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Critical Barriers to School and Teacher Performance in Basic Education and Their Impact on Educational Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Persistent weaknesses in Philippine learning outcomes have directed attention to the conditions under which teachers and schools work. This study assessed the critical barriers experienced by public elementary school teachers and examined how these barriers relate to school and teacher performance, as a basis for a Teacher Improvement Plan. A descriptive-correlational design was used with all 158 teachers from the 11 public elementary schools of San Francisco District, Schools Division of San Pablo City, Philippines, in School Year 2025–2026, selected through total enumeration. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire on teacher-related and work-related barriers, a school performance checklist adapted from the revised School-Based Management (SBM) system of the Department of Education, and a teacher performance scale adapted from the Ohio teacher evaluation rubric. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson correlation were used. Teachers rated work relationship (M = 3.79), classroom condition (M = 3.63), subject matter competency (M = 3.61), and teaching pedagogy (M = 3.59) as always experienced, and workload (M = 3.46) and teaching-learning resources (M = 3.45) as sometimes experienced, with textbook sufficiency the lowest-rated item (M = 3.16). School performance in curriculum and teaching (M = 3.76) and teacher performance in instructional planning (M = 3.81) and instruction and assessment (M = 3.83) were rated highly. No significant differences in barriers or performance were found across school size, educational attainment, teaching position, years in service, or grade level taught. Curriculum, classroom condition, teaching-learning resources, and work relationship were positively and significantly correlated with most performance domains, whereas teaching pedagogy was not significantly correlated with any domain. The findings indicate that the barriers are systemic rather than tied to individual teacher or school characteristics, and they support a district-wide Teacher Improvement Plan focused on workload reallocation, classroom improvement, resource access, practice-embedded professional development, and collaborative school culture.

Keywords: *critical barriers, school performance, teacher performance, basic education, teacher improvement plan, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is widely recognized as a foundation of national development, and schools are expected to provide every learner with meaningful and equitable learning opportunities. In the Philippines, however, international and national assessments continue to show weak learning outcomes. Filipino learners performed well below the average of participating countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022

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(OECD, 2023) and in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019 (Mullis et al., 2020). The World Bank (2022) estimated that about nine in ten Filipino children at age 10 cannot read and understand a simple, age-appropriate text. National assessment results tell a similar story: in the National Achievement Test for Grade 6 in School Year 2020–2021, learners were nearly proficient only in Filipino, with a mean percentage score of 54%, and showed low proficiency in Mathematics (41%) and in English, Araling Panlipunan, and Science (44% each).

To diagnose the causes of this situation, Congress created the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) through Republic Act No. 11899 (2022). Its first-year report described a system burdened by shortages of qualified teachers, congested curricula, inadequate facilities and learning resources, heavy non-teaching workloads, and professional development that is weakly connected to classroom practice (Second Congressional Commission on Education [EDCOM II], 2024). These conditions bear directly on teachers, whose competence is closely linked to learner achievement (Toston, 2023) and whose work is shaped by the support, resources, and working conditions that schools provide (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Although many studies have examined individual barriers such as workload, resource scarcity, or curriculum congestion, few have examined teacher-related and work-related barriers together and related them to both school performance and teacher performance within a single district. Such evidence is needed by school heads and division offices that must decide where limited resources and professional development efforts should be directed. The present study addressed this need in the San Francisco District of the Schools Division of San Pablo City, Philippines.

This study assessed the critical barriers to school and teacher performance in basic education in San Francisco District, Schools Division of San Pablo City, in School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to determine (1) the professional profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of educational attainment, teaching position, years in service, and grade level and subject area taught; (2) the school profile in terms of school size; (3) the teachers' assessment of teacher-related barriers (subject matter competency and teaching pedagogy) and work-related barriers (workload, classroom condition, teaching-learning resources, and work relationship); (4) the teachers' assessment of school performance; (5) the teachers' assessment of their own performance in instructional planning and in instruction and assessment; (6) whether the critical barriers differ significantly across school sizes; (7) whether the critical barriers and school and teacher performance differ significantly across the teachers' professional profile; and (8) whether the critical barriers are significantly related to school and teacher performance. The results served as the basis for a Teacher Improvement Plan.

