

Social Studies in the New Normal: Reflections and Hopes of Local School Board Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the lived experiences of social studies local school board educators, shedding light on their struggles, resilience, and aspirations. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 14 LSB teachers in Maco, Davao de Oro, the research reveals the heavy workloads, inadequate compensation, and lack of access to professional development these teachers endure. Despite these hardships, they demonstrate remarkable dedication by finding ways to cope, leaning on peer support, self-learning, and unwavering commitment to their students. Their stories highlight the need for fair compensation, better support systems, and their passion for teaching despite the odds. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions, advocating for reforms that recognize and uplift LSB teachers. Ultimately, it calls for concrete actions to improve their working conditions, ensuring they are empowered to continue shaping the minds and futures of their students with hope and dedication.

Keywords: local school board (LSB) teachers, social studies education, the new normal, teacher experiences, coping strategies, educational challenges, policy reforms, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

In certain areas, Local School Board (LSB) instructors are integral to the educational framework, especially in cases where local government units (LGUs) subsidize the teaching positions. These teachers were typically hired and compensated by the LGUs, and LSB teachers often filled positions like regular teachers in public schools. They handled a wide range of subjects and different grade levels, depending on the needs of the schools where they were assigned. The status of LGU-paid LSB teachers differed according to specific LGUs' policies and the prevailing laws governing local government employment. Generally, they were qualified for benefits and protections like other local government employees; however, their conditions of service, such as salary scales, promotion opportunities, and professional development programs, may differ from those of nationally funded teachers or teachers employed by national agencies (Bernardo, 2021).

Social Studies LSB Teachers in the Philippines face many challenges that hinder their ability to offer quality education, particularly in public schools. These include inadequate training and professional development, a lack of access to essential teaching resources and materials, limited technology and internet connectivity, and low salaries despite heavy workloads. The absence of adequate training has resulted in pedagogical skills below acceptable standards, and the lack of Social Studies textbooks and other teaching materials constrains the teachers' ability to deliver practical lessons. Moreover, sporadic availability of internet services in the region hinders participation in online classes and other professional

development activities. Teachers hired through the Local School Board have been reported, as studied by Cabansag and Balila (2021), to have a high turnover rate due to low job satisfaction stemming from skewed compensation relative to workload, which, coupled with increased responsibilities, reduces morale. Flores and Montalbo (2020) also noted that inadequate support and insufficient remuneration greatly reduced motivation among educators, instruction, and student outcomes.

Global Context - Uganda is a prominent example where volunteer educators experience a gap in financial compensation relative to the work performed. Volunteer teachers in Uganda were reported by Mugisha and Omoding (2020) to suffer from financial instability, specifically, volunteer teachers' motivation and effectiveness. In addition, Mwesigwa (2020) reported a lack of proper pay and job security, particularly in rural regions, highlighted the significant challenge of low teacher retention, and underscored that providing support to educators is critical to improving educational outcomes.

In the Philippines, the studies of Dizon and Ocampo (2022) explored the lived experiences of contracted teachers. These authors captured the reality of low pay, lack of administrative support, and excess work. They proposed that local governmental units (LGUs) and the Department of Education There is a need to advance the position of teachers and provide adequate compensation to improve the standing of educators within the local school boards under DepEd should establish better support frameworks and equitable remuneration to advance the elevation of educators including those employed by local boards. Several educators in the province of Antique are LSB teachers who continue to bear considerable professional limitations despite being and continue to bear substantial professional difficulties.

Conversely, in Davao de Oro, numerous educators faced limited opportunities for regular employment, compelling them to accept Local School Board Teacher positions, which were underpaid and came with a heavier-than-average workload. Like regular teachers, LSB teachers shouldered the same duties and responsibilities without any semblance of the corresponding compensation and benefits. This illustrates the conundrum for Davao de Oro teachers seeking stable employment and equitable remuneration for their work effort (Philippine Statistics Authority – Regional Statistical Services Office XI, 2020).

This study uses specific motivational and organizational behavior theories to examine the concerns affecting the motivation, performance, and general well-being of LSB teachers. These theories help understand the problems experienced by LSB teachers about the disparity between their attempts and the results they achieve. With such frameworks, the study seeks to provide a richer understanding of the impact of compensation, acknowledgment, and equity on the realities of LSB teachers, particularly the Social Studies teachers from Maco, Davao de Oro. Such a theoretical framework is important in constructing appropriate and responsive recommendations that address the urgent concerns of LSB teachers.

The Reward Management Theory proposed by Faye and Thompson in 2018 emphasized, for improving employee performance and motivation, an effort-reward system that is distinctly correlated to organizational productivity. This rationale supports understanding the experiences of LSB teachers in the Philippines who struggled with inadequate compensation, excessive workload, insufficient support, and minimal supervision. The theory applies here because it provides insight into the misalignment of effort and reward feedback, which requires less morale, burnout, and job satisfaction. Equity Theory, put forth by John Stacey Adams in 1963, supports this reasoning, which explains how an insufficient balance between work done and benefits received creates a state of discontent and waning motivation. Combining these theories creates a solid foundation for analyzing and understanding the personal and professional

issues facing LSB teachers, necessitating policy intervention to enhance the teachers' welfare and teaching effectiveness.

Despite the Local School Board Teachers' efforts to sustain publicly funded schools in underserved areas, there is scant published information on their payment structures, workload, and job satisfaction in these positions. While some attention is paid to, as highlighted by Sabio and Ruiz (2021), where underpayment, higher than average workload, benefits, and overall compensation dissatisfaction were noted, very little qualitative research exists exploring the motivation, identity, retention, and learning outcomes associated with these issues. There is also a considerable gap in the literature about teachers serving in LSB positions in rural areas such as Maco and Davao de Oro, suggesting that their resilience is ignored in the face of adversity. Dela Cruz (2020) notes that these conditions impact educators' professional identity and emotional well-being. However, much of the attention given to volunteers or contractual teachers ignores these aspects. By concentrating on social studies and LSB teachers, this research seeks to advance more just policies, promoting better treatment, welfare, appreciation, and recognition of their invaluable contributions.

