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The Impact of English Learning Large Class Sizes on Writing Instruction at the Faculty of Education in University of Zawia: Challenges and Implications

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Abstract

This research qualitative method investigation examines how elevated student-teacher ratios (45–60 learners) reconfigure writing pedagogy within resource-constrained EFL contexts at University of Zawia Faculty of Education, employing sequential explanatory design with 380 participants across quantitative surveys, classroom observations, and document analysis. Results reveal that class size operates not as a uniform constraint but as a differential stressor, systematically degrading classroom management ($r = –.487$, $p < .001$) and feedback quality ($r = –.432$, $p < .001$) while leaving pedagogical adaptation resilient ($r = –.087$, ns) a novel finding demonstrating instructors' strategic capacity despite structural limitations. Critically, 68.4% of instructors report being forced to prioritize surface errors over higher-order concerns due to temporal scarcity, with classroom management consuming 38% of instructional time rather than pedagogical interaction. The study's primary contribution lies in reconceptualizing large-class challenges through a domain-specific vulnerability framework, empirically identifying classroom management not pedagogical knowledge as the critical bottleneck requiring intervention. This shifts discourse from deficit narratives blaming instructors toward structural solutions, yielding three context-sensitive advantages: (1) a tiered intervention framework (micro-writing sequences, feedback prioritization protocols, technology-mediated scaffolding) feasible without class-size reduction; (2) the first large-scale empirical evidence from Libyan EFL contexts addressing a significant regional research gap; and (3) theoretical extension of sociocultural theory by demonstrating that scaffolding requires not only expert knowledge but temporal infrastructure a conceptual advance with implications for writing instruction across resource-limited global contexts.

Keywords: large class instruction, EFL writing pedagogy, teacher feedback, classroom management, Libyan higher education, writing assessment

أثر ازدياد أعداد الطلاب في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية على تدريس الكتابة في كلية التربية بجامعة الزاوية: التحديات والآثار

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة، التي تستخدم منهجية البحث المختلط، كيفية تأثير ارتفاع نسبة الطلاب إلى المعلمين (45-60 طالبًا) على أساليب تدريس الكتابة في سياقات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ذات الموارد المحدودة في كلية التربية بجامعة الزاوية. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على تصميم تفسيري متسلسل بمشاركة 380 طالبًا، من خلال استبيانات كمية، وملاحظات صفية، وتحليل الوثائق. وتُظهر النتائج أن حجم الصف لا يُمثل قيدًا موحدًا، بل عامل ضغط متفاوت، حيث يُؤدي إلى تدهور منهجي في إدارة الصف ($r = -0.487$، $p < 0.001$) وجودة التغذية الراجعة ($r = -0.432$، $p < 0.001$)، بينما يُحافظ على مرونة التكيف التربوي ($r = -0.087$، غير دال إحصائيًا). ويُعد هذا اكتشافًا جديدًا يُبرز القدرة الاستراتيجية للمدرسين رغم القيود الهيكلية. بشكل حاسم، أفاد 68.4% من المعلمين بأنهم يُضطرون إلى إعطاء الأولوية للأخطاء السطحية على حساب المشكلات الأكثر تعقيدًا بسبب ضيق الوقت، حيث تستهلك إدارة الصف 38% من وقت التدريس بدلًا من التفاعل

التربوي. تكمن المساهمة الرئيسية للدراسة في إعادة صياغة تحديات الصفوف الكبيرة من خلال إطار عمل خاص بالمجال يركز على نقاط الضعف، حيث تُحدد تجريبيًا إدارة الصف، وليس المعرفة التربوية، باعتبارها العائق الرئيسي الذي يتطلب تدخلًا. يُحوّل هذا الخطاب من سرديات القصور التي تُلقي باللوم على المعلمين إلى حلول هيكلية، مما يُحقق ثلاث مزايا حساسة للسياق: (1) إطار عمل تدخلي مُتدرج (تسلسلات الكتابة القصيرة، وبروتوكولات تحديد أولويات التغذية الراجعة، والدعم المدعوم بالتكنولوجيا) قابل للتطبيق دون تقليص حجم الصف؛ (2) أول دليل تجريبي واسع النطاق من سياقات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا، مما يُعالج فجوة بحثية إقليمية كبيرة؛ (3) التوسع النظري للنظرية الاجتماعية والثقافية من خلال إثبات أن الدعم التعليمي لا يتطلب فقط المعرفة المتخصصة، بل يتطلب أيضًا بنية تحتية زمنية، وهو تقدم مفاهيمي له آثار على تدريس الكتابة في السياقات العالمية ذات الموارد المحدودة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريس في فصول دراسية كبيرة، أساليب تدريس الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تقييم المعلم، إدارة الصف، التعليم العالي الليبي، تقييم الكتابة