Literature Review

Critical Barriers in Philippine Basic Education

The Department of Education (DepEd) governs public and private elementary and secondary education in the Philippines, including the alternative learning system. Despite continuing reforms, the system faces challenges that prevent many learners from receiving quality education. EDCOM II (2024) identified the root causes of the learning crisis across priority areas ranging from early childhood to higher education, among them inadequate teacher preparation and support, congested curricula, shortages of classrooms and learning resources, and the burden of administrative tasks on teachers.

Teachers play a central role in educational quality. Toston (2023) underscored that teacher competence is fundamentally linked to learner achievement, so improving teacher quality remains a priority of reform. At the same time, the conditions in which teachers work determine how much of their competence reaches the classroom. Effective professional development, for example, is content-focused, collaborative, sustained, and supported by coaching and feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and schools that lack these conditions limit the capacity of teachers to improve.

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Teacher-Related Barriers

Teacher-related barriers concern the preparation, subject knowledge, and pedagogical skill that teachers bring to their work. EDCOM II (2024) reported a shortage of trained and qualified teachers and the frequent assignment of teachers to subjects outside their specialization, particularly in underserved areas. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd, 2017) define teacher quality as the integration of content knowledge, pedagogy, and understanding of learners, which together enable teachers to design lessons that highlight key concepts and use varied strategies suited to learners' abilities.

Professional development is the main route to strengthening these competencies, but its effects depend on how it is organized. Padillo et al. (2021) found that professional development activities were associated with improvements in instructional planning, delivery, subject-matter knowledge, and classroom management, although teachers also perceived some activities as having little benefit. Tupas and Noderama (2020) observed that in-service training in the Philippines is constrained by insufficient administrative support, limited budgets, and weak alignment with teachers' needs. Gallego and Caingcoy (2020) likewise emphasized that professional development should be anchored on the competencies and needs that teachers themselves identify.

Work-Related Barriers

Workload is one of the most frequently cited barriers. Tarraya (2023) reported that Filipino public school teachers often work beyond official hours, which compromises their personal and professional well-being. Jomuad et al. (2021) found that teachers carried heavy workloads and experienced high burnout, and that workload significantly affected both burnout and work performance. Dorji and Wangchuk (2022) similarly reported that excessive workload limits the time teachers have for lesson planning and assessment, and Kanwal et al. (2023) found that workload affects both teacher efficiency and student achievement.

Classroom condition and curriculum are further constraints. Large classes make it difficult for teachers to give individualized attention, and Etim et al. (2020) found that average class size significantly predicted school performance, with effects that differed by grade level. The K to 12 curriculum has been described as congested, with misplaced prerequisite competencies and too many learning competencies for the time available (EDCOM II, 2024). Magallanes et al. (2022) documented teachers' concerns about curriculum reform, and Igcasama (2021) reported that the spiral progression approach affected the content and transitions of subjects and placed particular demands on teachers.

Teaching-learning resources and work relationships complete the work-related barriers. Shortages of textbooks, reference materials, and facilities hinder lesson preparation and limit learners' access to content (EDCOM II, 2024). Work relationships shape whether teachers can collaborate and apply new learning. Macabulos and Vicera (2019) found that teacher collaboration was hampered by limited cooperation, differing opinions, lack of time, and unhealthy competition. McChesney and Cross (2023) found that leadership engagement, the change environment, relationships, beliefs and attitudes, and shared understanding within a school affected whether teachers implemented what they learned from professional development, while Culajara (2023) showed that School Learning Action Cells can strengthen professional collaboration and the teaching-learning process.

School and Teacher Performance

School performance reflects how well a school achieves its educational goals. Under the revised School-Based Management system, schools are assessed in curriculum and teaching, learning environment, leadership, governance and accountability, and human resources and team development (DepEd, 2024). Managerial competencies of school heads, including the management of school operations and resources, have been found to relate to school performance (Devanadera & Ching, 2023; Valenzuela & Buenvinida, 2021). Evidence on school size is mixed; Egalite and Kisida (2016) found that school size had only modest associations with student achievement once other factors were considered.

