core teaching and student engagement, fostering a sense of fulfillment and encouraging more effective time management.

Many participants expressed that the 6-hour directive enhances job satisfaction by providing a clear framework for instructional time and allowing teachers to concentrate on core teaching responsibilities. Participant 1 noted, "Having a clear structure like a 6-hour teaching requirement can provide a sense of purpose and routine." Participant 10 elaborated, "It allows me to devote my full energy to actual teaching and student engagement... which gives me a sense of fulfillment and purpose." Participant 9 added, "It encourages me to manage my time more effectively and stay productive." These responses suggest that the directive supports professional clarity and instructional focus, which contributes to a more satisfying teaching experience.

• *Improved Work-Life Balance and Personal Time*

Several participants emphasized that the ability to leave school earlier due to the policy directly translates into improved job satisfaction by facilitating a healthier balance between professional duties and personal life. The policy empowers teachers to use their remaining hours for necessary preparation without needing to bring work home, thus allowing for more time with family and personal recovery.

Participants highlighted how the directive enables better time management and personal fulfillment. Participant 4 stated, "I can go home early so I can have more time to mingle with my family." Participant 12 shared, "The remaining 2 hrs. is for instructional materials preparation; I do not need to bring work to our house." Participant 14 added, "We can do more for our next-day classes," while Participant 11 emphasized, "6 hrs of contact with [Grade 1 pupils] is so manageable given their short time span." These responses reflect how the policy helps teachers maintain a healthier balance between work and personal life, which positively influences job satisfaction.

• *Enhanced Creativity and Motivation*

Some accounts suggest that the policy provides the necessary mental space and time for teachers to engage in professional development, creativity, and the completion of ancillary tasks. By reducing the burden of time-consuming obligations, the directive appears to foster a sense of autonomy and professional growth, which in turn boosts motivation.

Some participants reported increased motivation and creativity due to the directive. Participant 6 stated, "We were given more time for our ancillary activities... I have plenty of time to be more progressive and creative." Participant 13 affirmed, "I am more motivated," and Participant 7 noted, "I can comply [with] another task in school." These responses suggest that the policy fosters a sense of autonomy and professional growth.

• *Increased Productivity and Fulfillment Through Structured Instructional Time*

Participants frequently noted a direct correlation between the policy's defined instructional boundaries and an increase in both productivity and professional fulfillment. The clear framework sets explicit expectations for teaching time, helping teachers maximize their time with students and improving their efficiency and sense of purpose in their role.

Many participants reported that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy has positively influenced their productivity and sense of fulfillment. Participant 1 noted, "The structure of the policy can make me feel more productive because it sets clear expectations for teaching time." Participant 3 affirmed, "Yes – there is time management on my part," while Participant 4 shared, "I am more productive because it lessens our job in school so we can make our IM at home." Participant 6 stated, "I become more productive because I have more time to improve myself," and Participant 7 added, "Yes because I can prepare the material needed for the next day." Participant 10 provided a comprehensive reflection: "Having a clear structure helps me maximize time with my students... This sense of focus gives me fulfillment... the clearer framework makes my role more manageable and purposeful." These responses suggest that the policy's defined instructional boundaries enhance efficiency and professional satisfaction.

• *Supportive Leadership and Collegial Environment*

For several participants, the experience of job satisfaction under the policy is significantly enhanced by the presence of institutional support. The backing of the administration, including the school head, and a collaborative peer environment are cited as crucial factors that motivate teachers to accomplish their tasks and feel supported in the implementation of the new directive.

Some participants emphasized the role of administrative and peer support in enhancing their experience under the policy. Participant 5 stated, "Our admin provides us support for the materials used in the teaching-learning process," and Participant 9 noted, "With the support of my colleagues, I feel motivated to accomplish my tasks and follow the policy."

Participant 11 added, “Even the admin, including the school head, supports these 6 hours of work.” These responses reflect that institutional backing and collaborative culture contribute significantly to teachers’ sense of support and motivation.

Several participants expressed that their experience under the policy is nuanced, with both benefits and limitations. Participant 2 shared, “The 6-hour teaching directive has had both positive and negative effects on my job satisfaction.” Participant 13 stated, “Partly yes... but also no because we are still requiring waiting for the 4:30–5:00 pm time out.” The Master Teacher (Participant 16) added, “I appreciate the idea behind it, but in reality, the workload outside the classroom extends beyond the official hour.” These responses highlight that while the policy offers structural improvements, its practical implementation may not fully align with its intended benefits.

- *Enhanced Motivation Through Structure and Focus*

The policy acts as a powerful source of motivation for many teachers by establishing a clear structure and sense of purpose. Participants noted that having set instructional hours encourages them to give their best, plan lessons more effectively, and approach their work feeling inspired and happy.

Many participants reported that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy positively influences their motivation by providing a clear framework for teaching. Participant 1 stated, “Knowing I have a set number of hours to focus on teaching can give me a sense of structure and purpose.” Participant 5 affirmed, “I am motivated in teaching because the time allotment is enough,” while Participant 6 shared, “I go to school every morning not feeling exhausted but feeling motivated; I work happy and inspired.” Participant 10 elaborated, “It motivates me to give my best during instructional time... With clearer boundaries, I can plan my lessons more effectively and stay focused.” These responses suggest that the policy fosters a sense of direction and professional clarity, which enhances instructional engagement.

- *Improved Performance Through Time Management and Preparation*

Participants frequently linked the policy's time management benefits to tangible improvements in their professional performance. The added time for preparation allows teachers to create more functional instructional materials and focus intently on students, leading to a self-perception as a “more effective teacher.”

Several participants highlighted that the policy enables better lesson planning and instructional delivery. Participant 4 noted, “I can make my IMs more functional and very motivational,” and Participant 13 stated, “My performance improved because I was given more time to prepare for the next lesson.” Participant 14 added, “Improved and more effective teacher,” while Participant 12 emphasized, “Focus on children because of minimal time.” These responses reflect that the policy supports performance by allowing

teachers to concentrate on core teaching tasks and prepare more effectively.

- *Conditional Impact Based on Implementation and Support*

Participants recognized that the policy's positive impact on motivation and performance is highly contingent upon its consistent implementation and the presence of holistic institutional support. Inconsistent application and a lack of support systems for rest and development risk undermining the policy's ability to create sustainable motivation and high performance.

Some participants acknowledged that the policy's impact on motivation and performance depends on how well it is implemented and supported. Participant 2 explained, “The policy pushes me to perform well... However, for motivation and performance to be sustainable, there needs to be proper support, a manageable workload, and time for rest and development. Participant 7 noted, “It was good if it's fully implemented in our school,” indicating that inconsistent application may limit its benefits. These responses underscore the importance of institutional support and policy fidelity.

- *Lack of Support and Implementation Gaps*

A significant barrier to teacher motivation and satisfaction is the perceived lack of administrative support and the presence of procedural inconsistencies. Participants pointed to the conflict between the policy and administrative officers enforcing traditional time-out requirements, suggesting that these leadership and scheduling gaps actively undermine the policy's intended positive effects.

A few participants reported feeling unsupported or dissatisfied due to procedural inconsistencies or lack of administrative alignment. Participant 14 stated, “Not really because our principal is not doing so. Our AO are the ones requiring us to go out at 4:30–5:00 pm because it was the time set for timeout.” Participant 15 expressed, “No, I do not feel like being supported; teachers must be given enough time to prepare their instructional materials.” These responses suggest that gaps in leadership and scheduling practices can undermine the policy's effectiveness and impact on teacher wellbeing. Participant 8 responded, “Sorry, I cannot answer this question since our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.” This indicates that the policy's effects cannot be assessed in schools where implementation is still pending.

- *Challenges Due to Extended Responsibilities*

Despite the policy streamlining instructional time, participants expressed concern that the presence of non-instructional tasks and the need to adjust teaching strategies for varying learning needs still create excessive workload demands. These extended responsibilities consume time and energy beyond the prescribed hours, ultimately acting as a constraint on overall motivation and performance.

A few participants expressed concerns about workload beyond instructional hours. Participant 15 stated, “It does not have any impact on my motivation to teach... However...

other tasks that will consume a lot of time, exceeding eight hours... become taxing physically and mentally.” Participant 16 added, “I must adjust my teaching strategies to cater to pupils with varying learning needs... which require more time and energy.” These responses suggest that while the policy may streamline instructional time, additional responsibilities can still affect overall motivation and performance.

- *Mixed or Conditional Satisfaction*

The experience of job satisfaction is reported as being complex and influenced by both policy design and persistent workplace realities. Participants noted that while the directive offers positive structural changes, the physical and mental toll of a continuous teaching load, combined with the required support systems, means that overall satisfaction remains a balance of benefits and challenges.

A few participants acknowledged both benefits and challenges. Participant 2 shared, “The 6-hour teaching directive does affect my job satisfaction in both positive and challenging ways.” Participant 10 also noted that while the policy improves focus and organization, “continuous teaching load can be physically and mentally exhausting.” These responses reflect that satisfaction is influenced not only by policy design but also by workload intensity and support systems.

- *Perceived Limitations and Increased Difficulty*

A specific concern was raised regarding the compression of essential non-instructional time, particularly preparation time. For teachers managing multiple subjects, the limited two hours allocated for preparation is perceived as insufficient, which inadvertently increases the job's difficulty and negatively impacts job satisfaction.

Participant 15 expressed concern about the adequacy of preparation time: “The teaching job becomes more difficult... the preparation time is just two hours, which is insufficient when you have three or more subject preparations.” This highlights that for teachers with multiple subject loads, the directive may inadvertently compress essential planning time, affecting satisfaction.

- *No Impact or Uncertainty*

This theme captures the responses of participants who either reported no noticeable change in their job satisfaction, could not assess the impact due to lack of implementation, or noted that despite the directive, they frequently remain in school for extended hours, suggesting a lack of perceived benefit.

Participant 3 responded, “No,” indicating no perceived effect on job satisfaction. Participant 8 stated, “Sorry, I cannot answer this question since our school is not yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.” Participant 16 noted, “I often still stay,” implying that despite the directive, extended hours may still be necessary, which could influence overall satisfaction.

- *General Positive Sentiment*

Participants provided a general overview of the policy's positive effects, characterizing it as beneficial in “many ways” by instilling professional consistency and alignment. This sentiment reflects a broad sense of encouragement that the policy helps them focus on the core mission of their pupils' essential needs.

Participant 3 responded, “Positive in many ways,” and Participant 9 shared, “The policy challenges me to adjust, but it also pushes me to stay consistent, which improves both my motivation and performance.” Participant 11 noted, “It motivates me to give only the essential needs of my pupils.” These responses reflect a general sense of encouragement and professional alignment with the policy's goals.

➤ *The Challenges Encountered by Teachers in their Compliance with the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement.*

- *Sustained Instructional Demands and Physical Exhaustion*

Participants frequently identified the intensity and unbroken nature of the six-hour instructional block as a significant challenge. The demand to be “fully present and engaged” for such a stretch without sufficient recovery time leads to physical and mental exhaustion, suggesting that the uninterrupted teaching load may compromise both teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness.

Many participants reported that the 6-hour directive significantly enhances their job satisfaction by providing a crucial sense of clarity, purpose, and professional routine. The policy's defined structure allows teachers to fully dedicate their energy to core teaching and student engagement, fostering a sense of fulfillment and encouraging more effective time management. Several participants highlighted the intensity of maintaining full engagement for six consecutive hours. Participant 1 stated, “Managing the intensity of being fully present and engaged for that entire stretch of time” is a major challenge. Participant 10 echoed this, noting that “Managing consecutive teaching loads without enough breaks... can be physically and mentally exhausting.” These responses suggest that the uninterrupted nature of the instructional block may lead to fatigue and reduced instructional effectiveness, especially on days with heavy teaching loads.

- *Administrative Overload and Non-Teaching Responsibilities*

A pervasive difficulty cited by teachers is the burden of non-instructional tasks that frequently “spill over” and interfere with their teaching hours. This persistent administrative overload, including paperwork and excessive reporting, acts as a primary barrier to successful compliance with the 6-hour instructional focus and necessitates clearer boundaries and dedicated support systems.

A recurring challenge involves the spillover of non-instructional tasks into teaching hours. Participant 10 explained, “Paperwork, reports, and administrative responsibilities often spill over beyond the teaching hours.”

Participant 16 identified “excessive non-teaching tasks” as a key barrier. Participant 2 emphasized that the policy’s success depends on “recognition of the teacher’s full workload both inside and outside the classroom.” These responses reflect the need for clearer boundaries and support systems to manage ancillary duties without compromising instructional time.