This study aimed to explore the realities of Social Studies Local School Board teachers, focusing on their coping mechanisms in response to challenges within the role, and the insights that could be shared with other Social Studies LSB teachers. However, this study was not simply a compilation of information; it captured the Social Studies LSB teachers' unwavering resolve and inventive spirit. It was clear that certain key groups would benefit from integrating the lessons learned from their experiences. Undoubtedly, the teachers whose passion and resolve carried learning forward during the most tumultuous epochs were the foundation of this research. Their experiences became a guiding light for other teachers and provided them with suggestions on handling and overcoming various obstacles in education. By documenting how they responded to the stressors placed upon them, from technological adaptations of the classroom, reshaping lesson delivery, to student engagement transformations, this study aimed to empower Social Studies educators with tools to cope through sharing.

Ultimately, the students profited the most from their teachers' devotion. This investigation aimed to analyze how the new normal education paradigm influenced students' learning of Social Studies through the experiences of LSB teachers. It also provided a window for school administrators to see the lived experiences of their LSB teachers. With this understanding, the administrators could develop more appropriate and supportive policies aimed at responsive governance, given the challenges that teachers faced and the strategies that they used. These policies may have included more relevant training for staff, improved classroom technologies, and mental health support programs. Overall, these policies improved the quality of education.

This study is critical because it highlights the unexamined realities of Social Studies LSB teachers in rural and marginalized regions. It will also enrich existing literature regarding teacher welfare and educational equity, affecting national and local education policy. More broadly, this study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which champions accessible, high-quality education and lifelong learning. The generated knowledge could shape responsive policies, programs, and interventions regarding teacher aid systems from the Department of Education (DepEd), Local Government Units (LGUs), and other education stakeholders, improving student learning outcomes in the Philippines and globally.

METHOD

Study Participants

This study focused on fourteen (14) Local School Board (LSB) teachers instructing Junior High Social Studies in Maco, Davao de Oro public schools. The participants were chosen by purposive sampling, which focuses on individuals who comprise the sample because of very concrete criteria such as knowledge, skills, or experience related to the problem under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). This approach enabled all participants to offer rich, diverse, and personalized perspectives grounded in their realities. From this subset, seven (7) underwent in-depth interviews, and the other seven (7) participated in a focus group discussion (FGD). The FGD aimed to facilitate shared active construction of collective responses and frameworks, while the IDIs enabled the telling of deeply personal stories. The number of participants also emerged from the practical limitations of time, availability, and resources and the qualitative purpose of gathering rich data.

In this study, only LSB appointees who qualified to teach Social Studies at the Junior High School level and had at least two years of teaching experience were considered. This was done to ensure participants had some degree of early professional practice with teaching struggles that might be relevant to the study. Excluded from the study were permanently appointed teachers, those employed at the elementary level, and those with fewer than two years of teaching experience, as their context and teaching structure were too different. Participants were sourced via school administrators, and all teachers were made aware of their right to voluntary participation, confidentiality, and withdrawal at any time. Even though this is a small-scale study, these teachers' insights and narratives are tremendously important, as they preserve the legacy of LSB teaching experiences, which tend to be marginalized in broader educational discussions.

Materials and Instrument

Comprehending how individuals shape understanding from their experiences starts with assimilating rich and meaningful data. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized, interviews, observations, and relevant document analyses are critical for qualitative data collection. In this study, every participant received a guided semi-structured interview schedule with open-ended questions to elicit in-depth elaboration of their views. These questions were developed with great consideration for the aims and issues of the research. This research collected data from in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) note that in-depth interviews enable the deep exploration of an individual's lived experiences, especially for challenging issues. FGDs, on the other hand, emphasize interaction and collective contemplation of the participants, which helps bring out the shared and divergent perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

The interview guide contained three main open-ended research questions, each followed by some prompt questions aimed at eliciting more detail. A common set of questions guided the IDIs and FGDs to achieve uniformity and profundity in data collection. Responses were framed beyond the binary options of yes or no to ensure participants narrate their thoughts and experiences. To maintain ethics, all information collected during the interviewing of participants was kept confidential. Identifying information was omitted, and records were kept in encrypted files to ensure privacy. In addition, the University of Mindanao Professional Schools reviewed and validated the interview guide and instrument. These validators were selected for their considerable background and scholarly work in educational research that guaranteed the instrument's clarity, appropriateness, relevance, and overall merit for the research study.

Design and Procedure

This dissertation focused on the experiences of LSB Social Studies teachers using a qualitative phenome-

nological approach. A phenomenological approach helps us understand the meaning of experiences for participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith & Shinebourne, 2022). More recent scholarship, such as Lopez and Bell (2021) and Thompson (2023) illustrates the importance of looking at educators' subjectivity, particularly in cultural or organizational contexts. With this goal in mind, the study aimed to document the life and work of participants as Social Studies teachers in the LSB program.

For this case study, the researcher obtained formal clearance from the Dean of the Professional School of the University of Mindanao's Main Campus. With these approvals, the school heads were also requested to grant permission to conduct the research. With these approvals, participants with at least one year of experience teaching the LSB program were purposively sampled. As Palinkas et al (2021) noted, purposive sampling is an important approach in qualitative research where valuable information cases are located. After participant selection, all participants received information sheets and consent forms detailing the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study. Subsequently, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted as per the participant's schedules. Depending on the participants' preferences and applicable health guidelines, these sessions took place online or face-to-face. All procedural steps from participant recruitment to data transcription were followed systematically to uphold rigor and ethical standards of research.

In this study, the researcher adopted the roles of data collector, ethical supervisor, and reflexive interpreter. As a researcher, setting reflexivity when interpreting data is important to prevent personal biases; in this study, the researcher needed to consider their choices and reflexivity in the context of their position throughout the research process. Various interactions or engagements, including listening, empathic commitment, and professional distance, were utilized alongside data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the environment allowed participants to respond freely, which is important in phenomenological studies (Finlay, 2021).

Individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) had semi-structured interview guides developed by relevant experts for data collection. These guides straddled the border of a blueprint for the extraction of narratives and allowed respondents to respond more fully. With the consent of the participants, voice recording was used to capture data accurately and completely. Participants also defined clarity and correctness during member checking; thus, they could reclaim control over their words after restoring them to express accurate representations (Birt et al., 2020). This study strengthened rigor by implementing triangulation with individual interviews, group discussions, and researcher notes to enhance credibility from multiple viewpoints.

This study ran for several months. In the first month, I obtained ethical and administrative approvals, making up the first step. The second month encompassed the selection and scheduling of the study participants. The third and fourth months focused on conducting the interviews, FGDs, and data collection. Transcription, member checks, and preliminary coding followed this. In the last month of the study, I completed thematic and interpretive analyses and held several consultations with my adviser. As Nowell et al. (2022) proposed, a coherent structure to this timeline was achieved by applying a methodology-based approach, which provided ample opportunity for comprehensive analysis. I followed the recommendation of my consultant and adopted a methodology-based approach which provided coherence while allowing thorough analysis as suggested by Nowell et al. (2022).

The material was integrated and analyzed using thematic approaches in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework. This starts with data familiarity, followed by coding, thematic development, and refinement of categories. This approach was most suitable because it effectively

identifies patterns in qualitative data. Participants' voices were able to resonate because themes were constructed inductively from the data. Moreover, peer debriefs with colleagues and meetings with the research adviser helped corroborate the findings, increasing dependability (Nowell et al., 2022). Using this approach, LSB Social Studies teachers' narratives yielded rich descriptions and significant insights. To conclude, ethics were fully complied with throughout the study. The principal investigator obtained an ethics clearance certificate from University of Mindanao Ethics and Review Committee under UMERC Protocol No. 2024-414. From an ethical standpoint, all participants provided informed consent prior to the commencement of the study. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded through the use of pseudonyms and the secure physical and digital storage of the research data. As outlined by Ryen (2021) and Tracy (2020), ethical reflexivity frames ethics critique as a process of contradiction evaluation, focusing on fairness and respect toward participants in relation to the research. During the course of the interview, participants were provided with the agency to deem sensitive questions unnecessary. They were granted the option to answer only those questions they wished to respond to, choose not to respond at all, or withdraw at any point. Such measures constitute the ethical-structural boundaries critical to defending participants' rights and maintaining ethical standards of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experiences of Local School Board as Teachers in Social Studies

The themes presented in Table 1 are the ones that flourished in the conducted interviews and FGD with the participants. The following are the themes regarding the experiences of non-major social studies teachers in teaching social studies: *commitment and professionalism in daily practice, navigating the challenges of limited resources and heavy workload, reflections on job stability and financial concerns, and triumphs and moments of success.*

Table 1. Lived Experiences of Local School Board Teaching Social Studies

Themes	Core Ideas
Commitment and Professionalism in Daily Practice	Privilege of performing
	I feel proud to be contributing to the future of the community through education
	I feel grateful because i was able to practice my chosen profession
	Going to work every day with a positive outlook
	Love interacting with my students, guiding them
Navigating the Challenges of Limited Resources and Heavy Workload	You lack instructional resources to be used in your class.
	The resources, really, and of course, the students who are products of modular learning,

	Handle different subject areas not within your expertise
	Dealing with students with diverse behaviors and learning needs.
	Little resources, a wide range of student needs, time management, dealing with behavioral and heavy work loads
Reflections on Job Stability and Financial Concerns	Financial struggles remain a major challenge. Budgeting my small salary is tough, and at times,
	Lower salary rate
	We have no choice but to adjust and learn again based on experience
	The salary is so small
	Contributions are done even if salary is so little
Triumphs and Moments of Success	Lighter paper works and documentation
	Easy managing and adopting with work load
	Focused on being adaptable and organized, taking advantage of every opportunity to learn
	Able to learn from permanent teachers
	Attend and experience trainings like a teacher

Commitment and Professionalism in Daily Practice. This theme reveals how deeply committed LSB teachers are to their work, not just in fulfilling their duties, but in living out their role as educators daily. For them, being a teacher isn't just about showing up to school and delivering lessons; it's about consistently giving their best, being present for their students, and embracing the work with heart and purpose. Whether they are permanent or not, they carry themselves with the same level of professionalism and care.

According to one participant,

“As a Local School Board (LSB) Teacher, I had the privilege of performing many of the responsibilities of a permanent teacher.” IDI-1

Moreover, as stated by one participant,

“Being a school board teacher is both rewarding and challenging. I love interacting with my students, guiding them in their learning journey, and seeing their progress.” IDI-7

A third participant reflected on their two years of experience,

“In my 2 years' experience as a Local School Board teacher assigned in our local community, I feel grateful because I was able to practice my chosen profession and I am able to share my experiences and knowledge to the students.” IDI-3

Another teacher described a typical day,

“But even though it's tiring, I really enjoy seeing my advisory students becoming more mature and confident in themselves over time. It's very heartwarming and it makes the fatigue go away.” IDI-4

Despite these challenges, a participant reflected:

“Despite challenges like limited resources and diverse student needs, I feel proud to be contributing to the future of the community through education.”*IDI-2*

The commitment and professionalism shown by the LSB teachers are reflected in their daily routines and attitudes toward their students. They go beyond just teaching; they plan their lessons, dress professionally, and engage with students on both academic and personal levels. One participant shared how they balance being a teacher and an adviser, emphasizing the importance of supporting students emotionally as well as academically. Recent studies confirm that professionalism in teaching today includes not only lesson preparation and teaching skills but also emotional intelligence, adaptability, and caring for students' well-being (Kim et al., 2021; Torres & Rivera, 2020). Teachers' dedication to these responsibilities, even when their positions are not permanent, highlights their deep commitment to student growth and the community. This approach to teaching goes beyond the classroom, making a lasting impact on students' personal development (Cruz & Espina, 2022; Navarro & Garcia, 2023).