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Teacher performance refers to the quality of teachers' planning, instruction, and assessment. Sumanga et al. (2022) found that educational attainment and the number of training sessions attended significantly affected teaching performance, whereas teaching position and teaching experience did not. Bibon (2022) reported that teachers' instructional practices were related to learners' academic achievement in science. The Ohio Teacher Performance Evaluation Rubric organizes teacher performance into instructional planning, instruction and assessment, and professionalism (Ohio Department of Education, 2020), domains that parallel the planning, delivery, and assessment components of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Theory of Reasoned Action, which holds that behavior is guided by attitudes and perceived norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975); teachers' perceptions of the barriers they face are therefore expected to shape how they plan and teach. Knowles's adult learning theory, which emphasizes that adults learn best when learning is self-directed, problem-centered, and immediately relevant (Knowles et al., 2015), informed the design of the Teacher Improvement Plan. Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) supports the view that investment in teachers' knowledge and skills yields returns in organizational performance.

Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

The literature establishes that individual barriers such as workload, resource scarcity, and curriculum congestion affect teaching and learning. However, few studies have examined teacher-related and work-related barriers together and related them to both school performance and teacher performance within a single district. This study addressed that gap to provide district-specific evidence for intervention.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework. The professional profile of teachers and the school profile are examined in relation to the critical barriers in basic education, which comprise teacher-related barriers (professional development and training, subject matter competency, and teaching pedagogy) and work-related barriers (workload, classroom condition, curriculum, teaching-learning resources, and work relationship). The barriers are, in turn, examined in relation to school performance and teacher performance. The results provide the basis for the Teacher Improvement Plan.