- *Scheduling Conflicts and Time Allocation Issues*

Participants reported significant difficulties arising from rigid timetables and the scarcity of preparation time. Concerns over “limited or not enough” hours to cover subjects and effectively prepare lessons suggest that inflexible scheduling hinders compliance and may compromise the quality of instruction.

Participants also cited difficulties related to scheduling and time management. Participant 5 stated, “Sometimes an hour is limited or not enough,” while Participant 11 noted the challenge of “following the time allotted for each subject.” Participant 7 added, “To be ready to face the children and [ensure] the effectiveness of my lesson.” These responses suggest that rigid scheduling and limited preparation time can hinder instructional quality and compliance.

- *Biometric Timekeeping and Procedural Constraints*

A major procedural conflict emerged concerning the school’s biometric timekeeping systems. These systems, often set to reflect traditional 8-hour schedules, force teachers to wait for a prescribed “time out,” effectively undermining the policy’s intent to limit time spent in school and leading to participant frustration.

Some participants expressed frustration with biometric systems that conflict with the 6-hour directive. Participant 13 stated, “We are still required to wait for 4:30–5:00 pm for timeout,” and Participant 14 added, “The struggle of waiting for our time out because it is set on our biometrics.” These responses indicate that procedural requirements may undermine the policy’s intent by extending teachers’ presence beyond instructional hours.

- *Resource Limitations and Instructional Preparation*

Participants identified a lack of adequate learning resources and insufficient time for instructional preparation as critical constraints on their ability to teach effectively within the 6-hour framework. This highlights the need for sustained investment in materials and planning time to fully support the directive’s goals.

Participant 16 identified “inadequate learning resources” and “inadequate time for instructional preparation” as significant challenges. Participant 15 also noted “the preparation time” as a constraint. These responses highlight the need for sufficient materials and planning time to support effective teaching within the 6-hour framework.

- *Behavioral and Compliance Issues*

Some concerns related to compliance focused on staff punctuality and adherence to the schedule. Additionally, the effective distribution of teaching loads emerged as a factor

influencing an individual teacher’s ability to fully meet the 6-hour requirement.

Participant 4 humorously pointed out, “The problem was late teachers, early exit,” suggesting that punctuality and adherence to the schedule may vary among staff. Participant 9 offered a practical observation: “Having only 5 teaching loads is enough to comply,” implying that load distribution plays a role in meeting the directive.

- *No Reported Challenges*

A small but significant number of participants reported no perceived challenges in complying with the 6-hour instructional policy, suggesting that implementation is functioning effectively or that successful individual adaptations have been made in certain school contexts.

Participants 3, 6, and 12 responded with “No” or “None,” indicating that they do not currently face difficulties in complying with the policy. These responses may reflect effective implementation or individual adaptability.

- *Challenges in Class Scheduling and Instructional Continuity*

Participants frequently reported difficulties related to the inflexibility of class schedules, particularly the strain of continuous, back-to-back teaching loads. This rigidity, compounded by issues like limited classrooms and overlapping subject loads, compromises instructional quality and teacher well-being by removing necessary time for breaks, planning, and record-keeping.

Several participants identified issues with class scheduling, particularly the strain caused by consecutive teaching loads and limited flexibility. Participant 1 noted, “The schedule can become so packed with back-to-back classes that there’s little to no time left for things like updating records, lesson planning, or even just taking a breath.” Participant 9 added, “Scheduling of straight teaching loads... can be exhausting for teachers.” Participant 10 elaborated, “Scheduling becomes challenging when there are school activities, limited classrooms, or overlapping subject loads, which can disrupt the continuity of the 6-hour instruction.” These responses suggest that rigid or overloaded schedules compromise instructional quality and teacher well-being.

- *Administrative and Documentation Burden*

The requirement for extensive documentation, reports, and administrative tasks was frequently reported as a source of additional workload that extends beyond the designated teaching hours. This non-teaching burden reflects a significant gap between the policy’s intent and operational practice, as these responsibilities interfere with the intended instructional focus.

Participants also reported that documentation and administrative tasks often extend beyond the designated instructional hours, creating additional workload. Participant 10 explained, “Documentation and administrative requirements... tend to extend beyond teaching hours... responsibilities sometimes overlap.” Participant 15 stated,

“Yes, the overloading of tasks for teachers,” and Participant 2 emphasized that “Teachers are often assigned additional responsibilities such as committees, school events, or tasks unrelated to teaching.” These responses reflect a disconnect between policy intent and operational practice, where non-teaching duties interfere with instructional focus.

- *Subject-Specific and Role-Based Constraints*

One participant suggested that the challenges encountered may not be uniform but are more acutely experienced by “subject teachers.” This highlights the need for policymakers to consider the unique scheduling, preparation, and workload requirements of departmentalized instruction when implementing or refining the policy.

Participant 14 pointed out that issues are more pronounced “for subject teachers,” suggesting that departmentalized instruction may present unique scheduling and workload challenges. This highlights the need for differentiated policy application based on teaching assignments and grade levels.

- *No Reported Issues*

A substantial number of participants across various school contexts reported no current issues related to scheduling or administrative tasks, indicating that in these specific settings, the policy may be functioning smoothly or that previous difficulties have been successfully mitigated.

Several participants indicated that they do not currently experience challenges related to scheduling or administrative tasks. Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 16 responded with “No,” “None,” or “None so far.” Participant 13 stated, “Not anymore,” implying that previous issues may have been resolved. These responses suggest that in some school contexts, the policy is functioning smoothly or that mitigating strategies have been successfully implemented.

- *Insufficient Instructional Resources and Materials*

A dominant challenge identified across the schools is the chronic shortage of necessary teaching materials, instructional support, and classroom resources. Participants noted the lack of adequate textbooks, specialized equipment (like TLE and sports equipment), and general supplies, which are crucial for effective teaching and learning within the policy's framework.

Participant 2 cited “adequate teaching resources and materials,” while Participant 7 emphasized the need “to provide teaching materials needed by the learner.” Participant 12 noted “insufficient source of materials,” and Participant 15 listed “TLE and sports equipment, facilities, and textbooks.” Participant 16 also identified “lack of resources and instructional support.” These responses highlight the need for sustained investment in instructional tools to support effective teaching and learning.

- *Limited Support for Non-Instructional Tasks and Administrative Load*

Participants highlighted a significant operational gap between the policy's instructional focus and the lack of

clerical support for heavy administrative duties. The lack of streamlined reporting systems and clerical assistance forces teachers to shoulder excessive documentation, directly hindering policy effectiveness and consuming time that should be dedicated to instruction or rest.

Several participants expressed that teachers are burdened with documentation and administrative responsibilities that extend beyond instructional hours. Participant 10 explained, “Teachers are still burdened with heavy documentation, reports, and other administrative requirements... Additional support such as reduced paperwork, streamlined reporting systems, more clerical assistance... would help.” Participant 1 noted a gap between policy and practice, stating, “There’s not always enough follow-through in terms of practical support like scheduling assistance... or clear communication channels.” These responses suggest that operational inefficiencies and lack of clerical support hinder policy effectiveness.

- *Need for Clearer Policy Enforcement and Implementation*

A recurring recommendation from participants is the call for stronger, clearer, and more consistent enforcement of the 6-hour directive. The need for “strict implementation” and standardized monitoring suggests that inconsistent application and insufficient accountability mechanisms are currently undermining uniform compliance across schools.

Participants also called for stronger and more consistent enforcement of the 6-hour directive. Participant 13 recommended “a clearer and stricter implementation of the rule,” while Participant 14 echoed, “Strict implementation of this policy.” Participant 16 identified “policy enforcement” as a key area of concern. These responses reflect a need for standardized monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure uniform compliance across schools.

- *Teacher Wellbeing and Break Intervals*

Participants recognized the importance of integrating teacher wellness strategies into the instructional framework. Suggestions included providing specific mental health resources and incorporating structured rest intervals, indicating a need to protect teacher stamina and ensure optimal mental health during continuous instructional engagement.

Participant 9 raised a concern about teacher fatigue, suggesting, “After teaching for 3 hours, teachers should be given a 1-hour break before continuing... This will help them return to the classroom more effective and efficient.” Participant 1 also mentioned the absence of “mental health resources.” These responses underscore the importance of integrating wellness strategies and recovery time into the instructional framework.

- *Class Size and Workforce Distribution*

Participants identified overcrowded classrooms and overall staffing shortages as key limiting factors that contribute to operational strain and teacher workload. The call for “more workforce” suggests that inadequate staffing

directly compromises instructional quality and the policy's effectiveness.

Participant 11 identified “class size” as a limiting factor, implying that overcrowded classrooms may affect instructional quality and teacher workload. Participant 15 also called for “more workforce,” suggesting that staffing shortages contribute to operational strain and reduced support.

- *Professional Development and Capacity Building*

One participant suggested that targeted “capacity trainings for teachers” are a necessary form of support. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development for sustaining instructional effectiveness and facilitating the adaptation required by policy changes.

Participant 15 included “capacity trainings for teachers” among the needed supports, indicating that ongoing professional development is essential for sustaining instructional effectiveness and adapting to policy changes.

- *No Reported Gaps or Uncertainty*

These responses represent contexts where participants found the existing support systems adequate or expressed satisfaction with current policy implementation, contrasting with the reported systemic challenges in other schools.

Participants 3 and 6 responded with “No” and “None so far,” indicating satisfaction with current support levels or a lack of perceived deficiencies. Participant 4 offered a behavioral observation rather than a systemic recommendation, and Participant 8 noted that the policy is not yet implemented in their school.

As reflected in the responses, the problems identified by the participants are substantially connected to Statement of Problem No. 4, which focuses on the challenges encountered by teachers and the school in their compliance with the six-hour instructional engagement. The concerns raised by the respondents highlight the prevailing issues affecting the faithful implementation of the policy, including factors that constrain instructional time, workload management, and administrative demands. These findings provide empirical support for the investigation of SOP No. 4, offering a deeper understanding of the contextual and operational barriers that hinder full compliance and emphasizing the need for continuous monitoring and policy refinement.

➤ *Policy Recommendations to Optimize Teachers' Wellbeing Through the Implementation of the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement*

- *Flexible Scheduling and Break Integration*

A strong recommendation from participants is the need to move away from rigid time blocks toward an adaptive, flexible approach to scheduling the 6-hour instructional time. This approach should explicitly integrate breaks for “mental and physical rest,” allowing for variations that accommodate different teaching styles, subjects, and the essential needs of teacher well-being.

Several participants recommended introducing flexibility in how the 6-hour instructional time is distributed throughout the day. Participant 2 suggested, “Allow some flexibility... to accommodate different teaching styles, subjects, and student needs, including breaks for mental and physical rest.” Participant 9 echoed this, stating, “Provide teachers with adequate breaks in between classes... to rest, recover, and regain energy.” These responses highlight the need for adaptive scheduling that supports both instructional effectiveness and teacher well-being.

- *Clearer Guidelines and Policy Enforcement*

Participants frequently called for clearer, more stringent, and consistently monitored policy implementation. The recommendations include strong “strict implementation,” detailed guidelines for balancing instructional and non-instructional tasks, and accountability mechanisms like orientation for principals and monitoring through teacher feedback.

Participants emphasized the importance of consistent and transparent implementation. Participant 10 proposed “clearer guidelines on balancing instructional and non-instructional tasks,” while Participant 13 called for “a clearer and stricter implementation of the rule.” Participant 14 added, “Orientation to principals... and strict implementation of this policy.” Master Participant 16 recommended, “Monitor the implementation of the policy through teacher’s feedback.” These responses reflect a demand for stronger leadership accountability and standardized enforcement across schools.

- *Monitoring and Attendance Accountability*

Recommendations focused on strengthening administrative oversight, specifically by monitoring teacher attendance and ensuring compliance with the prescribed 6-hour policy. These suggestions reflect a perceived gap in procedural enforcement that currently undermines the policy's integrity.

Some participants focused on attendance compliance and administrative oversight. Participant 4 stated, “The school needs to monitor the teacher’s attendance, especially those teachers who came late and not render the 6 hrs. policy.” Participant 11 simply noted, “Monitoring of the administration.” These responses suggest that procedural gaps in attendance tracking may undermine the policy’s integrity.

- *Support for Instructional Preparation and Reduced Workload*

Participants strongly advocated for measures that actively protect and increase the time dedicated to lesson planning and preparation. Recommendations centered on providing “additional time allotment,” reducing the overall workload, and adjusting schedules to prevent consecutive heavy teaching loads, thereby ensuring teachers have the necessary capacity for effective instruction.

Participants highlighted the need for more time and resources dedicated to lesson planning and instructional support. Participant 5 recommended “additional time

allotment,” while Participant 15 advocated for “more time for preparation and less workload for teachers.” Participant 10 also emphasized the need to “adjust schedules to prevent consecutive heavy teaching loads and ensure enough time for rest and preparation.” These responses underscore the importance of balancing teaching demands with adequate preparation time.