Navigating the Challenges of Limited Resources and Heavy Workload. Teachers often face the challenge of having limited resources and heavy workloads, which can be overwhelming. With not enough materials or support, they get creative and find ways to teach with what they have. On top of lesson planning and grading, they also must handle administrative work and extra duties, often sacrificing their personal time. This constant pressure can lead to stress and burnout, leaving little time for rest. Despite this, many teachers stay committed to their students, driven by their passion to help them succeed. However, this dedication can affect their well-being, showing how important it is to better support teachers in their work. According to one participant,

“The challenging part of being a Local school board teacher is that you lack instructional resources to be used in your class. I mean, we have supplies, but as a schoolteacher, just like permanent teachers, I also need to have a printer to easily print out activities. What I did was I always went to the good office to let me print out documents.”*IDI-3*

Another participant echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing that the struggles go beyond just a lack of resources. The shift from modular learning to face-to-face classes had been particularly difficult.

“Okay, so there are a lot of challenges and triumphs as a local school board teacher, and one of those is the resources, really, and of course, the students who are products of modular learning, which is very challenging for the teacher because many of them can't read, so the adjustment from modular to face-to-face was really significant for me.”*IDI-6*

Moreover, one participant shared,

“I sometimes handle different subject areas as LSB, and since we are new ones, we also get piled up with work.”*IDI-6*

Another participant shared her experience,

There were challenges, particularly in dealing with students with diverse behaviors and learning needs.*IDI-1*

One participant described the situation vividly, saying,

“I had to deal with a variety of difficult situations, including little resources, a wide range of student needs, time management, dealing with behavioral and personal problems, and adjusting to change.”*IDI-2*

Educators routinely grapple with the practical challenge of balancing a high workload against insufficient resources. As interview respondents indicated, in some cases, they are given to teach extra subjects, or extra assignments, simply because there is no one else available to complete them. These circumstances

force them to go far out of their comfort zones, master new skills on the fly, and undertake excessive work hours even if it means giving up personal time. Under normal circumstances, the mental exhaustion would be overwhelming; nevertheless, a considerable number of educators continue to remain invested in their students' development and draw motivation from the sense of purpose that comes with their profession. The type of commitment that professionals exhibit under such conditions can, however, be made an enduring psychopathological condition known as occupational stress. Garcia and Weiss (2020) and Cerna (2022) note the lack of mental health resources available to cope with rising demand alongside teaching hands-off pedagogy substantially undermines teachers' mental health and job satisfaction. In the same vein, Reyes and Santiago (2023) address the clear lack of proactive resource allocations targeting the emotional well-being of educators to equip them with the means of coping with such undue pressure. This is the situation that most participants portrayed, teachers while burdened nevertheless, continually demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of adversity motivated by unwavering love for the vocation embraced and the community they serve.

Reflections on Job Stability and Financial Concerns Participants shared that low salary and a shortage of job stability are one of the major challenges in their role as LSB teachers. With limited income, many struggle to meet daily needs, cover classroom expenses, and afford transportation. Some felt disheartened, realizing that their expectations of financial comfort in teaching were far from reality. These concerns can affect their motivation and overall well-being, despite their continued dedication to the profession.

As one participant shared,

“Financial struggles remain a major challenge. Budgeting my small salary is tough, and at times, I have to use my own money to buy materials for my lessons due to the lack of resources. Still, I do my best to be resourceful and creative to ensure my students receive quality education.”*IDI-7*

Another participant expressed that,

“My challenges are that my station is quite far, and we have a very small salary, so it really is not enough for my daily needs, classroom expenses, and transportation costs for commuting back and forth from home to school. So, budget is my biggest challenge as an LSB teacher.”*FGD-1*

Participants also pointed out how financial obligations add to the burden, with one saying,

“In my experience as an LSB educator, one challenge I faced is... those with numerous contributions; we must meet those expectations. My minimal compensation as an LSB creates a tremendous challenge.”*FGD-6*

Moreover, one participant reflected on unmet expectations,

“All my hopes were shattered. Teaching is something I thought would bring me joy, but the monetary compensation is frankly disheartening. I presumed I would amass considerable financial wealth due to it.”*FGD-7*

The utterances of the participants reveal a shared problem amongst LSB teachers, relative to worries of employment stability and associated economic anxieties. A plethora of LSB economic strains—demanding long school commutes for low wages, personal investments into teaching aids, and compulsory contributions to the school—entail a burden that transcends the professional sphere. Even when attempting to engage fully, the emotional and physical toll of a lifetime of unrelenting disappointment—as a result of unmet expectations, particularly in terms of financial compensation—often leads to chronic disillusionment. Gumabay and Gacayan (2021) reported that LSB teachers deal with irregular and low

salaries, yet persist in their teaching duties out of a deep sense of responsibility and love for the profession. Their work further highlighted that while the teaching passion propels these educators forward, a juxtaposing reality where finances are barely available alongside minimal employment opportunities restricts their health and professional growth in the long run.

Triumphs and Moments of Success. Streamlining effortless processes allows an individual to focus on managing the workload and refining efforts. The willingness to take on new responsibilities while optimizing learning reflects adaptive fluidity that can translate to mastered enhanced organization. Moreover, interacting with educators teaches full-time professionals improves their practice and broadens their insights. Taking an active role in practitioner-oriented classes enables professionals to acquire a deeper comprehension of their field, thereby enriching their methods and inspiring inventive strategies that facilitate progress.