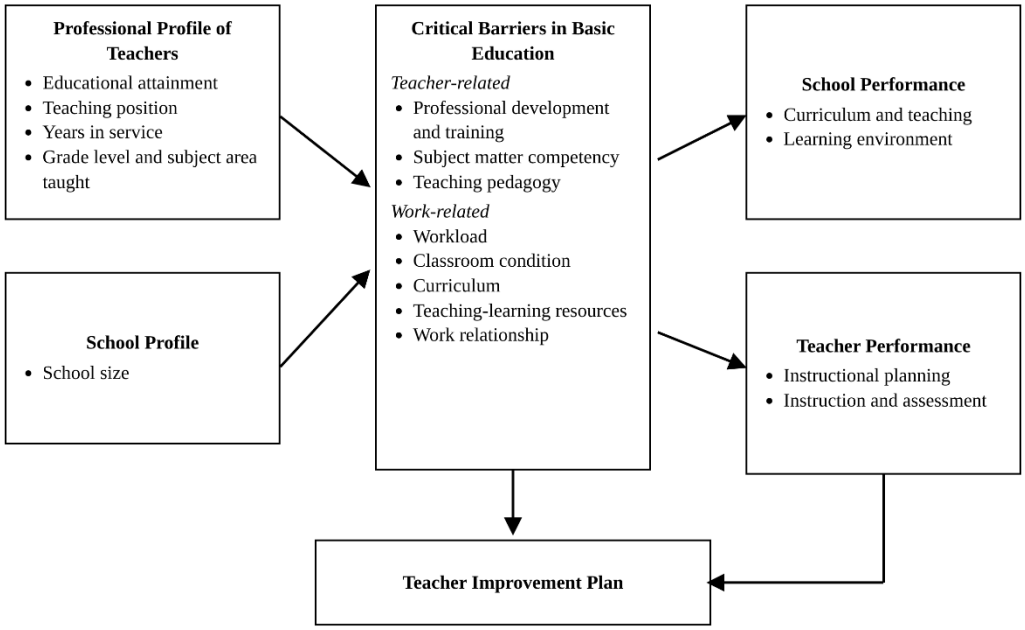


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

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METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component characterized the teachers' profile and their assessments of critical barriers, school performance, and teacher performance, while the correlational component determined the extent of the relationship between the barriers and the performance variables. This combination allowed the study to identify which barriers exist and how they are statistically linked to performance.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the San Francisco District, Schools Division of San Pablo City, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. The district comprises 11 public elementary schools: Atisan Integrated School, BRANZZA Memorial School, Fernando A. Quisumbing Elementary School, Don Enrique Bautista Elementary School, San Vicente Elementary School, San Antonio I Elementary School, San Isidro Elementary School, San Joaquin Elementary School, Sta. Ana Elementary School, San Gregorio Elementary School, and San Antonio II Elementary School.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Total enumeration was used, so all 158 public school teachers in the 11 elementary schools of the district served as respondents. Including the whole population ensured that the analysis captured a complete picture of barriers and performance levels in the district and provided a strong basis for district-specific recommendations. The distribution of respondents by school is presented in Table 2.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a questionnaire with five parts. The first part covered the respondents' professional profile, including educational attainment, teaching position, years in service, and grade level and subject area taught, and the second part covered the school profile in terms of school size. The third part was a researcher-made scale on critical barriers in basic education, covering teacher-related barriers (professional development and training, subject matter competency, and teaching pedagogy) and work-related barriers (workload, classroom condition, curriculum, teaching-learning resources, and work relationship), each rated on a four-point scale (4 = Always Experienced, 3 = Occasionally Experienced, 2 = Slightly Experienced, 1 = Not Experienced at All). The fourth part measured school performance in curriculum and teaching and in learning environment using indicators adapted from the School-Based Management self-assessment checklist of DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024 (DepEd, 2024). The fifth part measured teacher performance in instructional planning and in instruction and assessment using indicators adapted from the Ohio Teacher Performance Evaluation Rubric (Ohio Department of Education, 2020). The questionnaire was reviewed by the thesis adviser and panel members and content-validated by a principal, a school head, a master teacher, and an English expert, and it was pilot-tested with 30 teachers to establish internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha.

Data Gathering Procedure

After consultations with the adviser on the concept and instrument, the researcher requested approval to conduct the study from the Schools Division Superintendent of San Pablo City. Upon approval, permission was secured from the Public Schools District Supervisor of San Francisco District and then from the school heads of the 11 schools. The questionnaires were distributed to the teachers, who were given ample time to answer them. The completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked, and tabulated for analysis.

Data Analysis

Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the respondents' professional and school profiles. Weighted means and standard deviations were used to describe the teachers' assessments of the critical barriers,

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school performance, and teacher performance. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether the barriers and performance ratings differed across school sizes and across the categories of educational attainment, teaching position, years in service, and grade level taught, with effect sizes reported as eta squared (η^2); Pearson correlation was also used to relate years in service to performance ratings. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between the barriers and school and teacher performance. All tests were conducted at the .05 level of significance. The findings served as the basis for the Teacher Improvement Plan.

Ethical Consideration

Formal approval was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent, the Public Schools District Supervisor, and the school heads before data collection. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study through a letter of request, and their participation was voluntary. Names were optional in the questionnaire, responses were treated with utmost confidentiality, and the data were used solely for the purposes of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the professional profile of the teachers. Nearly half had earned units toward a master's degree (47.5%) and almost a third held a master's degree (30.4%), indicating a workforce actively engaged in graduate study. Teacjuhers were distributed almost evenly across the Teacher I, II, and III positions, with only 15 holding Master Teacher positions. More than a third had 6–10 years of service (36.1%), and slightly more than half taught in the primary grades (53.2%). Most teachers (86.1%) handled multiple subject preparations, reflecting the generalist assignment typical of public elementary schools.