- *Administrative Support and Documentation Efficiency*

A key recommendation for optimizing well-being is the necessity of reducing administrative tasks that interfere with instructional time. Suggestions included “streamlining documentation,” reducing repetitive reporting, and providing “additional support staff or clerical assistance” to protect the teachers’ focus and time.

Reducing administrative burden was a key theme. Participant 10 suggested “streamlining documentation and reducing repetitive reporting,” and called for “additional support staff or clerical assistance.” These responses reflect the need to protect instructional time by minimizing non-teaching responsibilities.

- *Teacher-Centered Feedback and Digital Integration*

Participants advocated for a more participatory and modernized approach to policy development. Suggestions included actively “listening more closely” to teacher and student feedback and leveraging “digital tools” to enhance efficiency, promoting policies that are both reflective of stakeholder needs and technologically assisted.

Participant 1 emphasized the importance of listening to stakeholders: “Start by listening more closely to the people it affects the most: students and teachers.” Participant 16 recommended, “Provide digital tools,” suggesting that technology can enhance efficiency and support policy implementation. These responses advocate participatory policy development and modernized systems.

- *Specialized Instructional Focus*

One recommendation focused on the specific needs of primary school teachers, suggesting that differentiated instructional strategies, such as focusing on non-readers, may be necessary for early-grade educators to effectively manage their specialized instructional load.

Participant 7 offered a role-specific suggestion: “As a primary teacher, focus on the nonreader all day,” indicating that differentiated instructional strategies may be needed for early-grade educators.

- *Compensation and Incentives*

A proposal was made for “OT pay,” suggesting that financial compensation may be necessary or warranted for duties that extend beyond the prescribed hours or for the policy-related adjustments expected of teachers.

Participant 3 proposed “OT pay,” suggesting that additional compensation may be warranted for extended duties or policy-related adjustments.

Participant 6 stated, “I’m happy as it is,” indicating satisfaction with the current policy. Participant 12 responded with “now,” which lacks clarity. Participant 8 noted that the policy is not yet implemented in their school.

- *Reduction of Administrative Burden and Non-Teaching Tasks*

A recurring recommendation is the urgent need to significantly minimize non-instructional responsibilities that drain teachers’ planning time and mental energy. Recommendations include “cutting down on unnecessary administrative tasks” and providing clerical support to ensure the protection of instructional hours.

A dominant theme across responses is the need to minimize non-instructional responsibilities that interfere with teaching and planning time. Participant 1 emphasized, “Cutting down on unnecessary administrative tasks, meetings, and paperwork that eat into both planning time and mental space.” Participant 10 recommended “streamlining documentation and reporting requirements” and “providing clerical or administrative support.” Participant 16 also suggested to “reduce non-teaching tasks.” These responses reflect a strong call for operational efficiency and protection of instructional time.

- *Mental Health and Wellness Support*

Participants advocated for the integration of specific programs to bolster emotional and psychological safety within the school. Recommendations include providing “Mental Health and Wellness Support,” organizing stress management training, and creating regular forums for dialogue to proactively address teacher concerns and burnout.

Several participants advocated for initiatives that promote emotional well-being. Participant 2 proposed “Mental Health and Wellness Support,” while Participant 10 recommended “wellness programs, professional development on stress management, and regular dialogues where teachers’ concerns are heard.” Participant 3 offered a lighter suggestion: “Happy hours,” which may imply informal social support or morale-boosting activities. These responses highlighted the importance of psychological safety and community-building within the school environment.

- *Fair Task Distribution and Role Alignment*

Recommendations focused on ensuring an equitable and strategically aligned workload for teachers. This included proposals for “proper distribution and assignments of tasks,” clear organizational assignments for both teaching and non-teaching staff, and aligning subject assignments with a teacher’s specific expertise.

Participants stressed the need for equitable workload allocation and role clarity. Participant 13 called for “proper distribution and assignments of tasks to teachers,” and Participant 14 emphasized “organized assignments to teachers and non-teaching staff.” Participant 16 added, “Assigned subjects aligned with the teacher’s expertise.” These responses suggested that strategic task alignment can reduce stress and improve job satisfaction.

- *Policy Enforcement and Implementation Consistency*

Participants called for stronger accountability mechanisms to address inconsistencies in the policy's application. Suggestions focused on being "stricter with attendance" and clearly enforcing the "6-hour cap" to ensure uniform compliance across the school environment. Some participants pointed to gaps in policy enforcement. Participant 13 recommended "a clearer and stricter implementation of the policy," while Participant 4 stated, "Be stricter with attendance." Participant 16 also emphasized the need to "Enforce 6-hour cap." These responses reflect concerns about inconsistent application and the need for stronger accountability mechanisms.

- *Instructional Support and Resource Provision*

Recommendations emphasized the need for both pedagogical and material support to enhance teacher effectiveness under the new policy. This includes providing targeted support for student learning processes (e.g., reading support), ensuring sufficient instructional resources, and offering seminars to simplify the teaching process.

Participant 7 suggested, "Support the reading process of the learners," indicating that targeted instructional support can enhance teacher effectiveness. Participant 10 also called for "sufficient instructional resources," and Participant 5 proposed "seminars to support and cater to the teaching process made easy." These responses highlight the value of pedagogical support and professional development.

- *Work-Life Balance and Time Management*

Participants universally followed measures that actively promote and protect work-life balance. Recommendations included consciously reducing school activities that add to the workload, encouraging time for professional reflection, and adopting a clear administrative posture that prioritizes teachers' personal time to reduce burnout.

Participant 11 succinctly stated, "Promote work-life balance," while Participant 9 recommended giving teachers "time to reflect and assess whether a project or policy truly supports their work." Participant 15 added, "Lessen school activities that add more workload to teachers." These responses advocate thoughtful scheduling and prioritization to protect teachers' personal time and reduce burnout.

- *Compensation and Incentives*

A proposal for a "salary increase" was suggested, directly linking financial recognition to teacher well-being and professional respect, with the goal of boosting morale and engagement. Participant 6 proposed a "salary increase," reflecting the belief that financial recognition is a key component of well-being and professional respect.

- *No Suggested Changes or Policy Not Yet Implemented*

These responses represent the contexts where participants either perceived no need for policy revisions or were unable to provide meaningful input because the policy had not yet been implemented in their respective schools. Participant 12 responded with "none," indicating no

perceived need for change. Participant 8 noted, "Sorry, I can't answer this question since our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy," suggesting that the impact on well-being cannot yet be assessed in their context.

- *Flexible Scheduling and Needs-Based Implementation*

A dominant recommendation for policy revision is the adoption of a "more flexible, needs-based approach" to scheduling the 6-hour instructional time. This proposed model would shift away from rigid time blocks, prioritizing learning outcomes and well-being by incorporating structured intervals for rest, lesson planning, and consultation.

A strong theme among respondents is the call for a more adaptable and context-sensitive approach to instructional time. Participant 1 recommended "a more flexible, needs-based approach that prioritizes both learning outcomes and well-being." Participant 9 proposed "structured intervals for rest, lesson planning, and consultation," while Participant 10 suggested "allocating part of the 6 hours for meaningful student engagement and a portion for lesson preparation." Participant 16 also advocated for a "flexible teaching load." These responses reflect a desire to shift from rigid time blocks to dynamic scheduling that supports both instructional quality and teacher well-being.

- *Incorporation of Breaks and Rest Periods*

Participants unanimously emphasized the necessity of embedding scheduled rest and recovery periods into the instructional day. The purpose of these built-in breaks is explicitly to "reduce fatigue" and improve the quality of instruction by helping teachers and students maintain focus and stamina.

Several participants emphasized the importance of integrating rest into the instructional day. Participant 2 recommended "scheduled short breaks... to help maintain student and teacher focus and reduce physical and mental fatigue." Participant 9 echoed this by suggesting built-in breaks to "reduce fatigue and improve the quality of instruction." These responses highlight the need to protect teacher stamina and mental health through intentional downtime.

- *Balancing Instructional and Non-Instructional Tasks*

Policy revisions were strongly recommended to address the burden of non-teaching responsibilities, which currently interfere with the instructional focus. Proposals included issuing "clearer guidelines to reduce redundant paperwork" and delegating ancillary duties to administrative staff to protect the mandated instructional time.

Participants expressed concern about the burden of non-teaching responsibilities. Participant 10 proposed "clearer guidelines to reduce redundant paperwork and the provision of support staff," while Participant 11 recommended to "reduce administrative tasks not related to pupil's progress." Participant 15 emphasized that "ancillary tasks should be limited within mandated hours... and some tasks can be delegated to admin staff." These responses suggested that

policy revisions should include mechanisms to streamline documentation and redistribute non-teaching duties.

- *Subject-Specific Adjustments and Curriculum Load*

Recommendations highlighted the need for curriculum and subject load adjustments, particularly for primary-grade educators. Suggestions focused on allowing "more time in each subject" and decreasing the number of subjects taught, indicating concerns about instructional depth and the manageability of the curriculum pacing.

Participants also called for changes in subject allocation and curriculum demands. Participant 5 suggested "more time in each subject and fewer MELCs," while Participants 12, 13, and 14 advocated for "1 hour per subject." Participant 7 recommended to "decrease the subject area for primary." These responses reflect concerns about instructional depth and pacing, particularly in early-grade education.

- *Incentives and Compensation*

One participant suggested a salary increase, reflecting the view that financial incentives are a necessary component to boost morale and engagement in relation to the demands of the teaching directive. Participant 4 proposed a salary increase: "Para mas sipagin kami," suggesting that financial incentives could boost morale and motivation. This response underscores the link between compensation and teacher engagement.

- *Monitoring and Policy Continuity*

Recommendations emphasized the importance of ensuring the policy's long-term stability and equitable implementation. Participants expressed a desire for the policy to continue through future administrations and called for fair distribution of tasks and respect for teacher autonomy.

Participant 6 expressed hope that "this policy carries up to the next administration," indicating a desire for long-term stability. Participant 15 also emphasized fair distribution of tasks and teacher autonomy. These responses suggest that sustainability and equitable implementation are key to long-term success. Participant 3 supported "continued implementation," indicating satisfaction with the current directive. Participant 8 noted, "Sorry, I can't answer this question since our school isn't yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy," reflecting that feedback is limited in non-implementing contexts.

➤ *Proposed Policy Enhancement: Comprehensive Teacher Wellbeing and Support Framework (CTWSF) Under the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement Directive*

- *Rationale*

The findings of the study revealed that while the six-hour instructional engagement directive has provided structure, clarity, and accountability in teaching, several challenges persist that affect teachers' wellbeing and the overall effectiveness of policy implementation. These challenges include administrative overload, limited flexibility, inconsistent policy enforcement, procedural gaps, and insufficient wellness support. Teachers emphasized the

need for clearer guidelines, harmonized systems, and contextualized strategies that uphold teacher autonomy, provide adequate preparation time, and promote mental and physical wellness.

In response, this proposed policy enhancement, the Comprehensive Teacher Wellbeing and Support Framework (CTWSF), aims to strengthen the implementation of the six-hour instructional engagement directive by introducing teacher-centered, flexible, and supportive measures aligned with the Department of Education's goals for quality instruction and holistic teacher development. This framework builds on existing policies such as DepEd Memorandum No. 291, s. 2008 and DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2009, integrating reforms based on empirical findings and teacher feedback.

- *Objectives*

The proposed framework seeks to:

- Harmonize existing policies related to the six-hour instructional engagement and standardize their implementation across schools.
- Reduce teacher workload and administrative burdens to allow more focus on instruction and learner development.
- Institutionalize wellness and mental health programs that safeguard teachers' physical and psychological well-being.
- Introduce flexible, context-responsive scheduling models that enhance teacher autonomy and creativity.
- Strengthen participatory governance and capacity building among teachers and school leaders to ensure policy sustainability and responsiveness.

IV. DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets the findings of the study on the impact of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy on teachers' well-being. It connects the results to existing literature and situates them within the broader context of teacher workload and welfare. The discussion highlights how the policy affects teachers' professional and personal lives, including workload, instructional effectiveness, and overall well-being. It also examines both the positive and challenging dimensions of the policy, drawing comparisons with previous studies. Ultimately, this chapter provides insights for teachers, administrators, and policymakers, serving as a basis for the conclusions and recommendations that follow.

