ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 9| September 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

CONTEXTUALIZING PROCRASTINATION: ITS IMPACT ON THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF SCIENCE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra24177
DOI No: 10.36713/epra24177

ABSTRACT

This study examined the experiences of Science teachers from the Schools Division Office of Lucena City in relation to procrastination and its impact on their work-life balance. Using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the study simultaneously employed a descriptive survey to collect quantitative data on the prevalence, causes, and effects of procrastination alongside semi-structured interviews guided by descriptive phenomenology to capture the lived experiences of selected participants. Quantitative results revealed that workload demands, ancillary responsibilities, emotional exhaustion, and challenges in time management were major contributors to procrastination. Qualitative findings further highlighted common experiences such as emotional strain, reduced motivation, task avoidance, and the use of coping mechanisms like time blocking and digital task managers. The integration of both data components revealed that procrastination among Science teachers is shaped by a combination of professional demands and personal challenges, significantly affecting both their instructional performance and overall well-being. Based on the findings, the study recommends the development of targeted support programs and practical interventions to help teachers manage procrastination more effectively and maintain a healthier work-life balance. These results provide valuable insights for strengthening teacher wellness initiatives within the division.

KEYWORDS: *Procrastination, Work-life balance, Science teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination, the act of delaying tasks despite knowing the negative consequences, has become a prevalent issue across various professional fields, including education. Teachers, particularly those at the elementary level, carry a range of responsibilities that extend beyond their instructional duties, such as lesson planning, grading, extracurricular activities, and administrative work. These additional tasks may lead to stress and, in some cases, procrastination.

In the context of the Philippines, Olleras et al. (2022) identified four key themes in their phenomenological study: the worrier, the overdoer, the underprivileged, and the perfectionist. Additionally, due dates significantly affect both teachers and students, as highlighted by these emerging themes, leading to task delays.

Bumagat et al. (2023) specified that science teachers frequently struggle with academic workload, laboratory experimentation, and physical infrastructures, as well as occasionally struggle with instructional resources, digital competency and infrastructure, assessment, and supervision.

Elementary school teachers play a critical role in shaping young minds, and procrastination could potentially hinder their effectiveness in managing both their professional and personal lives. Hence, given also the importance of time management and task prioritization in the teaching profession, understanding the causes and effects of procrastination on teachers' performance is essential for improving educational outcomes. This study will utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to gain insights into procrastination tendencies, causes, and potential interventions.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to investigate the extent to which procrastination influences science teachers in public elementary schools in Lucena City. The specific questions that the research sought to answer are:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age; civil status; highest educational attainment; teaching experience; number of learning area/s taught other than Science; number of teaching hours per day; average class size taught per session; and ancillary tasks.
2. How does the demographic profile of teachers influence their approach to teaching tasks and responsibilities?
3. To what extent do public elementary school teachers in Lucena City exhibit a tendency to prioritize non-teaching tasks over their primary teaching responsibilities?
4. What are the possible causes of procrastination among science teachers in public elementary schools in Lucena City?
5. How does procrastination affect the professional responsibilities and teaching performance of these teachers?

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6. In what ways does procrastination impact the personal lives of teachers outside of their professional duties?
7. What strategies or interventions could effectively assist public elementary school teachers in minimizing procrastination?

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design/Research Instrument/Data Gathering Procedures

The study utilized a mixed-method research design, specifically a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative descriptive survey and qualitative descriptive phenomenological methods. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed independently, and then merged to provide a fuller understanding of the research problem (Blessington, 2023). The quantitative component involved a researcher-designed instrument grounded in Steel's Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) to measure the frequency, patterns, and tendencies of procrastination within the teaching profession. The qualitative component utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Science teachers, applying phenomenological reduction and bracketing (epoche) (Shorey & Ng, 2022).

The self-devised questionnaire which were validated and pilot tested was composed of two parts: the demographic profile and a contextualized version of Steel's PPS. Responses were scored using a Likert scale from 1 to 4. A semi-structured interview using five open-ended questions was conducted to explore the causes and effects of procrastination on participants' personal and professional lives.