Table 1. *Professional Profile of the Teacher-Respondents (N = 158)*

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Educational attainment		
Bachelor's degree	31	19.6
With MA units	75	47.5
Master's degree	48	30.4
With doctorate units	2	1.3
Doctorate degree	2	1.3
Teaching position		
Teacher I	47	29.7
Teacher II	48	30.4
Teacher III	48	30.4
Master Teacher I	11	7.0
Master Teacher II	4	2.5
Years in service		
1–5 years	31	19.6
6–10 years	57	36.1
11–15 years	26	16.5
16–20 years	20	12.7
21–25 years	12	7.6
26–30 years	9	5.7
31 years and above	3	1.9
Grade level taught		
Primary (Kindergarten to Grade 3)	84	53.2
Intermediate (Grades 4 to 6)	68	43.0
Primary and intermediate	6	3.8

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Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Subject area taught		
Single preparation	22	13.9
Multiple preparation	136	86.1

Note. Percentages for teaching position were recomputed from the reported frequencies.

Table 2 presents the schools and the number of respondents per school. Three schools were classified as small, six as medium, one as large, and one as very large. Don Enrique Bautista Elementary School, the only very large school, had the greatest number of respondents (29).

Table 2. *School Profile and Distribution of Respondents*

School	Size category	Enrolment	Respondents
Atisan Integrated School	Small	169	7
Fernando A. Quisumbing ES	Small	395	8
Sta. Ana ES	Small	387	8
San Isidro ES	Medium	547	15
San Antonio I ES	Medium	651	16
San Antonio II ES	Medium	619	10
San Vicente ES	Medium	627	16
San Joaquin ES	Medium	611	12
BRANZZA Memorial School	Medium	791	17
San Gregorio ES	Large	911	20
Don Enrique Bautista ES	Very large	1,660	29
Total			158

Note. ES = Elementary School.

Critical Barriers in Basic Education

Table 3 summarizes the teachers' assessment of the critical barriers. Among the teacher-related barriers, subject matter competency (M = 3.61, SD = 0.52) and teaching pedagogy (M = 3.59, SD = 0.53) were rated as always experienced. In subject matter competency, the highest-rated item concerned the focus on reading, writing, and mathematics (M = 3.79), while the lowest concerned creating engaging lesson plans (M = 3.41). In teaching pedagogy, designing activities and assessments that accurately measure students' understanding was rated highest (M = 3.79), while applying knowledge gained from professional development sessions to classroom practice was rated lowest (M = 3.31). The latter suggests that teachers have difficulty translating professional development into practice, which is consistent with the observation that professional development in the Philippines is often weakly connected to classroom needs (Tupas & Noderama, 2020) and that school culture influences whether teachers implement new learning (McChesney & Cross, 2023).

Table 3. *Teachers' Assessment of the Critical Barriers in Basic Education*

Barrier	M	SD	Interpretation	Highest item M	Lowest item M
Teacher-related					
Subject matter competency	3.61	0.52	Always Experienced	3.79	3.41
Teaching pedagogy	3.59	0.53	Always Experienced	3.79	3.31
Work-related					
Workload	3.46	0.46	Sometimes Experienced	3.55	3.35
Classroom condition	3.63	0.41	Always Experienced	3.70	3.51
Teaching-learning resources	3.45	0.57	Sometimes Experienced	3.74	3.16
Work relationship	3.79	0.41	Always Experienced	3.81	3.77

Note. Scale: 4 = Always Experienced; 3 = Occasionally Experienced; 2 = Slightly Experienced; 1 = Not Experienced at All.

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Among the work-related barriers, work relationship received the highest rating (M = 3.79, SD = 0.41), followed by classroom condition (M = 3.63, SD = 0.41), both interpreted as always experienced. Workload (M = 3.46, SD = 0.46) and teaching-learning resources (M = 3.45, SD = 0.57) were rated as sometimes experienced. Within workload, the number of tasks teachers must complete was rated highest (M = 3.55), while the time left for instructional planning after paperwork and documentation was rated lowest (M = 3.35). These results echo reports that administrative and non-teaching tasks reduce the time teachers can devote to instruction (Jomuad et al., 2021; Tarraya, 2023). Within teaching-learning resources, teachers most often created their own teaching materials (M = 3.74), while the sufficiency of textbooks for all students received the lowest rating of any item (M = 3.16, SD = 0.76). This pattern indicates that teachers compensate for inadequate resources by producing their own materials, consistent with the resource shortages documented by EDCOM II (2024).