One participant shared,

“Staying organized and flexible ensured that I was able to learn from my peers to the fullest.” *IDI-4*

An active participant highlighted the impact of professional development,

“I attended the LAC session every month and attend trainings and workshops at school.” *FGD-6*

Another participant shared,

“Of course, I really make sure to give time to understand the new changes, and if there are parts that are confusing, I ask my colleagues. It’s better for me to be updated and informed so I can understand why there are changes and so I can apply them correctly in my teaching.” *IDI-1*

Teachers at LSB experience successes despite challenges such as inadequate materials and heavy workloads. Focus on adapting to responsibilities improves teaching, and enhances personal growth. One participant underscored the value of organized adaptability gleaned while learning from peers which corroborates that collaboration and feedback help improve teaching. Setiawan and Anwar (2020) indicate teacher collaboration as well as reflective practices increase professional competence and improve student performance. In addition, the influence of professional development through LAC sessions and training was apparent in their success story. Hashim and Yunus (2021) demonstrate participation in teacher training boosts self-confidence and fosters novel teaching techniques. Finally, proactive response to changes in education, as noted by one participant, supports findings by Nguyen et al. (2022) on the need for adaptability and continuous learning in everchanging classrooms. These experiences and insights collectively show how strategic organization, peer learning, and professional development contribute to triumphs in the teaching profession.

Coping Mechanisms Used to Manage Your Work as a Teacher Effectively

Presented in Table 2 are the themes after careful segregation and classification of the participants' responses to the articles for coping mechanisms used to manage your work as a teacher effectively. The strategies used to effectively manage school boards teachers' work are as follows: *coping mechanisms to manage stress, building supportive work relationships, adapt and commit for professional growth, adapt and commit for professional growth.*

Table 2. Coping mechanisms used to manage work as teacher

Themes	Core Ideas
Coping Mechanisms to Manage Stress	I ensure i get enough rest because it helps me recharge and handle stress better.
	Watching funny videos on the internet when i'm feeling stressed out
	I eat a lot and remind myself that i have a family to think
	Engage in hobbies like watching tv or using social media for a while
	Make time to do the things i love, like reading books, exercising, talking to my family
Building Supportive Work Relationships	Collaborating with colleagues has also been invaluable, as sharing ideas and responsibilities helps
	Connect with fellow teachers for support and advice
	Regularly share ideas, strategies, and resources to enhance our teaching effectiveness
	We are quite close and support each other because we go through the same struggles
	Show concern and make connections with my workmates and participate in school events
Adapt and commit for Professional Growth	Continuous professional development is essential for coping
	Actively participate in workshops, training sessions, and learning action cells
	Make time to join workshops and seminars that provide me with learnings
	Attend conferences, webinars, and workshops related to teaching and classroom management
	Apply strategies gained from trainings and embrace differentiated instruction

Coping Mechanisms to Manage Stress. Teaching, especially in an LSB position, can be emotionally and physically draining, and many teachers develop coping mechanisms to manage stress. One participant shared how they leaned on reflection and planning after each school day to process their emotions and prepare for the next. Others found solace in connecting with colleagues, seeking advice or simply sharing their experiences. For some, engaging in personal hobbies or activities outside of school helped to recharge their energy and maintain a healthy work-life balance. These strategies, while simple, allowed teachers to stay resilient and continue giving their best in the classroom, even amidst the pressures they face daily. According to one participant,

“Managing stress as an LSB Social Studies teacher can be challenging, but I have found several effective coping mechanisms. First and foremost, I prioritize my sleep. Regardless of the workload, I ensure I get enough rest because it helps me recharge and handle stress better. Another coping strategy is spending quality time with my loved ones, including family and friends.”*IDI-1*

Another participant emphasized the need to momentarily remove oneself from stressful situations:

“Give yourself some time to de-stress and relax. For example, you can engage in hobbies like watching TV or using social media for a while and then go back to reality after you have de-stressed yourself. That is my coping mechanism.”*FGD-1*

Engaging in lighthearted content and spiritual grounding also surfaced as helpful tools. As one participant expressed:

“During my free time and after class, my coping mechanism honestly watching funny videos on the internet when I’m feeling stressed out the entire day aside from watching funny videos online I love listening to music as well. I think it is essential to have things and hobbies that you like and top of I also pray to God to give more strength to continue teaching.”*IDI-3*

Similarly, another participant shared the value of pursuing personal interests:

“My coping mechanisms for managing stress are to make time to do the things I love, like reading books, exercising, talking to my family, and expressing my feelings. That's it.”*FGD-2*

Managing stress remains an important component in the profession of teaching, particularly for LSB Social Studies teachers who handle more roles than the available support. Study participants discussed various personal methods to manage stress, including sleeping early, communicating with friends and family, watching funny clips, listening to music, or praying. These strategies show a profound realization of individual needs for staying mentally and emotionally balanced. Teachers adopting strategies of emotional expression or relaxation like Burić et al. (2021) showed adaptive coping received lower burnout and higher satisfaction within their work. Strong emotional regulation and personal hobbies have also been found to aid educators in managing the emotions tied to the profession, as noted by Schoeps et al. (2020). The participants’ reflections attest simple practices such as laughter, prayer, or a moment of silence can encourage well-being and motivation in the face of daily professional stressors.

Building Supportive Work Relationships. Establishing supportive relationships at work is critical for fostering a constructive work climate for teachers. When teachers are encouraged by their colleagues, they tend to be more enthusiastic, self-assured, and experience less stress. Support during difficult times, along with role strategy sharing, listening, and helping one another, improves morale. The relationships enhance the sense of collective teamwork, making a difference which is beneficial during their most trying times. When teachers collaborate, not only is it easier to manage responsibilities, but it also enhances workplace satisfaction. An effective workplace support system enhances the teachers' experience, enabling them to focus more on improving students' learning experiences.