➤ *The Compliance of the School in Implementing the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement of Teachers*

- *Structured and Fully Implemented Instructional Engagement*

Several participants affirmed that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy is well-structured and fully implemented in their schools. They described the school day as thoughtfully planned, with clear instructional blocks and learner-centered activities that ensure teaching time is maximized. Teachers reportedly devote six full hours to actual teaching, including guided discussions, collaborative

tasks, differentiated group work, and performance-based outputs that actively involve learners. This structured approach reflects strong administrative support and leadership continuity, as noted by participants who credited both former and current school heads for ensuring alignment with national guidelines and maintaining consistent policy adherence across school years.

Participants further explained that this systematized daily schedule minimizes idle time and reduces the likelihood of instructional disruptions. Because routines are predictable and expectations are clearly communicated, teachers find it easier to focus on delivering lessons rather than managing time-related uncertainties. Some teachers even highlighted that the structured schedule provides them with a sense of direction throughout the day, helping them organize learning activities more efficiently and prepare learners for smoother transitions between subjects.

The master teacher confirmed that teachers complete their instructional duties within the prescribed hours and use the remaining two hours for ancillary tasks such as preparing lesson plans, checking outputs, crafting instructional materials, and completing required documentation. This indicates that the policy is not only implemented but also operationalized in a way that supports both teaching and preparation. Such structured compliance suggests that the policy has become embedded in the school's culture and daily routine, with teachers viewing it not merely as a mandate but as a functional guide that shapes their workflow.

Additionally, participants emphasized that the delineation of instructional versus non-instructional hours allows teachers to balance their workload more effectively. By allotting a specific time window for ancillary tasks, the policy helps prevent work overflow into personal hours, which is one of the common stressors in the teaching profession. This contributes to a more manageable workday and may indirectly support teacher well-being.

This implementation aligns with best practices in instructional time management, where clear scheduling and leadership support are essential. According to Gavin and McGrath-Champ (2024), structured work environments with defined expectations help reduce ambiguity and support teacher productivity. Their research emphasizes that clarity in instructional time policies contributes to teacher satisfaction, improves instructional quality, and helps ensure that professional work is carried out within designated timeframes. Participants' accounts mirror these findings, showing how transparent school-level implementation enhances teachers' confidence in meeting their responsibilities.

Moreover, the presence of monitoring systems such as classroom observations, daily time logs, and administrative walk-throughs reinforces accountability. These mechanisms ensure that instructional time is protected and that teachers consistently meet their professional duties without unnecessary extensions beyond regular working hours. Participants explained that such monitoring is not punitive but

supportive, enabling school heads to provide timely feedback, identify areas for improvement, and ensure compliance with DepEd policies. In several cases, teachers noted that constructive monitoring has led to more efficient lesson delivery and improved classroom management practices.

Overall, the accounts of the participants demonstrate that when instructional policies such as the 6-hour teaching requirement are clearly implemented, consistently monitored, and supported by school leadership, they become an integral part of school culture. This not only strengthens adherence but also enhances the quality of teaching and contributes to a more organized, productive, and sustainable work environment for teachers.

• *Partial Implementation and Ongoing Adjustments*

While some schools have fully implemented the policy, others are still in transition. Participants reported that biometric systems and legacy scheduling practices continue to reflect traditional 8-hour reporting models, creating inconsistencies in monitoring and compliance. In such settings, teachers may still be required to adhere to old timekeeping expectations even though instructional requirements have shifted, resulting in a disconnect between policy and practice. In some cases, leadership changes have delayed full implementation, as newly assigned school heads needed time to review existing structures, reorganize schedules, and cascade updated guidelines. Nevertheless, participants noted that despite these delays, new administrators are committed to enforcing the policy and are gradually aligning the school's systems with the DepEd mandate.

This transitional phase highlights the complexities of policy rollout in decentralized educational systems. Schools may interpret and apply directives differently based on their local contexts, available resources, and leadership styles. Variations in infrastructure, such as access to functional biometrics, reliable internet, or updated school forms, also influence how consistently the policy is applied. As noted by the OECD (2024), curriculum and policy flexibility must be accompanied by clear accountability mechanisms and sustained professional development to ensure uniform implementation across diverse settings. Without these supports, schools may struggle to translate central office directives into practical, operational routines.

Participants also noted that workload often extends beyond the prescribed six hours due to ancillary responsibilities such as preparing reports, attending meetings, addressing learner concerns, and implementing school programs. This suggests that while instructional time may be formally limited, actual practice may not fully align due to overlapping administrative tasks and expectations. Many teachers shared that they sometimes work beyond official hours to meet deadlines or accomplish tasks that could not be completed during the designated two-hour ancillary period. Such discrepancies point to the need for harmonized systems that integrate biometric tracking, administrative expectations, and instructional goals, ensuring that all three elements reflect the same policy intent.

These inconsistencies reinforce the importance of reviewing school-level routines to prevent overextension of teacher workload. Some participants emphasized that unless ancillary tasks are more strategically distributed or streamlined, teachers may continue to experience time pressure regardless of the formal policy. This further underscores the need for supportive administrative measures such as efficient task delegation, rationalized paperwork, and coordinated planning among grade levels and committees.

The gradual adjustment process reflects the importance of leadership training and stakeholder engagement in successful policy implementation. Schools undergoing transition benefit greatly from clear guidelines, orientation sessions, and open communication channels that allow teachers to raise concerns and seek clarification. Collaborative planning meetings, particularly between the school head, master teachers, and grade-level leaders, help ensure that policy changes are understood, contextualized, and embraced by all staff. Participants also emphasized that when teachers feel included in the decision-making process, policy adoption becomes smoother and more sustainable.

Overall, the uneven implementation across schools demonstrates that effective policy reform is not solely a matter of issuing directives but also of cultivating readiness, coherence, and shared understanding within the school community.

- *Administrative Burden and Monitoring Systems*

A recurring theme in participant responses is the significant impact of administrative workload on instructional time. Teachers repeatedly reported non-teaching tasks such as preparing reports, updating learner records, organizing school events, and completing compliance-related documentation often spill into instructional hours or the remaining two hours allocated for ancillary duties. This overlap leads to extended workdays and undermines the policy's core intention to protect teaching time and promote a manageable workload. In some cases, teachers shared that urgent administrative directives arrive during the school day, forcing them to adjust lessons or shorten activities to meet deadlines. These experiences point to a systemic issue in the distribution and timing of administrative demands in schools.

To address this concern, participants strongly recommended minimizing administrative responsibilities and streamlining documentation processes. Many expressed that the volume of paperwork required from teachers remains excessive, despite ongoing national efforts to reduce clerical tasks. Teachers proposed several strategies, including the hiring of additional non-teaching personnel who could handle routine administrative duties, thereby allowing teachers to focus on instruction. Others emphasized the need to adopt automated systems for tracking attendance, grades, and program accomplishments to reduce time spent on manual encoding. Grefaldo and Bausa (2025) demonstrated that biometric attendance systems with real-time data processing can significantly reduce manual workload and improve efficiency in school operations when properly configured and aligned with current policies. Their findings support the

participants' call for technological solutions that ease administrative burdens rather than add to them.

Biometric systems were frequently mentioned as tools for monitoring compliance with the 6-hour teaching policy. However, participants noted that these systems often reflect outdated 8-hour schedules, requiring teachers to remain on campus beyond their instructional hours, even when their teaching duties have been fulfilled. This mismatch creates tension between policy intent and technological enforcement. Teachers expressed frustration when biometric logs did not recognize the reduced 6-hour teaching requirement, resulting in perceived non-compliance despite adherence to instructional mandates. The study by Mercer (2025) highlights the need for transparent and context-sensitive governance of biometric systems to avoid policy misalignment, ensure ethical data use, and prevent inaccurate interpretations of teacher attendance and performance. Mercer argues that technology should adapt to policy changes, not the other way around.

Administrative oversight was also cited as a central factor in policy enforcement. School heads, master teachers, and administrative officers play key roles in monitoring compliance by conducting classroom observations, verifying attendance logs, and regularly checking instructional outputs. These practices serve to reinforce accountability, ensure policy alignment, and identify teachers who may need additional support. However, participants emphasized that these mechanisms must be balanced with respect for teacher autonomy and workload management. Excessive monitoring or rigid enforcement can unintentionally create pressure and diminish teachers' sense of professional trust. Thus, effective oversight should focus on guidance, transparency, and supportive leadership rather than punitive approaches.

Participant responses demonstrate that administrative workload and monitoring systems significantly influence the success of the 6-hour instructional policy. For the policy to achieve its intended purpose, schools must rationalize clerical tasks, modernize technological systems, and ensure that administrative practices consistently support rather than hinder instructional priorities and teacher well-being.

- *Flexible Models and Teacher-Centered Recommendations*

Some participants advocated for more flexible, output-based models that prioritize learning outcomes over rigid time structures. They argued that while time-bound policies provide structure, they may inadvertently restrict teacher creativity and responsiveness, especially in contexts where learner needs vary significantly. These participants emphasized trust in teachers' professional judgment, explaining that educators are highly capable of determining the appropriate pacing, strategies, and activities necessary to achieve lesson objectives. They recommended systems that allow greater autonomy in managing instructional time, enabling teachers to design learning experiences that are both meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Patzak and Zhang (2025) found that blending autonomy support with structured guidance enhances both teacher motivation and

student engagement, reinforcing the idea that flexibility does not equate to a lack of accountability but rather a more nuanced and professionalized approach to teaching.

Teacher autonomy has long been recognized as a key factor in promoting well-being, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness. Participants consistently highlighted that when teachers are given freedom to exercise their pedagogical expertise, they feel more empowered, trusted, and professionally valued. The OECD (2024) report on curriculum flexibility and autonomy underscores the importance of empowering teachers to adapt their schedules, instructional methods, and assessment approaches to meet diverse learner needs. Flexibility in instructional models can foster innovation, responsiveness, and deeper engagement by allowing teachers to adjust lessons based on learner readiness, interests, and contextual realities. Such autonomy also supports differentiated instruction, enabling teachers to better address the needs of struggling learners without being constrained by rigid time allocations.

Participants also emphasized the importance of centering teacher welfare in policy design and implementation. They expressed concern that rigid time-based structures, when combined with heavy administrative workloads, can increase stress and reduce job satisfaction. Recommendations to support teacher welfare included eliminating unnecessary clerical tasks, strengthening mental health and wellness programs, and recognizing teachers' contributions through fair compensation and equitable workload distribution. Hennessey et al. (2023) advocate for whole-school approaches to well-being, where leadership practices, organizational culture, and support systems work together to create nurturing environments for both staff and students. Participants echoed this position, noting that supportive leadership and a positive work climate are essential to ensuring that any instructional time policy enhances rather than compromises teacher well-being.

Finally, some participants recommended adopting a cautious, data-driven approach to future policy revisions. They stressed that changes to instructional time models should not be rushed or based solely on anecdotal concerns. Instead, they suggested systematically evaluating the current scheme over time through classroom observations, teacher feedback, learner performance data, and workload analyses. Such a process would ensure that adjustments are evidence-based, contextually appropriate, and aligned with the needs of teachers and learners. This reflects a commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder-informed decision-making, acknowledging that effective educational policies evolve through careful monitoring, consultation, and review rather than abrupt or unilateral changes.

In summary, participant insights highlight the need for balanced instructional policies, ones that uphold accountability while promoting teacher autonomy, protect instructional time while supporting well-being, and remain structured yet flexible enough to adapt to diverse school contexts.

• *Focus on Teacher Welfare and Professional Support*

Participants emphasized the importance of centering teacher welfare in the implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. They consistently highlighted that any policy aimed at improving instructional efficiency must also consider the well-being of the teachers who carry out its provisions daily. Participant 2 emphasized that productivity is directly linked to teachers' physical, emotional, and mental well-being, noting that stressed and overburdened teachers are less capable of delivering high-quality instruction. Meanwhile, Participant 11 advocated for maintaining the instructional core of the policy but eliminating unnecessary tasks that drain teacher energy and dilute their focus. These responses reflect a desire for a more holistic approach, one that balances the demands of instructional quality with the equally important need to sustain teacher morale.

Teacher satisfaction is closely tied to effective workload management and meaningful institutional support. When policies are implemented with consideration for teacher wellness, they are more likely to be embraced, sustained, and integrated into school culture. Participants stressed that the success of the 6-hour policy depends not only on compliance but also on teachers' sense of being valued and supported. This includes ensuring that teachers have sufficient time for rest and recovery, opportunities for professional development, and a reduction of stressors that detract from their instructional focus, such as excessive paperwork, abrupt administrative deadlines, or competing school initiatives.

Research strongly supports the integration of wellness strategies into school systems and policy implementation. Hennessey et al. (2023) argued that embedding a whole-school culture of well-being fosters resilience, motivation, and sustained engagement among educators. Their case study emphasizes that leadership commitment, strategic planning, and structured support systems, such as teacher assistance programs, workload rationalization, and collegial support networks, play essential roles in nurturing a healthy work environment. These findings align with participants' perspectives that teacher welfare should not be considered an "add-on," but rather an integral part of policy design and implementation.

