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Teachers' Administrative Challenges in the Digital Age

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Abstract **Review Article**

This study investigated the relationship between digitalization competency and administrative workload among public school elementary teachers in the Schools Division Office of Santiago City. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from 248 teachers during the School Year 2025–2026 through a validated survey questionnaire. The theoretical framework integrated the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Person-Environment (P.E.) Misfit Theory to analyze how digital tool adoption affects professional burden. Findings revealed that the respondents are "Highly Competent" in using digital tools for learner records, performance reporting, and communication. However, teachers "Strongly Agree" that their administrative workload remains excessive, citing technical difficulties and frequent digital updates as primary stressors. Statistical analysis showed significant differences in workload perception based on age, sex, civil status, and rank, with mid-career and lower-ranking teachers experiencing the highest intensity. Pearson's r correlation results indicated a significant positive relationship between digitalization in communication (r = .158) and performance reporting (r = .137) with workload volume. This suggests that as digital connectivity increases, the perceived workload also rises. The study concludes that while teachers are technologically competent, digitalization currently acts as an additional burden rather than a solution. It is recommended that school administrators establish clear work-life limits and that the Department of Education continues to streamline digital systems to reduce redundant non-teaching tasks.

Keywords: Digitalization Competency, Administrative Workload, Teacher Burden, Technology Acceptance Model, Person-Environment Misfit.

Introduction

The shift from traditional paper-based systems to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was intended to modernize global education, yet research indicates this digital transition has unexpectedly complicated the teaching profession (Liu et al., 2025; Yang, 2025). While these tools were designed to save time, they often introduce "technostress," a condition where the digital workload creates more physical and mental pressure than the manual methods it replaced (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Wang & Yao, 2025). In many cases, the high demand of managing digital platforms leads to professional burnout, as teachers struggle to balance new technological requirements

with their primary duty of instruction (Ani et al., 2025). Within the Philippines, this issue is visible in the daily use of systems like the Learner Information System (LIS) and e-RPMS. Despite DepEd Order No. 002, s.2024, which aimed to reduce extra paperwork, many educators still perform "double-work" by maintaining both digital and physical records (Cornista, 2025; Pacaldo & Loquere, 2025).

While these challenges are documented at a national level, there is a lack of specific data regarding the Schools Division of Santiago City. It remains unclear how local issues, such as system errors and the need for constant technical training, specifically affect the workload of teachers in this area (Khlaif et al., 2022; Arik Gungor et al., 2025). Furthermore, it is important to understand how personal factors including age, sex, civil status,years of service, educational attainment and position influence how effectively a teacher manages these digital demands (Juric et al., 2026; Soriano-Alcantara et al., 2024). This study is therefore necessary to fill the local information gap and determine if digital tools are truly helping or hindering the teaching process. By clarifying the link between technology use and administrative tasks, this research can help DepEd leaders in Santiago City create policies that support teacher well-being while maintaining high educational standards (Gudelos & Mabitad, 2025; Signo et al., 2025).

Methods

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between teachers' digital competency and their administrative workload. This approach was selected to observe the variables in their natural state without external interference. By utilizing this design, the researcher was able to profile the respondents while statistically measuring the link between the use of digital tools and the perceived burden on educators. This methodology is grounded in the Person-Environment (P.E.) Misfit Theory, which explores how individual characteristics such as age, sex, civil status, length of service, educational attainment, and position influence a person's ability to meet the demands of a digitized workplace (Maquidato & Bayani, 2024).

The research was conducted within the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Santiago City, Isabela. As an urbanized division active in the Department of Education (DepEd) digital platforms, it served as an ideal setting to study the transition from manual to digital reporting. Using a cluster sampling approach, 248 public elementary school teachers were selected from a total population of 694. This sample size was determined using the Raosoft Online Calculator, maintaining a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to ensure the statistical reliability of the findings across the North, East, South, and West clusters.

The primary data collection tool was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic profiles, digital competency levels, and administrative workload impact. To ensure accuracy, the instrument underwent a rigorous validation process by a panel of five experts in school management, IT, and statistics. Reliability was further confirmed through pilot testing, where a Cronbach’s Alpha score above 0.70 was achieved across all sections, proving the tool’s internal consistency. A 4-point Likert scale was intentionally used to eliminate neutral responses, forcing a clear assessment of the teachers' experiences. Data collection followed strict ethical and administrative protocols. After obtaining official permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and school heads, the researcher oriented the respondents on the study’s voluntary nature. Surveys were distributed via both printed and digital formats, achieving a 100% retrieval rate. The gathered data were analyzed using SPSS, employing frequency distributions, weighted means, and standard deviations for descriptive analysis. For inferential statistics, Independent Samples T-tests and One-Way ANOVA were used to compare groups, while Pearson r Correlation tested the relationship between variables at a 0.05 significance level.