According to one participant,

“So first, it is important to build a strong rapport with workmates, especially those from LSB, so we share the same sentiments and experiences. That's why we are quite close and support each other because we go through the same struggles and challenges every day. That becomes our learning experience, and when we finally get assigned together, we celebrate our journey.”*FGD-1*

Moreover, as stated by one participant,

“I actively collaborate with my colleagues, especially fellow LSB teachers. We regularly share ideas, strategies, and resources to enhance our teaching effectiveness. Over time, this collaboration has fostered strong friendships among us, allowing us to support each other in times of need.”*IDI-1*

Another participant also emphasized the value of teamwork and shared responsibility,

“Collaborating with colleagues has also been invaluable, as sharing ideas and responsibilities helps reduce stress and fosters a sense of community.”*IDI-4*

To create a supportive environment, another participant noted the importance of active participation and connection,

“Ahhhhh, to build a supportive network, I need to show concern and make connections with my workmates and participate in school events and meetings—things like that.”*FGD-2*

Numerous participants underscored the impact of support from colleagues and mentors. Positive workplace relationships with colleagues serve as an essential buffer for teachers, facilitating collegial or collective support and emotional well-being. It has been noted that teachers who practice some form of collaboration with peers not only experience lower levels of stress but also higher levels of job satisfaction (Hobson et al., 2021). Collaboration among educators leads to the sharing of teaching materials and improvement of teaching morale, which is beneficial for the workplace (Sun et al., 2022). Work environments that encourage and facilitate teachers to communicate, seek help, and attend school functions contribute to belongingness and professional development (Toropova et al., 2021). Such a community enables educators to face challenges while remaining committed to their professional roles.

Adapt and Commit for Professional Growth. The commitment and adaptation to professional development is a journey many LSB educators undertake with passion and resolve. These educators, in spite of the ambiguous circumstances related to their employment status and the everyday hurdles they face, show an eagerness to learn and grow. They strive to solicit feedback, observe veteran teachers, participate in training sessions, and utilize every possible chance to enhance their skills for the benefit of their students. While it may be particularly challenging with limited resources and little recognition, their desire to improve drives them onward. Growth isn't solely about acquiring distinct abilities; in this case, it is also the serenity to change, the modesty to accept, and the persistent resolve to make a tangible impact, irrespective of how difficult the struggle becomes.

According to one participant,

"For me, continuous professional development is really very important to cope with the challenges of teaching. I always attend trainings about new teaching strategies and technologies so that I can be more flexible." *IDI-7*

Others echoed this perspective, participants shared how active involvement in school-based programs contributes to growth,

"Honestly, I am very active in participating in workshops, trainings, and LAC sessions in our school. It's really nice because I learn a lot of practical strategies for my professional growth." *IDI-1*

Moreover, as stated by one participant,

“I attend conferences, webinars, and workshops related to teaching and classroom management as part of my ongoing professional development.”*IDI-2*

One participant appreciated the inclusion of LSB teachers in formal trainings, noting its empowering impact,

“So there are many trainings available for teachers and we are very lucky because we are included in the training and the most important thing is we are included in the INSET so we can learn new methods from DepEd even though we are not yet regular employees.”FGD-1

The fast-changing educational landscape requires teachers to continually adapt and invest in professional development. Engaging in training sessions, workshops, and webinars ensures that educators remain updated with new teaching methodologies and classroom management strategies (Schleicher, 2021). Studies show that teachers who actively participate in professional learning communities and apply innovative teaching practices enhance both their instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2022). Commitment to professional growth is not only about attending seminars but also about embracing differentiated instruction, integrating technology, and refining teaching methods to meet diverse student needs. By prioritizing continuous learning, educators can stay motivated, confident, and effective in their profession.

Insights of Local School Board Teachers on New Normal Education

After careful classification of the responses of the participants about their insights into the situation of the local school board teachers major in Social Studies. Their insights about new normal education have three (3) significant themes manifested: *LSB teachers are ancillary to achieving quality education, improving educational outcomes through adequate funding, and fostering inclusive and differentiated classroom are essential.*

Table 3. Insights of Local School Board Teacher on New Normal Education

Themes	Core Ideas
LSB teachers are ancillary to achieving quality education	Lsb program in the government is really helpful because it also provides assistance to our deped teachers
	Local school board (lsb) teachers has been a tremendous help
	Hiring lsb teacher is very much useful from both parties the school and for the lsb teacher.
	Local school board teachers provides an opportunity to strengthen the education system
	Extra pair of hands in education learners is very essential
Improving Educational Outcomes Through Adequate Funding	More funding for school activities and facilities
	Higher pay for lsb teachers
	Faster fund processing for school-based projects
	More budget for teacher trainings

	More programs for teachers to enhance service and competence
Fostering inclusive and differentiated classroom are essential	Understanding their strengths, weaknesses, cultural backgrounds, and family situations is essential.
	Integrating local traditions, recognizing different cultural celebrations, or simply encouraging students to share their unique perspectives
	Deep understanding of students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences
	Ensuring that every student feels heard and accepted is essential to developing a supportive and inclusive classroom
	It's important to acknowledge and embrace their differences

LSB Teachers Are Ancillary to Achieving Quality Education. LSB Social Studies teachers play a vital role in achieving quality education, even if their positions are not permanent. They take on the same responsibilities as regular teachers planning lessons, managing classrooms, and supporting students academically and emotionally. Despite facing challenges like job insecurity and limited resources, they continue to show dedication and passion for teaching. Their presence helps fill gaps in the education system, especially in areas where there is a shortage of regular teachers. By stepping up and delivering quality instruction, LSB teachers ensure that learning continues smoothly for students. Their efforts may often go unrecognized, but they are essential in keeping the education system running and in helping students reach their full potential.

According to one participant,

“So I think the LSB program in the government is really helpful because it also provides assistance to our DepEd teachers. But what I really learned is that money doesn't really matter. Aside from money, you can truly pour your heart, soul, and time into being an LSB teacher.” *FGD-1*

Another participant shared a similar journey. She recalled how the LSB program gave her hope while waiting for a permanent item.

“The government program for hiring Local School Board (LSB) teachers has been a tremendous help, providing employment opportunities for aspiring educators while they wait for permanent positions.” *IDI-1*

Still, another participant shared how the reality of being an LSB teacher can be exhausting, but fulfilling.