Participants also emphasized that teacher welfare is directly connected to instructional effectiveness. Teachers who feel supported are more likely to approach their responsibilities with enthusiasm, creativity, and professionalism. They also tend to exhibit stronger classroom management, improved instructional delivery, and higher levels of learner engagement. Conversely, when teachers feel overwhelmed or undervalued, the quality of instruction may suffer despite policy guidelines being in place.

Ultimately, prioritizing teacher welfare is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic one. Teachers who feel respected, supported, and cared for are more likely to comply with instructional policies, deliver high-quality education, and remain committed to their roles within the school community. A policy that safeguards instructional time while

simultaneously supporting teacher well-being is more likely to achieve its intended outcomes and contribute to a positive, sustainable, and thriving educational environment.

- *Evaluation Before Revision*

Some participants advised caution in revising the 6-hour instructional engagement policy prematurely. Participant 5 suggested that the current scheme be carefully evaluated over time before implementing any changes, emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision-making. This recommendation reflects a commitment to evidence-based policy refinement, ensuring that modifications are informed by actual outcomes rather than assumptions or anecdotal reports.

Evaluating policy effectiveness requires systematic data collection, stakeholder feedback, and contextual analysis. Schools need to assess whether the 6-hour instructional engagement policy is achieving its intended outcomes, such as enhanced learner engagement, improved instructional quality, and balanced teacher workload. Additionally, areas for improvement must be identified based on real-world implementation challenges, including variations in school resources, administrative support, and teacher capacity. Participants highlighted that without such careful evaluation, policy revisions risk being misaligned with the practical realities of classroom and school operations.

This perspective aligns with best practices in educational policy development. Hornstra et al. (2015) argued that contextual factors, such as school culture, administrative leadership, and teacher beliefs, significantly influence how policies are enacted and experienced at the classroom level. Policies that fail to account for these dynamics may encounter resistance, unintended consequences, or uneven implementation. By incorporating a period of observation and analysis, policymakers can better understand these complexities and design adjustments that are both feasible and effective.

Furthermore, allowing time for evaluation supports continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement. Teachers, school heads, and support staff can provide valuable insights into how the policy functions in practice, what challenges arise, and which adaptations may be necessary. Such an approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility and inclusivity in policy development, enhancing teacher buy-in and the likelihood of successful implementation.

Ultimately, a cautious, data-driven approach ensures that policy revisions are responsive, targeted, and grounded in the lived experiences of educators. By prioritizing evidence and context, educational leaders can make informed decisions that strengthen instructional practices, optimize teacher workload, and sustain the overall objectives of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy.

- *Affirmation of Guidelines and Monitoring Systems*

Many participants confirmed the existence of structured guidelines and monitoring mechanisms designed to ensure

compliance with the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. These mechanisms include systematic classroom observations, attendance tracking, and time monitoring conducted by school heads, master teachers, and department coordinators. Participants highlighted that these practices are intended not only to enforce compliance but also to support teachers in adhering to the policy while maintaining instructional quality.

Participant 10 described a well-organized system in which class schedules are carefully designed to allocate exactly six hours of instructional time, with clear delineation between teaching and ancillary periods. Participant 15 noted the use of logbooks and biometric systems to record teacher presence and instructional activity, while Participant 6 mentioned the use of locator slips during vacant periods to monitor teacher whereabouts. Collectively, these responses reflect strong institutional accountability and procedural alignment with DepEd directives, signaling that schools take policy compliance seriously and have developed formal mechanisms to operationalize the 6-hour requirement.

Biometric systems were frequently cited as important tools for monitoring attendance and compliance. These systems can provide real-time data, streamline record-keeping, and reduce manual workload. However, some participants observed that many biometric systems still reflect traditional 8-hour schedules, creating inconsistencies between the intended 6-hour instructional model and the data recorded. Such discrepancies can inadvertently pressure teachers to remain on campus beyond their instructional hours, highlighting a misalignment between policy intent and technological enforcement. Mercer (2025) warned that biometric governance must be transparent, context-sensitive, and regularly updated to prevent such misalignments and ensure ethical use of data.

The presence of monitoring systems reinforces the seriousness of the policy, emphasizing that instructional time is valued and that adherence is expected. These systems provide a framework for accountability, enabling school heads to track compliance, identify gaps, and provide targeted support where necessary. At the same time, participants cautioned that monitoring mechanisms must be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect current policy goals. Overly rigid systems or outdated procedures risk undermining teacher autonomy, creating unnecessary stress, and potentially diminishing instructional effectiveness.

Overall, the findings suggest that structured monitoring and accountability systems are critical for effective policy implementation. When aligned with the current 6-hour instructional engagement framework, these mechanisms help ensure both compliance and quality instruction while supporting a professional environment where teachers are trusted, guided, and empowered to manage their instructional responsibilities effectively.

- *Partial Compliance and Contextual Challenges*

While many participants affirmed compliance with the 6-hour instructional schedule, others noted exceptions arising

from contextual factors that affect day-to-day school operations. These include class suspensions due to inclement weather or health advisories, school-wide programs and activities, emergencies, and remedial instruction for struggling learners. Participant 10 explained that missed instructional time is often compensated through make-up classes, additional learning activities, or adjusted lesson pacing. Such measures reflect a practical approach to maintaining instructional continuity while responding to unpredictable circumstances.

Participant 1 acknowledged that teaching is not always predictable, and some flexibility is necessary to accommodate unexpected events without compromising learning outcomes. The master teacher (Participant 16) similarly noted that varying school contexts, resource constraints, and additional responsibilities such as administrative tasks or community engagement initiatives affect strict adherence to the 6-hour schedule. These insights suggest that while the policy is generally followed, real-world conditions necessitate adaptive implementation strategies that balance compliance with the practical realities of teaching.

Research supports the need for flexibility within instructional models. Patzak and Zhang (2025) found that blending autonomy support with structured guidance enhances teacher motivation, instructional effectiveness, and learner engagement. When educators are empowered to make context-sensitive decisions about lesson pacing, content delivery, and student support, they are better able to meet diverse learner needs without compromising the policy's objectives. The OECD (2024) also emphasized that curriculum flexibility and teacher autonomy are critical components of thriving learning environments, noting that rigid enforcement of instructional schedules can inadvertently undermine creativity, responsiveness, and instructional quality.

Inconsistencies in compliance may also arise from procedural or technological issues, such as biometric systems that are not aligned with the 6-hour instructional schedule. When monitoring tools reflect outdated schedules, teachers may be perceived as non-compliant despite fulfilling their instructional obligations. Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach that includes policy refinement, technological updates, professional development, and ongoing dialogue with educators to ensure that both the intent and the operationalization of the policy are clearly understood and practically achievable.

Overall, participants' experiences indicate that successful implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy depends not only on adherence to prescribed hours but also on the school's capacity to adapt to contextual challenges. Flexibility, informed by professional judgment, supportive leadership, and aligned monitoring systems, is essential for sustaining both instructional quality and teacher well-being.

➤ *The Perceived Impacts of the Policy on Teachers' Wellbeing*

• *Physical Fatigue and Energy Demands*

Several participants described the 6-hour continuous teaching schedule as physically demanding. The sustained engagement required for standing, moving around, speaking, and managing classroom dynamics can lead to fatigue, particularly on days with heavier teaching loads or extended activities. Participant 1 highlighted the strain of "standing and moving around the classroom for nearly the entire day," while Participant 10 emphasized the need for "energy, stamina, and voice endurance" to maintain instructional effectiveness. These reflections underscore the physical toll of uninterrupted teaching, which is often underestimated in policy discussions.

This experience aligns with research on occupational fatigue in education. Ilies et al. (2015) found that physical, cognitive, and emotional fatigue among school employees is closely linked to workload intensity, task complexity, and work-family conflict, often contributing to burnout. Teachers, particularly those in primary education, are highly vulnerable to physical exhaustion due to the interactive, high-energy nature of their work and the extended duration of classroom engagement. Prolonged periods of continuous instruction, as mandated by the 6-hour policy, can exacerbate these challenges, making teachers' well-being a critical consideration for policy sustainability.

Further evidence from Nwoko et al. (2025) supported this concern, revealing that teachers with larger class sizes, limited support, and minimal auxiliary resources experience higher levels of psychosomatic symptoms, stress, and fatigue. These findings indicate that while the 6-hour instructional policy aims to optimize learning time and improve educational outcomes, it must also consider the physical and mental sustainability of teaching practices. Without such considerations, teachers may face increased strain, which could indirectly affect instructional quality and student engagement.

To mitigate fatigue and support teacher wellness, participants suggested several strategies. Schools may consider integrating structured short breaks between lessons, providing ergonomic classroom designs that reduce physical strain, and offering wellness programs focused on physical recovery, voice care, and stamina-building strategies. Additionally, workload planning that distributes teaching intensity more evenly across the week or provides support staff for physically demanding tasks can help maintain teacher energy levels. These measures align with a holistic approach to policy implementation, ensuring that the objectives of uninterrupted instructional time are achieved without compromising teacher health and well-being.

Overall, participants' reflections highlight the need for policy design that balances instructional efficiency with the physical sustainability of teaching practices. Recognizing and addressing the physical demands of continuous instruction is essential for promoting teacher resilience, maintaining high-

quality learning experiences, and fostering a sustainable educational environment.

- *Positive Impact on Time Management and Recovery*

Despite the physical demands of continuous teaching, many participants reported that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy has improved their time management and allowed for better personal recovery. Participant 6 appreciated having dedicated time for instructional preparation and personal matters, highlighting that structured scheduling creates predictable blocks for both teaching and ancillary duties. Participant 13 described the extra time as “a great help” for preparing future lessons, planning assessments, and organizing classroom activities. These responses suggest that when the policy is implemented effectively, it can support work-life balance, reduce time-related stress, and provide teachers with the space to maintain professional and personal well-being.

Time management is a critical factor in professional well-being and instructional effectiveness. Patzak et al. (2025) found that structured behaviors such as planning, prioritization, and goal setting significantly enhance productivity, focus, and emotional resilience. Teachers who can clearly organize their schedules, separate instructional from non-instructional tasks, and allocate time for preparation report greater job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved work-life balance. The 6-hour policy, with its explicit delineation of teaching hours and ancillary time, appears to facilitate such structured behaviors, enabling teachers to plan lessons thoughtfully, monitor student progress, and engage in reflective practice.

The policy’s clear allocation of time empowers teachers to manage their responsibilities more effectively and fosters a sense of professional autonomy. By separating instructional duties from administrative or preparatory tasks, teachers experience reduced pressure to multitask during lessons, a factor that is often linked to burnout and reduced instructional quality. This structured approach allows teachers to focus fully on teaching when in the classroom while confidently completing preparation and planning during designated ancillary periods. As a result, teachers feel more in control of their workload, which enhances motivation, engagement, and overall well-being.

However, the benefits of improved time management are contingent upon consistent policy enforcement and a supportive school environment. Participants noted that recovery time may be compromised when ancillary duties overlap with teaching responsibilities, when school leadership introduces ad hoc tasks, or when monitoring systems are misaligned with instructional schedules. Without clear guidelines, predictable routines, and supportive administrative practices, the intended balance between instructional engagement and personal recovery may be undermined.

Therefore, successful implementation requires not only policy clarity but also institutional support, leadership guidance, and ongoing evaluation to ensure that teachers can

fully benefit from structured time allocation. The participants’ experiences indicate that the 6-hour instructional policy, when effectively applied, serves as a tool for enhancing time management, supporting work-life balance, and promoting teacher well-being. By fostering autonomy, structure, and predictability, the policy helps teachers navigate their professional responsibilities while maintaining personal recovery, which is essential for sustaining instructional quality and long-term occupational health.

- *Improved Emotional Wellbeing and Reduced Stress*

Many participants described a positive shift in their emotional well-being following the implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. Participant 1 shared that they now experience “no more stress,” while Participant 12 described their work environment as “stress-free.” These reflections suggest that the policy has contributed to reducing burnout, alleviating emotional strain, and fostering a more balanced work experience. Participants attributed this improvement to the structured allocation of teaching and ancillary hours, which allows them to complete instructional responsibilities efficiently while retaining time for preparation, reflection, and personal recovery.

Research supports the connection between structured policies and teacher emotional well-being. Beames et al. (2023), in a meta-analysis of intervention programs targeting teacher mental health, found that clear scheduling, wellness initiatives, and structured workload management significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and burnout among educators. Teachers who have access to predictable routines, time for lesson planning, and emotional support systems are better able to maintain psychological resilience, respond effectively to classroom demands, and sustain engagement with students. These findings resonate with participants’ reports, highlighting that the policy’s structured approach to instructional time may serve as a protective factor against occupational stress.