4. SAMPLING DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

For the quantitative component, the 117 Science teachers from public elementary schools were randomly selected, representing two-thirds of the total population of 175. For the qualitative part, purposive sampling was used to select the six participants to gain varied yet relevant perspectives on procrastination. The criteria for selection included Science teachers who had experienced procrastination in their professional duties and personal lives, and who were also engaged in ancillary tasks.

5. STATISTICAL DESIGN

The study employed descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions to summarize the responses from the questionnaire. Cross-tabulations and correlation analyses were used to investigate associations between procrastination tendencies and demographic factors like years of teaching experience and grade levels taught, and the frequency of procrastination and demographic factors.

6. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The study was conducted in the four districts of the City Schools Division Office (SDO) of Lucena. The division comprised forty-three (43) public elementary schools.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the responses of the respondents, the following are the results and discussion to achieve the purpose of this study and answer the problem of the study:

The demographic profile of the respondents included the age, civil status, highest educational attainment, and teaching experience. A large portion (41%) of public elementary

Science teachers is aged 29–42, a period marked by active careers and growing family responsibilities. This "sandwich generation" faces pressures from caring for both children and aging parents (Patterson, 2022), increasing the risk of work overload and time pressure. The near-even split between married (51%) and single (49%) respondents suggests varied sources of procrastination.

The majority of respondents earned units or graduated with a Master's Degree. Teves and Ubayubay (2024) noted that the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 requires teachers to pursue continuous professional development. Graduate education enhances teaching quality and improves teachers' quality of life.

With regards to their workload, it resulted to 32% of the respondents have two learning areas taught other than Science; 90% declared that they have 300–360 minutes of teaching hours; and 50% have an average class size of 36–40 students. As for ancillary tasks, 86% of the respondents have duties aside from teaching. DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024, on the Rationalization of Teachers' Workload, requires 6 hours of classroom teaching and 2 hours for ancillary tasks. These include curriculum planning, instructional preparation, classroom management, assessment, and homeroom duties. Teaching-related assignments also cover roles such as coordinator, trainer/adviser, and chairmanship.

Table 4

Respondents' Tendency on the Influence of Demographics on Teaching Practices

Statements	M	SD	VI
My years of teaching experience help me efficiently manage my teaching and non-teaching tasks.	3.66	0.733	With greatest tendency
The number of students I handle affects how efficiently I accomplish my other responsibilities.	3.34	0.842	With greatest tendency
The number of hours I spend teaching per week affects my ability to complete other tasks.	3.05	0.849	With great tendency
My age impacts my ability to adapt to changes in teaching methods or policies.	3.03	0.876	With great tendency
My civil status affects how I balance my teaching responsibilities with personal obligations.	2.88	1.035	With great tendency
Average	**3.19**		**With great tendency**

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Table 5
Respondents' Demographics and Approach to Teaching-Related Tasks

Themes	A priori code
Work-life sacrifice	Family-centered sacrifice over delayed task; Instruction-driven sacrifice; Human limitation acknowledgment

The convergence of Table 4 shows that Science teachers consider teaching experience and workload as key factors in managing responsibilities. Quantitatively, respondents agreed that years of experience help them handle teaching and non-teaching tasks, supported by qualitative accounts of completing work during weekends or personal time due to institutional demands. Mufidah, Arafat, and Puspita (2021) discussed that teaching experience has a significant effect on teacher performance. Meanwhile, Pranoto, Utami, and Latiana (2021) stated that age affects teaching experience, with senior teachers being more stable, mature, and qualified. Asio and Regios de Dios (2021) found age and civil status as significant predictors of procrastination.

Civil status received the lowest quantitative rating. However, qualitative responses revealed that caregiving and household duties affect timely task completion, showing how civil status, though weak in surveys, emerged in open-ended reflections. Respondents likewise shared that family and work roles align with Tarraya (2023), who found that excessive workload consumes time for family, self, and teaching.