School Performance

Table 4 presents the teachers' assessment of school performance in curriculum and teaching. The overall mean of 3.76 (SD = 0.41) was interpreted as always manifested. The conduct of remediation activities to address learning gaps in reading, science, and mathematics received the highest rating (M = 3.86), while teachers' preparation of contextualized learning materials received the lowest (M = 3.67). The results indicate that schools in the district consistently implement core curriculum and teaching practices, particularly remediation, in line with the expectations of the revised School-Based Management system (DepEd, 2024).

Table 4. *School Performance in Curriculum and Teaching*

Indicator	M	SD	Interpretation
Grade 3 learners achieve proficiency in early language, literacy, and numeracy	3.75	0.44	Always Manifested
Grade 6 learners achieve proficiency in the National Achievement Test	3.68	0.48	Always Manifested
Teachers prepare contextualized learning materials	3.67	0.46	Always Manifested
Teachers conduct remediation activities to address learning gaps	3.86	0.36	Always Manifested
The school conducts sufficient extracurricular activities	3.82	0.39	Always Manifested
The school provides access to learning and promotes inclusivity	3.75	0.37	Always Manifested
Classrooms are well equipped with necessary learning resources	3.79	0.42	Always Manifested
Overall	3.76	0.41	Always Manifested

Teacher Performance

Table 5 presents the teachers' assessment of their own performance. Instructional planning (M = 3.81, SD = 0.31) and instruction and assessment (M = 3.83, SD = 0.28) were both rated as always demonstrated. In instructional planning, knowing the content taught and understanding its relationship to other content areas were rated highest (M = 3.85 each), while expecting all students to achieve their full potential was rated lowest (M = 3.71). In instruction and assessment, treating all students fairly and establishing a respectful, supportive, and caring environment was rated highest (M = 3.87), while involving learners in self-assessment and goal setting was rated lowest (M = 3.79). The narrow ranges and low standard deviations show that teachers held consistently positive views of their own planning, instruction, and assessment practices.

Table 5. Teacher Performance in Instructional Planning and in Instruction and Assessment

Domain	M	SD	Interpretation	Range of item means
Instructional planning	3.81	0.31	Always	3.71–3.85
Instruction and assessment	3.83	0.28	Always	3.79–3.87

Note. Scale: 4 = Always; 3 = Often; 2 = Sometimes; 1 = Never.

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Differences in Critical Barriers Across School Sizes

Table 6 presents the comparison of the critical barriers across school sizes. No significant differences were found for any barrier (all $p > .05$). The largest difference was observed for teaching-learning resources ($F = 1.795$), with small schools reporting the lowest mean ($M = 3.26$), but this difference was not statistically significant. The results indicate that teachers in small, medium, large, and very large schools experienced the barriers to a similar extent, suggesting that the barriers stem from district- or system-level conditions rather than from school size. This finding is consistent with evidence that school size alone has limited association with educational outcomes (Egalite & Kisida, 2016).

Table 6. *Comparison of the Critical Barriers Across School Sizes*

Barrier	Small M (SD)	Medium M (SD)	Large M (SD)	Very large M (SD)	F	Decision
Subject matter competency	3.84 (0.22)	3.82 (0.62)	3.81 (0.61)	3.79 (0.60)	0.186	NS
Teaching pedagogy	3.85 (0.28)	3.78 (0.72)	3.80 (0.75)	3.79 (0.73)	0.446	NS
Workload	3.57 (0.34)	3.44 (0.48)	3.52 (0.42)	3.54 (0.45)	1.288	NS
Classroom condition	3.60 (0.39)	3.64 (0.41)	3.61 (0.39)	3.62 (0.40)	0.383	NS
Curriculum	3.57 (0.42)	3.59 (0.42)	3.57 (0.41)	3.58 (0.42)	0.159	NS
Teaching-learning resources	3.26 (0.49)	3.48 (0.57)	3.50 (0.60)	3.49 (0.59)	1.795	NS
Work relationship	3.84 (0.30)	3.78 (0.43)	3.75 (0.44)	3.79 (0.42)	0.606	NS

Note. NS = not significant ($p > .05$).