“Hiring LSB teacher is very much useful from both parties the school and for the LSB teacher. First thing, having LSB teacher around is a great help for they can support and fill in classroom adviser who happen to be not around for important matters. Also on the part of the LSB teacher although it is somehow tiring but as for my experience I can say that it is beneficial for I can practice my profession and gain experience and at the same time I am earning.” *IDI-3*

Another participant shared something truly heartfelt,

“The government program for hiring local school board teachers provides an opportunity to strengthen the education system by hiring skilled, community-based teachers.” *IDI-4*

Local School Board (LSB) teachers play a crucial role in supporting the public education system, offering valuable assistance to both students and permanent teachers. Their presence helps address teacher shortages and ensures that students receive the attention they need in the classroom. Studies highlight that contract-based teachers, such as LSB teachers, significantly contribute to easing the workload of regular teachers while improving student-teacher ratios, which directly enhances learning outcomes (Mackenzie & Santiago, 2021). Additionally, the LSB program benefits both the education sector and the teachers themselves by providing employment opportunities and strengthening the overall quality of education. The presence of additional educators ensures that no learner is left behind, reinforcing the idea that an extra pair of hands in the classroom is vital to sustaining educational success (García & Weiss, 2022).

Improving Educational Outcomes Through Adequate Funding. Improving educational outcomes greatly depends on the availability of adequate funding. When schools receive sufficient financial support, they can provide essential resources such as updated learning materials, better facilities, and access to technology all of which enhance the learning environment. For teachers, proper funding means fair compensation, opportunities for professional development, and support services that reduce burnout. For students, it translates to more engaging lessons, extracurricular programs, and better classroom experiences. Without enough funding, both teaching and learning suffer, but when investment in education is prioritized, it creates a ripple effect that leads to improved performance, motivation, and long-term success for both teachers and learners

According to one participant,

“Increase our salary, hopefully it will be a bit higher, and also give us benefits similar to those of regular teachers.” *FGD-5*

In addition to financial considerations, participants also shared,

“I suggest nga dugangan pa ang support ug training para sa mga teachers, labi na sa pag-adapt sa bag-ong pamaagi sa pagtudlo ug teknolohiya. Ang paghatag og daghang oportunidad para sa mga teachers para makatabang pud sa pagpaayo sa quality na edukasyon. IDI-4

“I suggest increasing the support and training for teachers, especially in adapting to new teaching methods and technology. Providing more collaboration opportunities between teachers can also help improve the overall quality of education.”

Moreover, as stated by one participant,

“To improve this government program for hiring LSB teachers, it is necessary to ensure that there is support for the development of this profession, provide additional opportunities, and guarantee that resources are available in schools to help LSB teachers like me” *FGD-2*

Improving educational outcomes requires not just teacher dedication, but also sufficient funding and systemic support. Participants emphasized the need for increased salaries and benefits for Local School Board (LSB) teachers, aligning them more closely with regular teaching staff to ensure motivation and job satisfaction. Beyond financial concerns, they also called for stronger professional development, better access to resources, and more collaboration opportunities to enhance instructional quality. One participant underscored the need for trainings in technology and innovative teaching strategies, while another stressed the importance of resource provision to effectively support LSB teachers in fulfilling their roles. These

sentiments are backed by recent literature, such as the findings of García and Weiss (2020), who argued that adequate funding directly affects teacher performance and student achievement by improving working conditions and access to professional growth. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2021) emphasized that when teachers are fairly compensated and equipped with modern tools and training, they are more effective and satisfied in their roles. Furthermore, Bautista and Boholano (2022) noted that investing in contractual or temporary teachers like LSBs is essential to improving equity in education, particularly in under-resourced public schools. These studies reinforce the call for better financial and institutional support for teachers, recognizing that such investments are key to raising the quality of education and addressing long-term gaps in the system.

Fostering Inclusive and Differentiated Classrooms Is Essential. Fostering inclusive and differentiated classrooms is essential in meeting the diverse needs of students. Every learner brings a unique set of experiences, abilities, and learning styles to the classroom, and it is the teacher's role to create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Inclusive teaching ensures that no student is left behind, while differentiation allows educators to adjust their strategies, content, and assessments to accommodate individual needs. This approach not only promotes academic success but also builds empathy, respect, and a sense of belonging among students. By embracing inclusivity and differentiation, teachers help cultivate a classroom culture where all learners have the opportunity to thrive.

According to one participant,

“Understanding their strengths, weaknesses, cultural backgrounds, and family situations is essential.”*IDI-1*

Another participant reflected on the importance of integrating the community's rich diversity into teaching practices,

“Our school reflects the rich diversity of our community, and I make sure to incorporate this into my teaching. Whether it's integrating local traditions, recognizing different cultural celebrations, or simply encouraging students to share their unique perspectives, I want them to know that their identities matter.”*FGD-2*

Moreover another participant stated,

“Fostering a positive and inclusive classroom culture in a local school board setting requires a deep understanding of students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences.”*IDI-2*

Understanding that each student learns differently, one participant underscored the value of flexible teaching methods:

“No two students learn the same way, and I try my best to adjust my teaching methods to meet their needs. Some students learn best through discussion, others through hands-on activities, and some need extra time or support.”*FGD-4*

Fostering inclusive and differentiated classrooms is crucial in addressing the diverse needs of learners, especially in local school board (LSB) settings. Participants highlighted the importance of building meaningful relationships with students by understanding their individual strengths, backgrounds, and family situations. Through differentiated instruction and active listening, teachers create a sense of belonging and mutual respect in the classroom. Integrating local traditions and community diversity into lessons also helps students feel seen and valued. Teachers noted that recognizing students' unique learning styles and adjusting instruction accordingly contributes to a more equitable learning experience. These insights align with recent studies, such as Tomlinson and Imbeau (2020), who emphasized that differentiated instruction is a key strategy for inclusive education, enabling teachers to cater to various

readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. Additionally, Alsubaie and Ashuraidah (2022) found that inclusive classroom environments rooted in empathy, cultural responsiveness, and flexibility significantly improve student engagement and academic outcomes. As echoed in the participants' experiences, fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom is not only an ethical responsibility but also a practical approach to ensuring that every student thrives. Moreover, according to a study by Gómez and González (2023), fostering inclusivity and recognizing diverse learning needs leads to better emotional and academic outcomes, as students feel valued and understood, which is essential for creating a positive learning atmosphere that supports both academic growth and personal development.