Both data sets highlighted workload, with surveys noting its effect on completing tasks and interviews describing the strain of multiple roles. Thus, teaching experience, family responsibilities, and workload influence how teachers manage tasks, with qualitative data enriching the understanding of these pressures.

Table 6
Respondents' Prioritization of Non-Teaching Tasks

Statements	M	SD	VI
I believe that non-teaching responsibilities affect the quality of my teaching performance.	3.21	0.585	With great tendency
Non-teaching responsibilities, such as meetings, often take time away from my teaching duties.	3.10	0.747	With great tendency
I prioritize completing administrative reports over lesson preparation when both are due.	2.88	0.948	With great tendency
I am often required to prioritize extracurricular activities over classroom-related tasks.	2.84	0.919	With great tendency
I spend more time preparing for school programs than preparing for my lessons.	2.70	1.044	With great tendency
Average	**2.95**		**With great tendency**

Table 7
Respondents' Tendency to Prioritize Tasks

Themes	A priori code
Role expectations	Role-related responsibilities

Data from Table 6 and 7 both highlight the burden of non-teaching responsibilities on teachers' instructional roles. Quantitative results showed that non-teaching duties consume time for preparation, reinforced by qualitative accounts of struggles extending beyond regular hours. The highest-rated statement stressed their impact on teaching performance. Qualitative responses also noted that teachers prioritize duties despite exhaustion, driven by responsibility. Tarraya (2023) noted that teachers perform added roles such as paperwork, seminars, training, health initiatives, disaster response, finance tasks, and administrative work. Despite policies to lessen these, respondents still handle ancillary responsibilities that affect preparation time and performance. Overall, both data sets confirm that Science teachers view non-teaching tasks as a demanding workload factor, contributing to fatigue and forcing them to reprioritize tasks by urgency over instructional importance.

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Table 8
Respondents' Tendency on the Possible Causes of Procrastination

Statements	M	SD	VI
I postpone tasks when I feel tired or stressed.	3.18	0.952	With great tendency
I procrastinate when I am unclear about how to complete a specific teaching-related task.	3.08	0.853	With great tendency
I delay preparing lessons because of distractions at work or home.	3.00	0.891	With great tendency
I delay completing tasks when I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work, I need to do.	2.94	0.874	With great tendency
I tend to postpone tasks when I feel I have more time to complete them later.	2.85	1.014	With great tendency
Average	**3.01**		**With great tendency**

Table 9
Respondents' Perceived Possible Causes of Their Procrastination

Themes	A priori code
Cognitive underestimation of task duration	Task misjudgment
Personal struggles as a trigger for delay	Emotional overload; distractions; lack of task engagement

The findings in table 8 and 9 confirm that Science teachers procrastinate mainly due to emotional and cognitive pressures. Stress and tiredness were the most agreed-upon causes, consistent with the qualitative theme of emotional overload. Respondents described exhaustion, overwhelm, and delaying tasks in hopes of having more energy. Task misjudgment also appeared in both strands, with surveys citing delays from distractions or the belief there is enough time, aligning with qualitative accounts. Distractions and disengagement were reported in both data sets; surveys noted them generally, while interviews revealed deeper causes like social media, repetitive work, and shifting priorities. Overall, procrastination arises from external workload and internal emotional and cognitive misjudgments.

Table 10
Respondents' Tendency on the Effects of Procrastination on Teaching Performance

Statements	M	SD	VI
Procrastination negatively impacts the quality of my teaching.	3.16	0.840	With great tendency
Delays in completing tasks have negatively affected my ability to achieve professional goals.	3.11	0.917	With great tendency
Procrastination delays my preparation for lessons and classroom activities.	3.02	0.928	With great tendency
Procrastination has led to conflicts with colleagues or supervisors over unfinished tasks.	2.98	1.000	With great tendency
I have missed deadlines for submitting reports or requirements because of procrastination.	2.83	0.903	With great tendency
Average	**3.02**		**With great tendency**