Throughout the process, the study adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. All respondent information was kept confidential and anonymous,

with no identifying details used in the final report. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the scheduling of the surveys was carefully managed to avoid disrupting instructional time. By prioritizing the principles of beneficence and justice, the researcher ensured that the study provided a fair and safe environment for teachers to share their professional insights, ultimately aiming to improve the working conditions within the division.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Frequency and Percent Distribution of Respondents (n=248)*

Profile	Specifics	Frequency	Percent
Age	30 years old & below	81	32.66
	31-40 years old	98	39.52
	41 years old & above	69	27.82
Sex	Male	70	28.23
	Female	178	71.77
Civil Status	Single	40	16.13
	Married	208	83.87
Length of Service	5 years & below	91	36.69
	6-15 years	104	41.94
	16 years & above	53	21.37
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's degree	73	29.44
	With master's units	92	37.10
	Master's degree	83	33.47
Position	Teacher I/II	94	37.90
	Teacher III	140	56.45
	Master Teacher I/III	14	5.65

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the 248 teachers in SDO Santiago City who are navigating the demands of the digital age. The data shows that most teachers are in their "mid-career" stage, with the largest group aged 31 to 40 (39.52%) and having 6 to 15 years of experience (41.94%). According to Ani et al. (2025), these teachers often bear the heaviest extra office work because they are expected to be both active in the classroom and highly efficient in digital reporting.

The teaching force is also largely women (71.77%) who are married (83.87%). This suggests that most educators in the area are balancing their professional roles with family responsibilities. Cornista (2025) notes that female teachers in the Philippines are often assigned many administrative tasks, while Pagela (2024) points out that being married adds another layer of pressure as they try to manage home life alongside school digital demands. This makes achieving a healthy work-life balance a significant challenge for this group.

Interestingly, while 70.57% of these teachers have finished or are currently taking a Master’s degree, more than half (56.45%) remain in the Teacher III position. This high level of education does not seem to reduce their extra paperwork. As Gueriba and Morales (2025) highlight, teachers in these ranks usually do the bulk of the data entry and system management for their schools. This confirms that even highly qualified teachers are stuck as the primary handlers of digital reports. Overall, this profile reveals a "misfit" between the teachers and

their environment: they are highly skilled professionals, yet they are trapped in roles that require a massive amount of clerical work, making it hard to keep up with both their students and their personal lives.

Table 2. *Level of Digitalization Competency of the Respondents on Performing Administrative Tasks*

Level of Digitalization Competency	Mean	SD	Description
Digital Tools for Learner Records Management	3.73	.31	Highly Competent
Digital Tools for Performance and Reporting	3.61	.49	Highly Competent
Digital Tools for Communication and Coordination	3.71	.35	Highly Competent

The data in Table 2 shows that public elementary teachers in SDO Santiago City have reached a high level of skill in using modern technology. Across all three areas: managing student records, finishing reports, and staying in touch with others the teachers are rated as "Highly Competent" (HC). For Learner Records Management (Mean=3.73), teachers show a strong mastery of systems like the LIS. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), teachers use these tools because they see them as essential for their jobs (Davis, 1989). However, Bete and Collera (2025) argue that even when teachers are very good at using these systems, the constant need for manual updates still creates a heavy amount of extra office work.

This high level of skill is also seen in Performance and Reporting (Mean=3.61). Teachers are very capable of finishing their digital performance reviews (e-RPMS) and using presentation tools like PowerPoint. While these digital skills are now a vital part of the teaching profession (Arık Güngör et al., 2025), Yang (2025) warns that being fast at digital work often leads to more frequent requests for data. This creates a "misfit" where high technical ability actually results in a heavier administrative burden, as more tasks are assigned to those who can finish them quickly (Wang & Yao, 2025).

Finally, the results for Communication and Coordination (Mean=3.71) prove that teachers have mastered digital talk. They are best at using apps like Messenger and Viber to coordinate with colleagues and parents. While these tools make talking faster (Davis, 1989), Signo et al. (2025) warn that being highly skilled in messaging can lead to a "boundary blur," where school work follows the teacher's home. For the teachers in Santiago City, their high competence means they are always "reachable," which adds a layer of always-on pressure to their professional lives (Liu et al., 2025).