Cervellione et al. (2025) further emphasized the role of emotional intelligence and mindfulness in promoting teacher well-being. Their systematic review revealed that programs designed to enhance emotional regulation, reflective capacity, and coping strategies improve teachers’ emotional competence and reduce exhaustion. Participants’ experiences suggest that the predictable structure provided by the 6-hour instructional policy functions in a similar way by reducing uncertainty, clarifying expectations, and enabling teachers to focus on teaching without the constant pressure of extended or overlapping duties.

These findings collectively indicate that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy, when paired with supportive practices and a well-managed school environment, can significantly enhance teachers’ emotional well-being. By mitigating stressors, reducing chronic fatigue, and fostering a sense of control and predictability, the policy contributes to healthier, more resilient educators. In turn, emotionally supported teachers are likely to sustain high-quality instruction, demonstrate greater classroom engagement, and maintain long-term commitment to their professional roles,

creating a positive cycle of well-being and instructional effectiveness.

- *Mixed Outcomes and Adjustment Challenges*

While many participants reported positive impacts of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy, others described mixed emotional outcomes. Participant 2 noted feeling both fulfilled and drained, depending on the level of support, availability of recovery time, and the intensity of daily responsibilities. The master teacher (Participant 16) acknowledged that sustaining six hours of focused teaching every day can be exhausting, particularly when breaks are limited, class sizes are large, and expectations from school administration remain high. These reflections highlight that the emotional experience of teachers under the policy is not uniform and is influenced by both individual and institutional factors.

This duality underscores the complexity of policy implementation. Teachers may benefit from the structure, clarity, and predictability provided by a formalized schedule, yet without adequate support and consideration for workload intensity, the same structure can contribute to emotional strain. Hulme et al. (2024) found that workload intensification combined with diminished professional autonomy negatively affects teacher well-being, especially among early-career educators who may have fewer coping strategies or less experience in managing instructional and ancillary demands. This suggests that even well-intentioned policies must consider the broader work environment and the support mechanisms available to teachers to avoid unintended negative consequences.

Moreover, some participants reported that while instructional hours were formally reduced, the overall workload remained largely unchanged due to ancillary responsibilities, administrative tasks, and additional school programs. This indicates that policy adjustments in teaching time alone are insufficient unless accompanied by systemic reforms in task distribution, administrative expectations, and workload management. Without these complementary changes, the benefits of reduced instructional hours may be offset by continued pressure, resulting in sustained fatigue and stress.

To address these challenges, participants suggested that schools adopt more flexible implementation models that allow teachers to adjust schedules in response to contextual demands. Ongoing feedback mechanisms, such as regular consultations with school heads and collaborative planning sessions, can help identify areas of strain and provide opportunities for timely support. Targeted interventions, such as wellness programs, workload redistribution, and mentoring for early-career teachers, can further mitigate emotional strain during transitional phases. These strategies emphasize that effective policy implementation requires not only clear guidelines but also responsive support systems that account for the lived experiences and professional needs of teachers.

Overall, the mixed emotional outcomes reported by participants highlight the importance of balancing policy structure with flexibility, support, and workload management. By addressing these factors, schools can ensure that policies designed to enhance instructional time also contribute positively to teacher well-being, engagement, and long-term professional sustainability.

- *Reduced Stress and Improved Wellbeing*

Many participants reported improvements in their physical and emotional well-being as a result of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. Participant 3 simply stated, “Not stressed,” while Participant 7 noted, “Lessened the stress.” Although brief, these responses reflect a meaningful reduction in the psychological and emotional burden traditionally associated with extended teaching hours. By providing structured instructional time and clearly delineated ancillary periods, the policy allows teachers to allocate sufficient focus to both classroom engagement and preparation activities. This structured approach appears to alleviate the cognitive load associated with multitasking and reduces emotional exhaustion, enabling teachers to engage more effectively with their learners.

These experiences align with the findings of Zhou, et al (2024), who identified reduced stress and increased psychological capital as key outcomes of supportive work environments in education. Their meta-analysis demonstrated that when job demands are balanced with adequate resources such as structured schedules, autonomy, and access to wellness support, teachers experience enhanced well-being, lower burnout rates, and improved emotional resilience. In the context of the 6-hour policy, structured instructional blocks can serve as a form of resource allocation, allowing teachers to manage time efficiently, focus on pedagogy, and regain energy for both professional and personal tasks.

However, not all participants reported noticeable benefits. Participant 12 responded with “None,” indicating no perceived change in physical well-being. Others, such as Participant 14, noted procedural inconsistencies; for instance, being required to stay beyond instructional hours due to administrative demands, which can offset the intended benefits of the policy. These mixed experiences underscore that while structured teaching hours can reduce stress, the effectiveness of such policies is contingent upon consistent implementation and alignment of school practices with policy goals. Without clear boundaries and monitoring systems that protect recovery time, stress reduction may be limited or unevenly experienced across teachers.

To maximize the stress-reducing potential of the policy, schools must ensure that ancillary duties, administrative expectations, and unexpected tasks do not encroach upon the allocated recovery and preparation periods. Regular monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and leadership support are essential to maintain the integrity of the policy and safeguard teacher well-being.

- *Positive Impact on Work-Life Balance*

Many participants reported that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy has led to notable improvements in the balance of work. Participant 4 shared, “Yes, more time with family,” while Participant 11 echoed, “Yes. I have more time for my family.” Participant 6 highlighted the reduction in physical and mental exhaustion, stating, “Yes, I’m not as exhausted as before,” and Participant 13 noted an increased motivation to attend school. These responses suggest that the policy has not only reduced fatigue but also allowed teachers to allocate meaningful time for personal and family responsibilities, which are critical indicators of improved work-life balance.

The literature supports these observations. Tipan and Aguilar (2025) found that institutional support and flexible scheduling significantly influence teachers’ ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities. Personal and family obligations are major determinants of teacher well-being, and policies that accommodate these needs contribute to higher job satisfaction, engagement, and professional performance. The master teacher (Participant 16) affirmed that structured instructional time allows for better planning and personal recovery, which is crucial for sustaining motivation, instructional quality, and long-term retention in the teaching profession.

Nonetheless, the benefits of improved work-life balance are highly contingent upon consistent policy implementation, adequate support systems, and the avoidance of encroachment by additional duties. Without these conditions, the potential advantages of reduced instructional hours may not fully translate into meaningful personal or professional gains.

- *Conditional Benefits and Ongoing Challenges*

While many participants acknowledged improvements in well-being, several emphasized that the benefits are conditional. Participant 2 remarked, “The 6-hour policy is manageable, but only if schools and teachers are given enough support, manageable class sizes, and protected planning time.” Participant 10 noted that although instructional hours are clearly defined, preparation and paperwork sometimes extend beyond regular hours. These observations highlight that policy alone cannot address systemic issues such as workload intensification, insufficient staffing, and administrative burdens.

Research by Tarraya (2022) on Philippine public schools supported this perspective. The study found that heavy administrative responsibilities and overlapping tasks continue to strain teacher effectiveness and well-being, even when instructional policies are formally implemented. Tarraya recommended hiring additional non-teaching personnel, improving data management systems, and restructuring workflows to reduce teacher strain. Participants 9 and 15 also reported persistent workload pressures, reinforcing the idea that the policy’s benefits are undermined when systemic factors remain unaddressed.

To fully realize the intended impact, schools must adopt a holistic approach that includes workload redistribution, wellness programs, leadership training, and continuous professional support. Such measures ensure that the policy’s implementation translates into tangible improvements in teacher well-being rather than creating a superficial or fragmented effect.

- *Mixed or No Perceived Change*

Some participants reported no significant change in their well-being. Participant 5 responded, “No po,” while Participant 12 stated, “None.” Participant 8 indicated, “Sorry, I can’t answer this question since our school isn’t yet implementing the 6-hour instructional engagement policy,” highlighting that policy impact cannot be universally assessed in all contexts. These mixed outcomes underscore the importance of contextual sensitivity in policy design and implementation. Zhou et al. (2024) emphasized that teacher well-being is influenced by multiple factors, including school climate, leadership support, personal resilience, and workload distribution. A one-size-fits-all approach may fail to address the diverse realities and needs of educators.

To improve responsiveness and ensure equitable benefits, schools should regularly collect teacher feedback, monitor implementation fidelity, and adapt strategies to local conditions. This includes adjusting schedules, clarifying expectations, providing resources, and addressing procedural gaps that hinder policy effectiveness. Such adaptive strategies increase the likelihood that the policy will achieve its intended outcomes across varying educational contexts.

Overall, participant responses indicate that the 6-hour instructional engagement policy has the potential to reduce stress, enhance emotional well-being, and improve work-life balance. However, the benefits are conditional and heavily dependent on consistent enforcement, adequate support systems, manageable workloads, and attention to local contexts. For the policy to deliver sustained improvements in teacher well-being, schools must integrate structural support, address systemic workload issues, and maintain ongoing dialogue with educators to ensure that policy implementation aligns with both instructional and personal needs. When effectively operationalized, the policy can foster healthier, more resilient, and more motivated teachers, ultimately enhancing instructional quality and learner outcomes.

➤ *Extent of Influence of the Teaching Directive on Teachers’ Satisfaction*

- *Positive Impact on Job Satisfaction Through Structure and Focus*

Many participants expressed that the 6-hour instructional engagement directive enhances job satisfaction by providing a clear framework for teaching responsibilities and allowing teachers to concentrate on their core instructional duties. Participant 1 noted that having a structured schedule “provides a sense of purpose and routine,” while Participant 10 emphasized that it allows full energy to be devoted to teaching and student engagement. These reflections indicate that a clearly delineated

instructional schedule not only organizes daily activities but also fosters professional clarity, reduces ambiguity, and promotes a focused teaching experience.

This aligns with findings from Dicke et al. (2020), who demonstrated that job satisfaction among teachers is strongly influenced by clarity in professional roles and working conditions. Their study highlighted that structured environments improve teachers' perceptions of effectiveness, reduce role ambiguity, and consequently enhance overall satisfaction. In the context of the 6-hour directive, such clarity allows teachers to prioritize pedagogical responsibilities over peripheral or administrative tasks, reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and professional purpose.

Moreover, participants reported that the directive's emphasis on instructional engagement reduces distractions from non-teaching responsibilities. By minimizing interruptions and extraneous tasks during core teaching hours, teachers are able to focus more fully on learner outcomes, curriculum delivery, and student engagement. This focused engagement strengthens intrinsic motivation, professional fulfillment, and emotional well-being, which are critical components of long-term job satisfaction and commitment to the teaching profession.

- *Improved Work-Life Balance and Personal Time*

Several participants highlighted how the 6-hour directive facilitates better time management and personal fulfillment. Participant 4 shared that they "can go home early" and spend more time with family, while Participant 12 appreciated not having to bring work home. These observations suggest that the policy contributes to a healthier balance between professional responsibilities and personal life, which is closely linked to job satisfaction.

Research supports these findings. Tipan and Aguilar (2025) found that institutional support and flexible scheduling significantly influence teachers' ability to balance professional and personal obligations. Their study emphasized that personal and family responsibilities are major factors affecting teacher well-being, and policies that accommodate these needs promote higher satisfaction and sustained performance. In this sense, the 6-hour policy provides both structural and temporal resources that allow teachers to allocate time effectively for rest, personal activities, and family engagement.

Work-life balance is particularly crucial in high-demand professions such as teaching, where extended hours and emotional labor can lead to burnout. By providing predictable instructional hours coupled with designated ancillary periods, the directive empowers teachers to manage their workload efficiently, reduce multitasking stress, and enjoy personal recovery time. However, participants noted that the success of this balance depends on consistent policy enforcement and minimizing overlapping administrative tasks, which may otherwise encroach on personal time and undermine the policy's intended benefits.

- *Enhanced Creativity, Motivation, and Professional Growth*

Participants also reported that the directive positively affects motivation and creativity. Participant 6 described having "plenty of time to be more progressive and creative," while Participant 13 affirmed feeling "more motivated." These responses suggest that the structured schedule creates a conducive environment for autonomy, professional growth, and innovative pedagogical practices.

Patzak and Zhang (2025) found that teacher autonomy support, when coupled with structured expectations, enhances motivation, engagement, and professional efficacy. Teachers who are given clear boundaries for instruction but also allowed flexibility in planning and delivering lessons report higher levels of satisfaction and are more likely to pursue continuous professional development. The directive's balance of structure and flexibility appears to provide these conditions, enabling teachers to exercise agency, explore innovative teaching strategies, and take ownership of their professional practice.