Table 11
Respondents' Perceived Effects of Procrastination on Teaching Performance

Themes	A priori code
Impact of procrastination on work quality	Compromised tasks
Urgency-driven behavior	Pressure-induced productivity
Role expectations	Role-related responsibilities

Quantitative and qualitative findings on table 10 and 11 show that procrastination hinders Science teachers' instructional and professional duties. Surveys indicated strong agreement that it affects lesson preparation, delays tasks, and reduces teaching quality. This suggests that teachers perceive procrastination as having a direct influence on their ability to deliver effective instruction. When tasks are delayed, the quality of classroom activities suffers, making teaching quality the most pronounced concern for the respondents. This was echoed in qualitative data, where teachers described a "snowball effect" of delays leading to rushed work and low energy. Respondents shared that procrastination produces rushed outputs, weakening teaching effectiveness, and adds emotional burden from unfinished tasks and pressure to meet expectations, consistent with survey results on missed deadlines. Some noted it can create urgency, but such productivity is short-lived. This aligns with De la Cruz and Macalisang (2024), that heavy workloads and administrative duties reduce teachers' energy and well-being, weakening

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teaching quality. EDCOM II (2024) stressed that non-teaching tasks cut lesson preparation time, making procrastination both a symptom and consequence of excessive demands. Qualitative responses further show it as a reaction to systemic pressures limiting teachers' capacity. Overall, procrastination is both a personal challenge and a product of overwhelming role demands.

Table 12

Respondents' Tendency on the Impact of Procrastination on Personal Life

Statements	M	SD	VI
Work-related delays negatively impact my sleep schedule and rest periods.	3.24	0.827	With great tendency
Delaying work tasks reduces the time I have for hobbies or relaxation.	3.21	0.805	With great tendency
Procrastination at work makes it harder for me to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	3.20	0.812	With great tendency
I spend personal time catching up on work tasks I delayed earlier.	3.12	0.873	With great tendency
I delay personal plans because of unfinished work-related responsibilities.	2.97	0.909	With great tendency
Average	**3.15**		**With great tendency**

Table 13

Respondents' Perceived Impact of Procrastination on Personal Life

Themes	A priori code
Work-life sacrifice	Family-centered sacrifice; Prioritizing rest and personal time
Emotional responses to procrastination	Conflicted emotions; Negative feelings induced

The results presented in table 12 and 13 shows the impact of procrastination on personal life. It implies that procrastination strongly affects teachers' well-being, especially rest, emotions, and work-life balance. Surveys revealed agreement that work delays disrupt sleep, consume rest and hobby time, and affect personal plans. Paudel, Ghimire, Nygård, and Neupane (2024) emphasized that inadequate sleep and excessive workloads contribute to burnout. Insufficient rest becomes both a consequence and a worsening factor of diminished work quality and well-being. Qualitative insights supported this, as teachers shared sacrificing family gatherings, weekends, or downtime to catch up on tasks. Rest and recovery also emerged as themes, with teachers coping by resting yet feeling guilt or stress. Emotional responses such as anxiety, guilt, and exhaustion were frequent, confirming impacts on emotional and physical health. Teachers described conflict between needing rest and meeting expectations, adding fatigue. Cho, Pyun, and Wang (2023) noted that heavy work demands limit leisure and cause exhaustion. Without proper rest, teachers face lower job satisfaction and well-being. These findings affirm that procrastination harms teachers' health and quality of life. Overall, procrastination extends beyond the classroom, reducing personal time, mental state, and recovery, and critically shaping teacher well-being.