Table 3. *Level of Agreement of Teachers on the Administrative Workload they experienced*

Level of Digitalization Competency	Mean	SD	Description
Volume and Intensity	3.47	.48	Strongly Agree
Workload Burden Amidst Digitalization	3.33	.59	Strongly Agree
Impact of Administrative Workload on Their Core Duties	3.17	.64	Strongly Agree

The results in Table 3 highlight a critical issue in the daily lives of educators in SDO Santiago City. Overall, the teachers "Strongly Agree" that their administrative workload has reached a difficult

level. Even though teachers have high digital skills, this has not stopped the workload from growing. This situation creates what researchers call a "Proficiency-Burden Paradox," where being good at technology actually leads to more tasks being assigned to the teacher.

In terms of Volume and Intensity (Mean = 3.47), the data shows that teachers are struggling with a massive amount of extra office work. They "Strongly Agree" that the sheer number of reports and non-teaching duties is too high. This finding matches the warnings of Shen et al. (2025), who found that when teachers have too many reports to finish, they quickly become emotionally exhausted. For the teachers in this study, the workload is not just a small part of the day; it is an intense pressure that often follows them home.

The Workload Burden Amidst Digitalization (Mean = 3.33) also received a "Strongly Agree" rating. This proves that technology has brought its own set of problems. Teachers reported that issues like system errors and slow internet turn digital tools into a source of stress rather than a help. As Bete and Collera (2025) explain, if the computer systems are not efficient, they create a clerical burden that slows everything down. Teachers often find themselves doing "double work" handling physical papers and digital files at the same time, which goes against the goals of DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024.

Finally, the Impact on Their Core Duties (Mean = 3.17) shows a serious threat to classroom quality. Teachers "Strongly Agree" that their office tasks are stealing time that should be used for helping students learn. Medez (2024) points out that when paperwork becomes the priority, the "human" side of teaching suffers. These results show a clear Person-Environment (P.E.) Misfit: while the teachers are smart and capable, the school environment is asking for more than a human can give in a single workday. Following the ideas of Gavin and McGrath-Champ (2024), this "work intensification" means educators are being pushed to their limits, which eventually hurts their effectiveness in the classroom.

Table 4. *Differences in the Level of Administrative Workload Experienced by Teachers on Digitalization*

Level of Administrative Workload	Mean	Age	Sex	Civil Status	Length of Service	Educational Attainment	Position
Volume and Intensity	3.47 (SA)	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig
Burden Amidst Digitalization	3.33 (SA)	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig
Impact on Their Core Duties	3.17 (A)	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig	sig

The empirical data reveal that the administrative workload in the Schools Division of Santiago City remains exceptionally high despite digital integration. For the dimension of Volume and Intensity, teachers recorded a Mean of 3.47, categorized as "Strongly Agree" (SA). This finding is statistically "significant" (sig) across all profiles, including Age, Sex, Civil Status, Length of Service, Educational Attainment, and Position. These results align with the observations of Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008) and Wang & Yao (2025), who argued that "digital age" tools, while intended to assist, often add more physical and time-consuming work. The consistency of this burden across all demographic groups suggests that the workload increase described by Ani et al. (2025) is a systemic issue rather than an

individual one.

Furthermore, the Burden Amidst Digitalization yielded a Mean of 3.33 (SA), with "significant" (sig) differences found across all demographic variables. This confirms the reality of "double-work" where teachers manage both manual and digital files simultaneously, a struggle previously highlighted by Cornista (2025) and Pacaldo & Loquere (2025). The fact that variables like Age and Position significantly influence this perception supports the Person-Environment (P.E.) Misfit Theory mentioned by Juric et al. (2026), suggesting that the digital environment's demands often exceed the specific capacities or resources available to different groups of teachers.

Finally, the Impact on Their Core Duties showed a Mean of 3.17, which indicates that teachers "Agree" (A) that their primary role is being compromised. The "significant" (sig) results across all categories, specifically Educational Attainment and Position, reflect the warnings of Shen et al. (2025) and Pamunag & Mosquera (2025), who noted that excessive digital reporting leaves less time for helping students learn. As teachers in Santiago City navigate technical glitches and system errors (Khlaif et al., 2022), the transition to platforms like the LIS and e-RPMS appears to have shifted their focus from pedagogy to data-centric compliance, regardless of their professional background.