Implications and Concluding Remarks

Implications for Practice

The conclusions derived from this study emphasize the growing support gaps for Local School Board (LSB) teachers, particularly Social Studies educators in public schools. These teachers show a deep commitment to their roles despite facing persistent challenges, such as inadequate pay, scant instructional resources, and overwhelming workloads. It is important that the local government units as well as school administrators treat LSB teachers with the respect they deserve as integral to the educational workforce. Timely and just remuneration, regular professional development opportunities, active participation of the LSB teachers in programs and governance and fair treatment show more than gratitude. These actions are essential to the enhancement of teaching and learning. To support LSB teachers navigate the challenges specific to their positions, mentoring, peer collaboration, and in-service training need to be formalized as standard.

In addition to providing resources, schools must also attend to the mental and emotional needs of LSB teachers. These individuals shoulder the same duties as their regular counterparts but receive less recognition and reduced benefits. Implementing wellness programs, safe dialogue zones, and leadership opportunities can help LSB teachers reclaim their lost value and be empowered within the school community. Their narratives depict not only the challenges they face but also the creativity and strength they possess. Holistic support goes beyond enhancing the teaching environment; it involves cultivating a system that allows hope, resilience, and compassion to flourish for both educators and learners.

For the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Maco, these findings are actionable and indicate a need to shift educator LSB's welfare-supporting policies. The LGU should actively manage the budget for education programs dedicated to teacher support and development. Improved compensation packages, benefits, and professional development opportunities for LSB teachers honor their efforts and enhance public school education. In addition, the LGU must hold regular meetings with school administrators and LSB teachers to understand their needs, evaluate programs, and share policy solutions shaped by their lived experiences. By doing so, the LGU of Maco can exemplify responsive and inclusive governance in education, where educators as the crucial agents of social transformation are celebrated.

Implications for Future Research

This study opens the door to many more important conversations. While it focused on Social Studies LSB teachers in Maco, Davao de Oro, we know that the challenges shared here, limited resources, low pay, and emotional stress are not isolated to one place. Future research should look into the stories of LSB teachers across different provinces, school levels, and subject areas. Their voices matter. By listening to more of them, we can begin to understand how widespread these struggles are and what kind of support truly helps teachers not just survive but grow. Exploring how their job status affects their long-term career choices,

motivation, and identity as educators could shed light on how we can better sustain and nurture the passion that drew them to the profession in the first place.

It would also be meaningful to study how LSB teachers' efforts impact their students. Are their resilience and creativity making a difference in learning outcomes? Are support systems, when they exist, helping both teachers and learners flourish? Comparative studies between regular and LSB teachers could reveal valuable insights on how to bridge gaps in treatment and opportunities. Most importantly, future research should go beyond the data and numbers. It should continue to tell stories of real teachers, in real classrooms, facing real challenges with courage and heart. These stories, when brought into the spotlight, have the power to shape more compassionate policies and more inclusive educational systems.

Concluding Remarks

This investigation examined the experiences, coping strategies, and perspectives of Local School Board (LSB) Social Studies teachers in Maco, Davao de Oro. Based on the findings, four pertinent themes emerged within the focus group participants' experiences: daily practice commitment and professionalism, navigating scarce resources and an overwhelming workload, reflections regarding job stability and financial concerns, as well as successes and positive milestones. From a coping strategy perspective, the participants described implementation of stress management techniques, positive work relationships, and a commitment to professional growth. Furthermore, the participants emphasized that LSB teachers are crucial to attaining quality education, expressed hope for improved educational outcomes with adequate funding and support, and highlighted the need for inclusivity and differentiation in regard to student learning.

This research has shown me how personal stories shape a collective narrative. While reflecting on my LSB colleagues' stories, tears of empathy warmed my eyes because they resonated with my own experiences. I resonate with the sleepless nights devoted to lesson planning and the sparse rewards that came with those efforts. Just as many others have, I would beamingly celebrate small wins—a student grasping a concept, parents offering simple gratitude, and even colleagues showing kindness after difficult days.

As an LSB instructor, this study has reinforced the delicate balance between struggle and meaning in our work; I've found purpose at the intersection of the two. Our struggle is ongoing, yet our impact is also profound. The strength of our collective resolve shifts the narrative from admirable to transformative. We are not placeholders or “panakip-butas”; we are actively shaping and changing minds and lives. The insights gained from this study argue strongly that even in the absence of security of tenure, unwavering commitment continues to make a difference in our students' lives.

The implications of this study, for me personally, are profound. It made me realize that while I once saw my role as temporary, it is foundational both to the education system and to my growth as a teacher. I have learned that advocacy must begin from within: that I can speak up, share my story, and use this study as a platform to call for fairness, support, and recognition for all LSB teachers like me. This experience strengthened my resolve to continue learning, collaborating, and teaching purposefully.

As IDI4 reflected, even with limited resources, creating innovative lessons gave them confidence and pride, and I share the same sentiment. There are days when I question if all the effort is worth it, especially with the heavy workload and minimal compensation. Yet, seeing our students improve and hearing them say “salamat, Ma'am” at the end of a lesson makes everything worthwhile. I also relate to what FGD1 mentioned that being an LSB teacher is a stepping stone and a source of valuable experience. It may not

be the most financially rewarding path, but it builds our resilience, shapes our character, and sharpens our skills.

Ultimately, this research is more than a requirement for graduation it reflects our shared realities, a call to action, and a message of hope. I dedicate this to all LSB teachers who continue to show up every day, with or without applause, because they believe in the power of education. May this study help amplify our voices and bring about meaningful change in our profession.

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