Table 14

Respondents' Tendency on the Strategies for Addressing Teacher Procrastination

Statements	M	SD	VI
Reducing administrative responsibilities would allow me to focus more on teaching.	3.57	0.592	With greatest tendency
Regular monitoring of my workload would help prevent procrastination.	3.50	0.502	With greatest tendency
Developing a structured schedule for both teaching and non-teaching tasks would be beneficial.	3.39	0.742	With greatest tendency
Having access to administrative support staff would minimize delays in my teaching tasks.	3.35	0.791	With greatest tendency
Receiving time management training would help me manage tasks more effectively.	3.30	0.780	With greatest tendency
Average	**3.42**		**With greatest tendency**

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Table 15
Respondents' Strategies in Addressing Procrastination

Themes	A Priori Code
Coping strategies	Listing tasks; Time blocking
Self-regulation in procrastination	Reward-based motivation; Student-centered drive

Table 14 and15 shown the most common strategy was listing tasks as a coping mechanism. Teachers said that organizing tasks, setting deadlines, and tracking progress helped manage responsibilities and reduce overwhelm. This aligns with Panuelo and Pili (2024), who emphasized the need for policy actions to support teacher welfare. Similarly, Francisco, Tupaz, and Astilla (2024) highlighted how administrative overload contributes to emotional strain, reinforcing the importance of institutional strategies to prevent burnout and improve performance. Task lists reflect practical self-regulation strategies that help teachers regain control and minimize delays.

Quantitative and qualitative findings emphasize the need for structured support and practical strategies to manage procrastination. Surveys showed strong agreement that reducing administrative duties and monitoring workload are effective. Qualitative responses reinforced this, highlighting coping strategies like task lists, checklists, and time blocking to organize work, break down tasks, and maintain control. Self-regulation techniques such as reward-based motivation and student-centered drive were also noted as internal motivators. These align with institutional strategies aimed at reducing external barriers. Overall, addressing procrastination requires both systemic support and personal organization, enabling teachers to better manage responsibilities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results and discussions lead to the following conclusions:
Most public elementary Science teachers were 29 to 42 years old, predominantly married, with graduate-level education and 6 to 10 years of teaching experience. They handled at least two learning areas aside from Science, worked 300 to 360 minutes daily, managed classes of 36 to 40 students, and commonly held ancillary roles beyond classroom duties.

Teachers' demographic profile, especially teaching experience, influences how they manage teaching and non-teaching tasks. Class size also affects efficiency, while civil status shapes responsibilities, supported by qualitative accounts of sacrificing rest and personal time to meet professional demands.

Science teachers believe non-teaching duties reduce teaching quality and consume preparation time. Qualitative responses noted prioritizing compliance and school tasks over lesson planning due to workload pressure.

Elementary Science teachers tend to postpone tasks when tired, stressed, or uncertain how to proceed. Common reasons were emotional overload, exhaustion, distractions, low motivation, personal obligations, and disengagement from repetitive work.

Respondents believed procrastination negatively affects teaching, resulting in rushed outputs, lower-quality materials, and disorganization. While pressure may force action, it often causes exhaustion, weak preparation, and stress that reduces focus.

Most teachers reported work-related delays affecting sleep and rest. Procrastination caused sacrifices in family time and well-being, leading to guilt, anxiety, and emotional fatigue.
Strategies identified include reducing administrative duties, monitoring workload, task lists, time blocking, planners, and motivation through student-centered goals and rewards. Respondents strongly believed these would minimize procrastination.

Based on the study, the following recommendations are drawn:
It is recommended that Department of Education policymakers introduce adjustments for varied teacher work conditions. Balancing subject loads and class sizes, collaborative planning, rotating duties, and flexible arrangements could support healthier teaching routines.

The SDO is encouraged to review how non-instructional duties are assigned. Clearer separation of teaching and administrative work, fewer deadline overlaps, and better balance may help teachers prioritize effectively. Workshops on time management, emotional regulation, and goal-setting, and provide planning tools or peer-support spaces will help the teachers.

School heads are advised to strengthen planning by providing flexible timelines, encouraging early preparation, and using reminders or positive reinforcement to keep teachers engaged.

Administrators should promote boundaries that protect well-being by supporting wellness initiatives and embracing a culture that values rest and recovery.
Teachers are encouraged to build habits for task management through planners, peer strategies, and manageable goals.

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Volume: 11| Issue: 9| September 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

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