Differences in Critical Barriers and Performance Across the Professional Profile

Table 7 presents the comparison of work-related barriers across the teachers' professional profile. No significant differences were found across years in service, $F(6, 151) = 0.150$ to 0.192, $p \geq .978$; educational attainment, $F(3, 154) = 0.065$ to 0.134, $p \geq .940$; teaching position, $F(4, 153) = 0.129$ to 0.179, $p \geq .949$; or grade level taught, $F(2, 155) = 0.065$ to 0.135, $p \geq .874$. Effect sizes were negligible ($\eta^2 \leq .008$). Teachers therefore experienced workload, classroom condition, curriculum, resource, and relationship barriers similarly regardless of their qualifications, career stage, or grade level.

Table 7. *Comparison of Work-Related Barriers Across the Professional Profile (F and p Values)*

Barrier	Years in service F(6, 151)	Educational attainment F(3, 154)	Teaching position F(4, 153)	Grade level F(2, 155)
Workload	0.186 (.980)	0.134 (.940)	0.179 (.949)	0.126 (.882)
Classroom condition	0.181 (.982)	0.082 (.970)	0.145 (.964)	0.094 (.910)
Curriculum	0.192 (.978)	0.112 (.953)	0.172 (.952)	0.135 (.874)
Teaching-learning resources	0.170 (.984)	0.127 (.944)	0.150 (.962)	0.094 (.910)
Work relationship	0.150 (.989)	0.065 (.978)	0.129 (.972)	0.065 (.937)

Note. Values are F (p). All differences were not significant at $\alpha = .05$.

Table 8 shows that school and teacher performance ratings likewise did not differ significantly across educational attainment, teaching position, grade level taught, or school size, and that years in service were not significantly correlated with any performance domain ($r = .028$ to $.041$, $p \geq .607$). These results differ from those of Sumanga et al. (2022), who found that educational attainment affected teaching performance, but agree with their finding that teaching position and experience did not. Taken together, the absence of profile-based differences suggests that both the barriers and the perceptions of performance are shared across the district's teaching force rather than concentrated in particular groups of teachers.

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Table 8. *Comparison of School and Teacher Performance Across the Profile Variables*

Profile variable	Curriculum and teaching	Learning environment	Instructional planning	Instruction and assessment
Educational attainment, F(3, 154)	0.156 (.926)	0.203 (.894)	0.112 (.953)	0.113 (.952)
Teaching position, F(4, 153)	0.298 (.879)	0.245 (.912)	0.224 (.925)	0.225 (.924)
Grade level taught, F(2, 155)	0.342 (.711)	0.289 (.750)	0.144 (.866)	0.139 (.870)
School size, F(3, 154)	0.089 (.966)	0.112 (.953)	0.071 (.975)	0.075 (.973)
Years in service, r	0.035 (.662)	0.041 (.607)	0.028 (.728)	0.032 (.692)

Note. Values are F (p) or r (p). All results were not significant at $\alpha = .05$.

Relationship Between Critical Barriers and School and Teacher Performance

Table 9 presents the correlations between the critical barriers and the performance domains. Curriculum showed the strongest correlations, being significantly correlated with curriculum and teaching (r = .568), instructional planning (r = .570), and instruction and assessment (r = .458), all $p < .01$, as well as with learning environment (r = .158, $p < .05$). Classroom condition was the only other barrier significantly correlated with all four domains (r = .193 to .393). Work relationship showed the strongest correlation with instruction and assessment (r = .516, $p < .01$) and was also significantly correlated with curriculum and teaching (r = .434) and instructional planning (r = .438). Teaching-learning resources, workload, professional development and training, and subject matter competency were significantly correlated with curriculum and teaching and instructional planning, and all except workload with instruction and assessment. Teaching pedagogy was not significantly correlated with any performance domain (r = .035 to .114).