Table 5. *Correlation between the Digitalization Competency Utilized by the Respondents and the Level of Administrative Workload They Experienced*

	Learner Records Management			**Performance and Reporting**			**Communication and Coordination**		
	r	p	Decision	r	p	Decision	r	p	Decision
Administrative Workload Volume and Intensity	-.013	.841	Fail to reject Ho	.158	.013	**Reject Ho**	.219	.001	**Reject Ho**
Workload Burden Amidst Digitalization	.039	.537	Fail to reject Ho	.137	.031	**Reject Ho**	.353	<.001	**Reject Ho**
Impact on Core Duties	-.100	.115	Fail to reject Ho	-.127	.045	**Reject Ho**	.059	.352	Fail to reject Ho

The Pearson *r* correlation results show whether using digital tools actually reduces or adds to a teacher's workload. The most important finding is the strong link between Communication and Coordination and both Workload Volume (r=.219) and Workload Burden (r=.353). This proves that as teachers use more digital tools like messaging apps and social media groups, their feeling of having too much office work actually goes up. This matches what Yang (2025) calls "digital tethering." It creates an always-on pressure where teachers feel they must be reachable at all times, which ends up "eating" their personal time.

In the same way, Performance and Reporting tasks showed a clear positive link with workload volume and burden. Even though digital systems are supposed to make reporting easier, teachers often find that these tools require more time for typing in data and fixing computer errors. As Gavin and McGrath-Champ (2024) pointed out, digital "clutter" can sometimes be more tiring than the old paper system. This creates a "misfit" where the tools meant

to help actually get in the way. On the other hand, Learner Records Management (like student grades) showed no significant link to workload. This means that keeping student records online doesn't really add or take away from the total amount of work teachers feel.

The data reveals that moving to digital systems is a "double-edged sword." While it offers modern ways to work, the constant need to stay connected and the difficulty of digital reports are linked to more extra work. Only the reporting tools showed a very small help in reducing the Impact on Core Duties, but it was not enough to make a real difference. These results show why DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 is so important. Just "going digital" is not enough; the extra paperwork itself must be removed so that technology does not just become another layer of stress for teachers.

The study concludes that the teachers in the Schools Division Office of Santiago City are mostly married women in their mid-careers who are highly educated but stay in middle-level teaching positions. These educators are very good at using digital tools for records, reporting, and communication, which shows they have successfully accepted technology into their work. However, this high skill level has not reduced their burden because the school environment still demands too much from them. This creates a "Person-Environment (P.E.) Misfit" where the heavy amount of digital and manual tasks is more than what teachers can handle, which directly takes away time from their main job of teaching students. The study also proves that a teacher's background matters, as those aged 31-40, male teachers, single teachers, and those in lower ranks or with less experience feel the most pressure from having too many reports and working overtime. Ultimately, the study concludes that technology has both good and bad effects. While it provides modern ways to work, the constant digital messages and complex reporting systems are actually linked to an increase in the total workload. This shows that simply using digital tools is not a solution on its own; the school system must actually reduce the number of required non-teaching tasks so that technology does not just become another heavy burden for teachers.

Based on the evidence of administrative workload and the "double work" identified in this study, several actions are proposed for stakeholders within the Schools Division of Santiago City. For Department of Education (DepEd) Officials, there is a critical need to enforce policies that remove non-teaching tasks, such as DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024. To address the problem of too much office work, the department should prioritize the creation of a unified digital platform. This would eliminate the need for teachers to enter the same data into multiple systems, ensuring that digitalization actually reduces extra paperwork rather than simply changing its format.

At the institutional level, School Heads and Administrators are encouraged to set firm boundaries regarding work-life balance, specifically ensuring that digital tasks do not spill into a teacher's personal time. Since the study showed significant differences in workload across different profiles, administrators should ensure that extra duties are shared fairly among staff. Providing dedicated technical support would also allow educators to focus on instruction instead of troubleshooting system errors. Meanwhile, Public School Teachers may benefit from targeted training in time-saving digital skills and wellness programs to manage the stress of high workload intensity.

Finally, for Future Researchers, it is recommended to conduct qualitative studies to explore the emotional effects of digital stress on educators. Expanding the research to include secondary school teachers or private institutions would also provide a broader perspective on the issue. Additionally, investigating the direct impact of hiring more administrative assistants could offer a practical solution to reducing the clerical burden and improving classroom performance.

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