Intrinsic motivation, creativity, and professional fulfillment are closely interlinked. Teachers who feel trusted to manage their instructional time and develop meaningful learning experiences are more likely to experience pride, engagement, and satisfaction in their work. By fostering a sense of purpose alongside autonomy, the directive supports both personal and professional growth, reinforcing the link between structured teaching schedules and job satisfaction.

- *Mixed Experiences and Implementation Challenges*

While many participants highlighted positive impacts, others reported mixed or conditional satisfaction. Participant 2 described experiencing both benefits and challenges, while Participant 15 expressed concerns about insufficient preparation time for multiple subjects. These accounts suggest that job satisfaction under the policy is influenced not only by the policy's design but also by contextual factors such as workload intensity, class size, and available support systems.

Creagh et al. (2023) emphasized that workload intensification and "time poverty" negatively affect teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Even well-structured policies may fail to achieve their intended outcomes if teachers are required to perform overlapping tasks, manage multiple subjects without adequate preparation time, or navigate procedural inefficiencies. Participants 13 and the master teacher (Participant 16) noted that operational practices such as waiting for biometric time-out or handling administrative paperwork can undermine the directive's goals, reflecting gaps between policy intent and practical enforcement.

To optimize job satisfaction, schools must ensure the directive is implemented with fidelity, supported by sufficient staffing, and accompanied by workload reforms. Streamlining administrative responsibilities, providing professional support, and reinforcing teacher autonomy are essential to fully realize the benefits of structured instructional time. Schools should also maintain continuous

feedback loops, allowing teachers to communicate challenges and suggest improvements to scheduling, resource allocation, and policy operations.

The 6-hour instructional engagement directive has the potential to enhance job satisfaction through structure, focus, improved work-life balance, and opportunities for creativity and professional growth. Participants' experiences indicate that clear instructional boundaries allow teachers to concentrate on their core teaching responsibilities, reduce role ambiguity, and derive greater intrinsic satisfaction from their work. Work-life balance and personal recovery are strengthened when ancillary tasks are appropriately scheduled and administrative burdens are minimized.

However, the directive's positive effects are conditional and influenced by workload, support systems, operational fidelity, and contextual factors such as class size and school culture. Addressing these challenges requires holistic interventions, including workload redistribution, professional support, and alignment of operational practices with policy objectives. When implemented effectively, the policy not only enhances job satisfaction but also contributes to teacher motivation, well-being, and sustained professional commitment, ultimately benefiting instructional quality and learner outcomes.

➤ *The Challenges Encountered by Teachers in their Compliance with the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement*

• *Sustained Instructional Demands and Physical Exhaustion*

Several participants highlighted the intensity of maintaining full engagement for six consecutive hours. Participant 1 described the challenge of "being fully present and engaged for that entire stretch of time," while Participant 10 noted that consecutive teaching loads without breaks can be "physically and mentally exhausting." These reflections suggest that the uninterrupted nature of the instructional block, while intended to streamline instructional delivery, can lead to fatigue, diminished attentiveness, and potential declines in instructional effectiveness over the course of the day.

This observation aligns with research on occupational fatigue in education. Creagh et al. (2023) described "time poverty" as a phenomenon in which teachers experience insufficient time for physical, mental, and emotional recovery due to intensified workloads. Their synthesis indicates that sustained instructional demands contribute to stress, burnout, and reduced capacity to deliver quality education, particularly when teachers are required to maintain continuous engagement without structured rest. Similarly, Ilies et al. (2015) noted that prolonged cognitive and physical exertion in teaching can result in psychosomatic symptoms, reduced concentration, and work-family conflict.

Participants' experiences underscore the need for proactive strategies to safeguard teacher well-being while maintaining policy objectives. Schools may consider integrating structured breaks between instructional blocks to

allow for physical rest, mental recuperation, and brief collaborative planning. Rotating schedules or shared teaching responsibilities can also help distribute workload evenly, reducing the intensity of continuous teaching periods. Additionally, wellness initiatives such as mindfulness sessions, brief physical exercises, or scheduled "quiet time" can support teachers' stamina, engagement, and overall resilience.

Implementing these measures not only protects teacher health but also enhances instructional effectiveness. When teachers have opportunities for recovery, they are better able to sustain energy, maintain focus, and provide high-quality learning experiences for students. In this sense, the policy's success depends not solely on adherence to instructional hours but also on creating conditions that support sustainable teaching practices over the long term.

• *Administrative Overload and Non-Teaching Responsibilities*

A recurring challenge identified by participants involves the spillover of non-instructional tasks into teaching hours. Participant 10 noted that "paperwork, reports, and administrative responsibilities often spill over," while the master teacher (Participant 16) described "excessive non-teaching tasks" as a key barrier to maintaining instructional focus. These responses highlight a critical tension between policy intentions providing structured teaching time and operational realities, where ancillary duties encroach upon the designated six-hour instructional block.

Research underscores the impact of administrative overload on teacher performance and well-being. Creagh et al. (2023) found that excessive administrative tasks contribute to work intensification, reducing instructional focus and increasing the risk of burnout. Teachers often find themselves multitasking, balancing paperwork, reporting requirements, and lesson preparation simultaneously. This not only diminishes their effectiveness in the classroom but also undermines the goals of policies designed to optimize teaching time.

Kim (2019) similarly demonstrated that administrative workload disproportionately crowds out instructional preparation, especially in public school contexts. Teachers burdened with non-teaching responsibilities report lower job satisfaction, reduced motivation, and a heightened sense of professional stress. These findings align closely with participant experiences, suggesting that the presence of ancillary duties within instructional hours can compromise the benefits of the 6-hour policy.

To address these challenges, participants recommended targeted strategies: hiring additional non-teaching personnel to handle administrative work, streamlining documentation processes, and integrating digital tools for reporting and attendance tracking. Such interventions can protect instructional time, allowing teachers to focus on their core responsibilities and enhancing both job satisfaction and instructional quality. By reducing the administrative burden, schools can create an environment in which the 6-hour

directive is not only implemented in theory but also operationally feasible and sustainable for educators.

- *Scheduling Conflicts and Time Allocation Issues*

Participants frequently cited difficulties related to scheduling and time management as significant barriers to effective implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy. Participant 5 noted that “sometimes the hour is limited or not enough,” while Participant 11 highlighted challenges in “following the time allotted for each subject.” These reflections suggest that rigid scheduling frameworks, while intended to streamline instructional delivery, can inadvertently constrain teacher flexibility, reduce preparation time, and potentially compromise instructional quality.

Research supports the notion that technical or prescriptive scheduling alone cannot ensure effective curriculum implementation. Pak et al. (2020) found that adaptive scheduling issues often require flexible planning, collaborative leadership, and contextual decision-making to maintain instructional continuity. Their analysis emphasizes that effective time allocation must balance policy directives with operational realities such as class size, subject load, and available teaching resources.

Additionally, participant responses indicated that instructional time is often affected by overlapping school activities, limited classroom availability, and uneven distribution of subject loads among teachers. Such logistical constraints create bottlenecks that make strict adherence to the 6-hour schedule challenging, even when teachers are committed to compliance. Without strategic scheduling, these issues can lead to uneven learning experiences for students and increased stress for educators.

To address these challenges, schools may implement collaborative timetable planning, rotational use of classroom spaces, and coordinated scheduling of extracurricular activities. Providing teachers with some discretion to adjust instructional pacing within structured guidelines can also enhance their capacity to manage time effectively. By integrating flexibility within the policy framework, schools can maintain accountability while promoting instructional quality and teacher satisfaction.

- *Biometric Timekeeping and Procedural Constraints*

Some participants expressed frustration with biometric systems that conflict with the 6-hour directive. Participant 13 stated, “We are still required to wait for 4:30–5:00 pm for timeout,” and Participant 14 added, “The struggle of waiting for our time out because it is set on our biometrics.” These responses indicate that procedural requirements may undermine the policy’s intent.

Mercer (2025) analyzed biometric governance in schools and found that outdated systems can create policy misalignment and ethical concerns. When biometric tracking does not reflect instructional realities, it forces teachers to remain on campus unnecessarily, affecting morale and work-life balance.

To resolve this, schools must update biometric systems to align with instructional policies and ensure that timekeeping reflects actual teaching engagement.

- *Resource Limitations and Instructional Preparation*

Several participants emphasized the challenge of inadequate learning resources and limited preparation time. The master teacher (Participant 16) identified “inadequate learning resources” and “inadequate time for instructional preparation” as significant barriers, while Participant 15 similarly noted that preparation time is constrained. These observations suggest that even with a clearly structured 6-hour instructional schedule, the quality and effectiveness of teaching can be compromised if teachers lack the necessary materials and adequate time to plan lessons.

UNESCO (2023) highlighted that instructional time alone does not guarantee learning outcomes; it must be supported by sufficient resources, teacher support, and effective classroom management. Without these, teachers face difficulties in meeting curriculum objectives, engaging learners meaningfully, and sustaining instructional quality. This is particularly critical in resource-constrained contexts, where the absence of textbooks, manipulatives, digital tools, or subject-specific materials can hinder lesson delivery and reduce learner engagement.

Participants’ responses indicate that policy compliance must be complemented by strategic investments in instructional resources. Providing access to teaching aids, digital learning platforms, and learner-centered materials not only enhances lesson quality but also reduces teacher stress and preparation strain.

Furthermore, collaborative planning time—such as co-planning sessions, team teaching, or scheduled preparation periods—can allow teachers to optimize lesson design, share best practices, and maintain instructional effectiveness within the 6-hour framework.

Investing in resources and planning support underscores the interdependence between policy structure and operational feasibility. Without this support, teachers may comply with the policy in terms of hours but still struggle to deliver high-quality instruction. Ensuring that the 6-hour directive is both implementable and meaningful requires aligning instructional time with adequate materials, preparation, and professional support systems.

- *Administrative and Documentation Burden*

Participants consistently reported that documentation and administrative tasks frequently extend beyond the designated six-hour instructional block, adding to teachers’ workload and limiting their capacity to focus on core teaching responsibilities. Participant 10 noted that “responsibilities sometimes overlap,” while Participant 2 emphasized that teachers are often assigned tasks unrelated to teaching. These observations highlight a disconnect between the policy’s intent of providing protected instructional time and the operational realities where non-teaching duties encroach upon the workday.

This issue aligns with the concept of “time poverty,” as described by Creagh et al. (2023), where teachers face intensified workloads that compromise both instructional focus and personal recovery. Excessive documentation and ancillary responsibilities require multitasking, which can reduce lesson preparation quality, increase stress, and ultimately undermine teacher effectiveness.

In the Philippine context, Torres and Reyes (2022) underscored that school support systems are often insufficient to manage teacher workload effectively. Administrative responsibilities are frequently layered on top of instructional duties without adequate staffing, time allocation, or procedural streamlining. The resulting workload intensification contributes to stress, fatigue, and decreased instructional quality, particularly in public schools with high student-to-teacher ratios.

To mitigate these challenges, participants and researchers alike advocate for practical interventions such as hiring non-teaching personnel to manage administrative tasks, streamlining reporting procedures, and leveraging digital tools for documentation and monitoring. Aligning operational practices with the policy’s intended instructional focus is crucial not only for compliance but also for safeguarding teacher well-being, maintaining instructional quality, and ensuring that the 6-hour policy produces meaningful educational outcomes.

- *Instructional Resource Limitations and Role-Based Constraints*

A dominant concern raised by participants was the lack of adequate teaching materials and classroom resources. Participant 15 specifically listed “TLE and sports equipment, facilities, and textbooks,” while Participant 7 emphasized the need for learner-centered materials that could enhance engagement and hands-on learning. These responses highlight the critical role of sustained investment in instructional tools to support effective teaching, ensuring that the 6-hour instructional directive translates into meaningful learning experiences rather than merely meeting formal time requirements.

The Master Teacher (Participant 16) also underscored “lack of resources and instructional support” as a significant barrier, pointing to the challenges teachers face when required to deliver high-quality instruction without sufficient tools or support. These observations align with findings from LeBlanc (2020), who noted that resource limitations, particularly in large or crowded classrooms, can hinder both student engagement and teacher well-being. Without adequate materials, teachers are forced to rely on less interactive or repetitive instructional methods, which can reduce learner motivation and impede educational outcomes.

Resource limitations are particularly pronounced in subject-specific contexts, such as Technical Livelihood Education (TLE) or departmentalized instruction, where specialized equipment, tools, or materials are essential. These constraints necessitate differentiated policy applications that consider the unique needs of each subject area. Ensuring

equitable support across disciplines is essential for maintaining instructional quality, teacher motivation, and student achievement.