Table 9. *Correlations Between the Critical Barriers and School and Teacher Performance*

Barrier	Curriculum and teaching	Learning environment	Instructional planning	Instruction and assessment
Teacher-related				
Professional development and training	.331	.019	.266	.211
Subject matter competency	.211	.087	.218	*.167*
Teaching pedagogy	.109	.035	.114	.049
Work-related				
Workload	.325	.090	.273	.142
Classroom condition	.393	*.193*	.380	.305
Curriculum	.568	*.158*	.570	.458
Teaching-learning resources	.452	.070	.284	.308
Work relationship	.434	.142	.438	.516

Note. N = 158. Values in bold are significant at $p < .01$ and values in italics at $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

All significant correlations were positive and weak to moderate in strength, meaning that teachers who reported experiencing the barriers more frequently also rated school and teacher performance more highly. The researcher interpreted this pattern as indicating that awareness of barriers accompanies engagement and self-efficacy: teachers who are most involved in curriculum delivery, classroom management, and collaboration may also be the most aware of the constraints they face. Because both barriers and performance were self-reported, this interpretation should be treated with caution. The results nonetheless identify curriculum, classroom condition, and work relationship as the barriers most closely associated with performance, consistent with literature on curriculum congestion (EDCOM II, 2024; Magallanes et al., 2022) and on the role of school culture and collaboration in instructional practice (Macabulos & Vicera, 2019; McChesney & Cross, 2023).

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Teacher Improvement Plan

Based on the findings, a Teacher Improvement Plan was developed for San Francisco District for School Year 2026–2027. Grounded in adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 2015), human capital theory (Becker, 1964), and a process-improvement perspective, the plan consists of five components: (1) workload reduction and task reallocation, including a workload audit, reassignment of non-teaching tasks, rotating ancillary duties, and wellness sessions; (2) classroom condition improvement, including classroom assessment, priority repairs, furniture provision, and ventilation and lighting upgrades; (3) teaching-learning resource access, including resource inventories, an inter-school resource-sharing network, teacher-made material workshops, and a digital resource bank; (4) professional development and capacity building aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, including monthly Learning Action Cell sessions (DepEd, 2016), demonstration teaching with peer observation, and training in instructional planning and assessment; and (5) work relationship and collaborative culture enhancement, including structured faculty sharing, peer mentoring, inter-school learning visits, and recognition of teachers. The plan includes an implementation timeline, a monitoring and evaluation framework, estimated budget requirements per school, and a risk management plan.

CONCLUSION

Public elementary teachers in San Francisco District frequently experienced barriers related to subject matter competency, teaching pedagogy, classroom condition, and work relationships, and occasionally experienced barriers related to workload and teaching-learning resources, with textbook insufficiency standing out as the most pressing resource gap. Teachers compensated for limited resources by creating their own materials and found it difficult to apply professional development learning in the classroom, which points to a gap between pedagogical knowledge and its application in practice. Despite these barriers, teachers rated school performance in curriculum and teaching and their own performance in instructional planning and in instruction and assessment highly.

The barriers and performance ratings did not differ across school size, educational attainment, teaching position, years in service, or grade level taught, indicating that the barriers are systemic rather than tied to particular teachers, career stages, or schools. Curriculum, classroom condition, and work relationship were the barriers most consistently related to school and teacher performance, underscoring that curriculum clarity, the physical learning environment, and a collaborative school culture are foundational to teacher effectiveness. Because the barriers are shared across the district, interventions are most appropriately designed at the district level, as reflected in the proposed Teacher Improvement Plan.

Recommendation

The Schools Division Office may conduct a division-wide review of work relationships and collaboration, prioritize classroom infrastructure improvements, and support the adoption of the Teacher Improvement Plan across all schools in the district. School heads may establish structured collaboration systems through regular Learning Action Cell sessions, optimize classroom conditions within available resources, reallocate non-teaching tasks, and shift professional development from seminar-based formats toward practice-embedded approaches such as demonstration teaching, peer observation, and coaching. Teachers may engage actively in collaborative structures, focus on identified areas for professional growth, and develop strategies for sharing and using teaching-learning resources efficiently. Future researchers may address the limitations of this study by using objective performance measures, longitudinal and qualitative designs, and further investigation of the positive relationship between reported barriers and performance, and may compare generalist and specialist teaching assignments in the elementary grades.

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