Addressing these gaps requires strategic investment in physical and digital teaching materials, provision of learner-centered resources, and ongoing professional support. When teachers have access to adequate resources and support structures, they are better able to implement innovative, engaging, and effective instructional strategies within the 6-hour framework, thereby enhancing both compliance with the policy and overall teaching and learning outcomes.

- *Policy Enforcement and Implementation Gaps*

Several participants emphasized the need for stronger and more consistent enforcement of the 6-hour instructional engagement directive. Participant 13 recommended “a clearer and stricter implementation of the rule,” while Participant 14 echoed the call for “strict implementation.” These responses underscored the critical role of standardized monitoring and accountability mechanisms in ensuring that the policy’s objectives are realized in practice, rather than remaining aspirational goals.

The challenges highlighted by participants reflect a broader phenomenon observed in educational policy studies. Angrist and Dercon (2024) found that gaps between policy intent and practice are often rooted in ineffective service delivery rather than deficiencies in policy design. Their cross-national analysis revealed that policies frequently fail to achieve intended outcomes because of weak operational oversight, inconsistent enforcement, and variability in local implementation. This suggests that even well-conceived directives require systematic and context-sensitive monitoring to ensure compliance.

In the context of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy, these findings imply that enforcement mechanisms such as classroom observations, time tracking, and supervisory oversight must be clearly defined, consistently applied, and supported by school leadership. Without these measures, teachers may encounter ambiguities regarding expectations, leading to inconsistent adherence, reduced instructional focus, and diminished policy impact.

Effective implementation also requires capacity-building for school heads and coordinators, including training in monitoring practices, feedback provision, and problem-solving strategies to address noncompliance or logistical challenges. By combining clear rules with supportive oversight, schools can bridge the gap between policy intent and operational reality, ensuring that the 6-hour directive delivers its intended benefits for instructional quality, teacher well-being, and learner outcomes.

- *Teacher Fatigue, Recovery Time, and Workforce Considerations*

Participants consistently raised concerns about teacher fatigue and the need for adequate recovery time during the school day. Participant 9 suggested implementing a 1-hour break after 3 hours of teaching, while Participant 1

highlighted the absence of mental health resources to support emotional resilience. These responses underscore the critical importance of integrating wellness strategies into instructional frameworks to safeguard both teacher well-being and instructional effectiveness.

Research supports the strong link between teacher well-being and job demands, recovery opportunities, and institutional support. Zhou, Slem, and Vella-Brodrick (2024) conducted a meta-analysis revealing that educators' psychological and physical health is significantly influenced by workload, opportunities for rest, and the presence of supportive infrastructure within schools. When recovery time is limited, teachers experience higher stress levels, reduced engagement, and diminished instructional quality.

Additionally, participants identified structural challenges that exacerbate fatigue. Participant 11 cited "class size" as a limiting factor, while Participant 15 called for "more workforce" to distribute responsibilities more evenly. LeBlanc (2020) emphasized that overcrowded classrooms and insufficient staffing intensify teacher stress, reduce opportunities for individualized instruction, and compromise overall learning outcomes.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach. Strategic personnel deployment can help balance teacher workloads, ensure manageable class sizes, and optimize instructional coverage. Simultaneously, investment in wellness infrastructure such as access to counseling, structured breaks, wellness programs, and professional development on stress management can support teachers' physical and emotional resilience. Integrating these measures within the 6-hour instructional engagement framework ensures that teachers can sustain high-quality teaching while maintaining personal well-being and long-term career satisfaction.

➤ *Policy Recommendations to Optimize Teachers' Wellbeing Through the Implementation of the 6-Hour Instructional Engagement*

- *Flexible Scheduling and Adaptive Instructional Time*

Participants recommended introducing flexibility in the distribution of the 6-hour instructional period, emphasizing the importance of breaks for mental and physical recovery and the adaptation of schedules to accommodate diverse teaching styles and subject-specific demands. These recommendations reflect a recognition that rigid, uninterrupted teaching blocks, while supporting policy compliance, may not fully optimize instructional effectiveness or teacher well-being. Allowing adaptive scheduling enables teachers to manage energy levels, sustain engagement, and tailor instructional approaches to the needs of their learners.

Research supports the integration of flexibility within structured instructional frameworks. Herman and Reddy (2024) highlighted that educator well-being is strongly influenced by workload design and recovery opportunities. Their study advocates systemic approaches that balance

instructional rigor with health-promoting practices, including flexible scheduling, wellness initiatives, and structured breaks. Such strategies help mitigate fatigue, enhance concentration, and support sustained instructional quality over the course of the school day.

Implementing adaptive scheduling also encourages teacher autonomy and professional judgment. By permitting educators to manage the timing and pacing of lessons within the 6-hour framework, schools can foster innovation, responsiveness, and higher levels of engagement among both teachers and learners. This approach aligns with contemporary perspectives on workload management, where flexibility is seen as a key mechanism for enhancing both teacher motivation and student outcomes.

Ultimately, incorporating flexibility does not undermine the intent of the 6-hour policy; rather, it operationalizes the directive in a way that is sensitive to human factors and contextual realities. By balancing structure with adaptive strategies, schools can promote a sustainable teaching environment that supports instructional excellence, teacher well-being, and long-term policy effectiveness.

- *Leadership, Accountability, and Transparent Policy Implementation*

Participants emphasized the importance of consistent and transparent implementation of the 6-hour instructional engagement directive. Recommendations included providing clearer guidelines, conducting orientation sessions for school leaders, and establishing feedback-based monitoring systems to ensure adherence. These responses reflect a call for stronger leadership accountability and standardized enforcement mechanisms across schools, highlighting the critical role of school administrators in translating policy intent into daily practice.

Research supports the centrality of leadership in policy implementation. Viennet and Pont (2017) proposed a framework for education policy enforcement that emphasizes coherence, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning. According to their findings, successful implementation relies not only on clear directives but also on consistent application, proactive leadership, and inclusive processes that engage educators, coordinators, and school heads. When leaders are equipped with knowledge, tools, and authority to monitor compliance and provide constructive feedback, policies are more likely to achieve their intended outcomes.

In the context of the 6-hour directive, transparent enforcement mechanisms serve multiple purposes. First, they clarify expectations for teachers, reducing ambiguity about instructional responsibilities and ancillary duties. Second, they provide accountability structures that support equity across schools, ensuring that all educators adhere to the same standards. Finally, feedback-oriented monitoring fosters a culture of continuous improvement, allowing schools to identify implementation gaps, address challenges proactively, and refine practices based on evidence and stakeholder input.

Therefore, enhancing leadership capacity through professional development, orientation programs, and structured support systems is essential. By prioritizing accountability, clarity, and stakeholder engagement, schools can strengthen the operationalization of the 6-hour policy, ensuring that it consistently improves instructional quality, teacher well-being, and overall educational outcomes.

- *Administrative Support and Documentation Efficiency*

A dominant theme among participants was the need to reduce administrative burden. Many advocated streamlined documentation processes, minimized paperwork, and the provision of additional clerical support. These recommendations reflect a shared concern that excessive non-teaching responsibilities encroach on instructional time, contribute to teacher stress, and diminish overall professional satisfaction. Participant observations consistently highlighted that balancing instructional duties with administrative tasks often leads to extended workdays, fatigue, and reduced focus on core teaching responsibilities.

Research underscores the significance of operational efficiency in promoting teacher well-being and instructional quality. Fatahi and Warner-Griffin (2024) argued that organization-wide frameworks are essential for reducing administrative strain. Their study emphasizes that when support systems are in place to handle routine documentation and procedural tasks, teachers can devote more energy and attention to instructional planning, student engagement, and professional development. Such organizational measures directly support the goals of the 6-hour instructional engagement policy by ensuring that teaching hours are protected and used effectively.

Reducing administrative workload is also linked to improved job satisfaction and reduced burnout. By delegating non-instructional tasks to support staff or leveraging automated systems for reporting and tracking, schools can create a work environment that values teacher time and professional expertise. This approach not only enhances instructional quality but also fosters a culture of trust and respect, reinforcing teachers' commitment and motivation.

In summary, minimizing administrative burdens through efficient systems, additional staffing, and technological solutions is critical to operationalizing the 6-hour directive effectively. Doing so ensures that teachers can focus on their primary responsibility, facilitating student learning while maintaining their well-being and professional satisfaction.

- *Mental Health and Wellness Support*

Participants highlighted the critical importance of mental health resources and structured wellness programs within schools. Recommendations included stress management training, wellness initiatives, and informal morale-boosting activities aimed at fostering psychological safety and community cohesion. These suggestions reflect a shared understanding that supporting teacher mental health is essential not only for individual well-being but also for

sustaining instructional effectiveness and a positive school climate.

Research confirms the pivotal role of mental health support in educational settings. Witte (2015) emphasized that mental health practices, including individualized support plans and professional development, are crucial for educators to manage stress, prevent burnout, and maintain high levels of engagement. Such interventions enhance teachers' capacity to navigate the demands of teaching while protecting their emotional resilience. Similarly, Nalipay et al. (2025) advocated for mental health literacy and robust support systems, enabling educators to manage both their own wellbeing and the emotional needs of their students effectively.

Integrating mental health and wellness programs into the operational framework of schools provides multiple benefits. Structured initiatives such as stress management workshops, peer support networks, and mindfulness sessions equip teachers with practical strategies for coping with occupational stress. Informal activities that promote collegiality and morale can further strengthen school culture, creating an environment where teachers feel valued, supported, and connected.

Ultimately, embedding mental health resources and wellness programs within schools is a proactive strategy for sustaining teacher performance, engagement, and satisfaction. When psychological safety and community-building are prioritized, the 6-hour instructional engagement policy can be implemented more effectively, allowing teachers to deliver high-quality education while maintaining personal well-being.

- *Fair Workload Distribution and Instructional Support*

Participants emphasized the importance of equitable distribution of tasks, alignment of teacher roles with their areas of expertise, and the provision of adequate instructional resources. Recommendations included assigning subjects based on teacher specialization, minimizing school activities that contribute to non-instructional workload, and offering professional development opportunities to enhance instructional competence. These measures are aimed at improving job satisfaction, reducing work-related stress, and sustaining high-quality teaching practices.

Research supports the link between equitable task allocation and teacher performance. LeBlanc (2020) found that class size, workforce distribution, and resource availability significantly affect teacher stress, engagement, and instructional effectiveness. Teachers assigned tasks outside their expertise or burdened with excessive non-instructional responsibilities are more prone to fatigue and reduced instructional quality. Strategic staffing, targeted resource provision, and ongoing professional development were recommended as essential strategies to address these challenges and create supportive working conditions.

Aligning teacher responsibilities with expertise not only improves instructional quality but also enhances professional

satisfaction and motivation. When educators feel competent in their assigned roles and have access to sufficient resources such as textbooks, teaching materials, and classroom equipment, they can focus on innovative lesson delivery, learner engagement, and performance-based outcomes. Moreover, reducing extraneous administrative or co-curricular duties allows teachers to dedicate time to planning, reflection, and individualized support for learners.

In conclusion, equitable task allocation, strategic role alignment, and resource provision are critical components of an operational framework that supports both teacher well-being and student learning. These measures complement the 6-hour instructional engagement policy by ensuring that teachers can use their designated instructional hours efficiently, with adequate support and professional growth opportunities.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Based on the Findings of the Study, the Following Conclusions were Drawn:*

- The effective and sustainable implementation of the six-hour instructional engagement policy, Re ensured by the Department of Education and school administrators through strengthened policy harmonization, monitoring, and teacher support. A comprehensive policy review must be conducted to address inconsistencies and produce clear operational guidelines on instructional time, documentation, and allowable administrative tasks.
- The policy enhances teacher well-being by providing structure and autonomy, though its effectiveness is limited by procedural inconsistencies and workload pressures.
- Teachers face complex challenges in complying with the directive, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reforms, resource support, and wellness-centered policies.
- Optimizing teacher well-being under the 6-hour directive requires flexible scheduling, reduced administrative burden, mental health support, and equitable workload distribution.

➤ *The following recommendations are proposed:*

- Develop and implement a unified national framework for the 6-hour instructional engagement policy, including standardized scheduling templates, monitoring tools, and leadership orientation programs to ensure consistency across schools.
- Introduce mandatory wellness breaks and allocate planning time within the instructional schedule to mitigate fatigue and support teacher well-being.
- Empower teachers through participatory planning and subject-based autonomy, allowing them to co-design instructional strategies that align with their expertise and teaching style.
- Use biometric systems and streamline administrative processes to reduce procedural burdens and better reflect actual instructional engagement.

- Policy recommendations are proposed for the establishment of school-based wellness committees tasked with promoting mental health programs, equitable workload distribution, and access to instructional resources.

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