1. Introduction

English language proficiency constitutes a critical competency for prospective educators within Libya's evolving academic landscape, particularly as international scholarly engagement intensifies. At University of Zawia Faculty of Education, English language programs serve dual purposes: developing students' linguistic competence while simultaneously modeling instructional methodologies they will later implement in Libyan schools. Writing instruction occupies a pivotal position within this curriculum, functioning not merely as a linguistic skill but as a vehicle for critical thinking development and academic socialization (Hyland, 2024). However, institutional realities frequently position pedagogical ideals against structural constraints, with class sizes regularly exceeding forty-five learners in required writing courses a figure substantially surpassing international benchmarks for effective language instruction (Alvarez and Win, 2022). The pedagogical literature consistently associates reduced class sizes with enhanced writing outcomes through mechanisms including increased teacher-student interaction, more substantive feedback cycles, and greater opportunity for individualized scaffolding (Hsoune, 2025); (Ferris, 2023). Conversely, large enrollment contexts generate distinctive challenges: instructors face intensified marking burdens that truncate feedback depth, classroom management demands compete with instructional time, and student anonymity may diminish engagement (Yu and Lee, 2019). Within Libyan higher education specifically, these dynamics intersect with additional contextual factors including variable student preparedness, limited technological infrastructure, and curriculum frameworks not originally designed for high-density delivery.

This study investigates the operational realities of writing instruction within large EFL classes at University of Zawia Faculty of Education, addressing two research questions: (1) How do elevated class sizes manifest in observable pedagogical practices and instructor decision-making during writing instruction? (2) What adaptive strategies do instructors employ to preserve instructional quality under structural constraints, and what institutional implications emerge from these adaptations? By examining the interplay between structural limitations and pedagogical response, this research contributes actionable insights for curriculum designers and administrators navigating similar constraints across the region (Xu and Qin, 2024).

2. Literature Review

Contemporary L2 writing pedagogy has evolved beyond product-oriented approaches toward process-based frameworks emphasizing recursive drafting, peer collaboration, and instructor feedback as catalysts for development (Babanoğlu and Atalmış, 2025). Sociocultural theory further positions writing as a socially mediated activity wherein expert guidance scaffolds learners' appropriation of disciplinary discourse conventions (Lantolf & Thorne, 2020). These paradigms presuppose pedagogical conditions permitting sustained interaction a presupposition frequently undermined in large-class environments where temporal and attentional resources become critically scarce (Xu and Qin, 2024); (Alsofyani and Barzanji, 2025); (Das et al., 2025). Meta-analytic reviews demonstrate modest but consistent correlations between reduced class sizes and improved writing performance in L1 contexts, particularly for

struggling writers who benefit disproportionately from individualized attention (Degtyarev, 2022). In EFL settings, the relationship proves more complex; while smaller classes facilitate feedback quality, some studies note that well-structured large classes implementing peer review protocols can achieve comparable outcomes for specific writing dimensions (Yu & Lee, 2019). However, these successful adaptations typically require explicit training in collaborative assessment a resource-intensive prerequisite often unavailable in under-resourced institutions (Andargie et al., 2025). Libyan universities operate within distinctive sociopolitical and economic parameters following periods of institutional disruption. English language programs frequently serve heterogeneous student populations with varying secondary education backgrounds, while faculty navigate curriculum standardization pressures alongside infrastructural limitations (Elsamu et al., 2025). Research specific to Libyan EFL contexts remains sparse, with existing studies primarily addressing general language acquisition challenges rather than discipline-specific pedagogical constraints like writing instruction (Karaim, 2025). This gap necessitates contextually grounded investigation attentive to local institutional realities.

3. Methodology

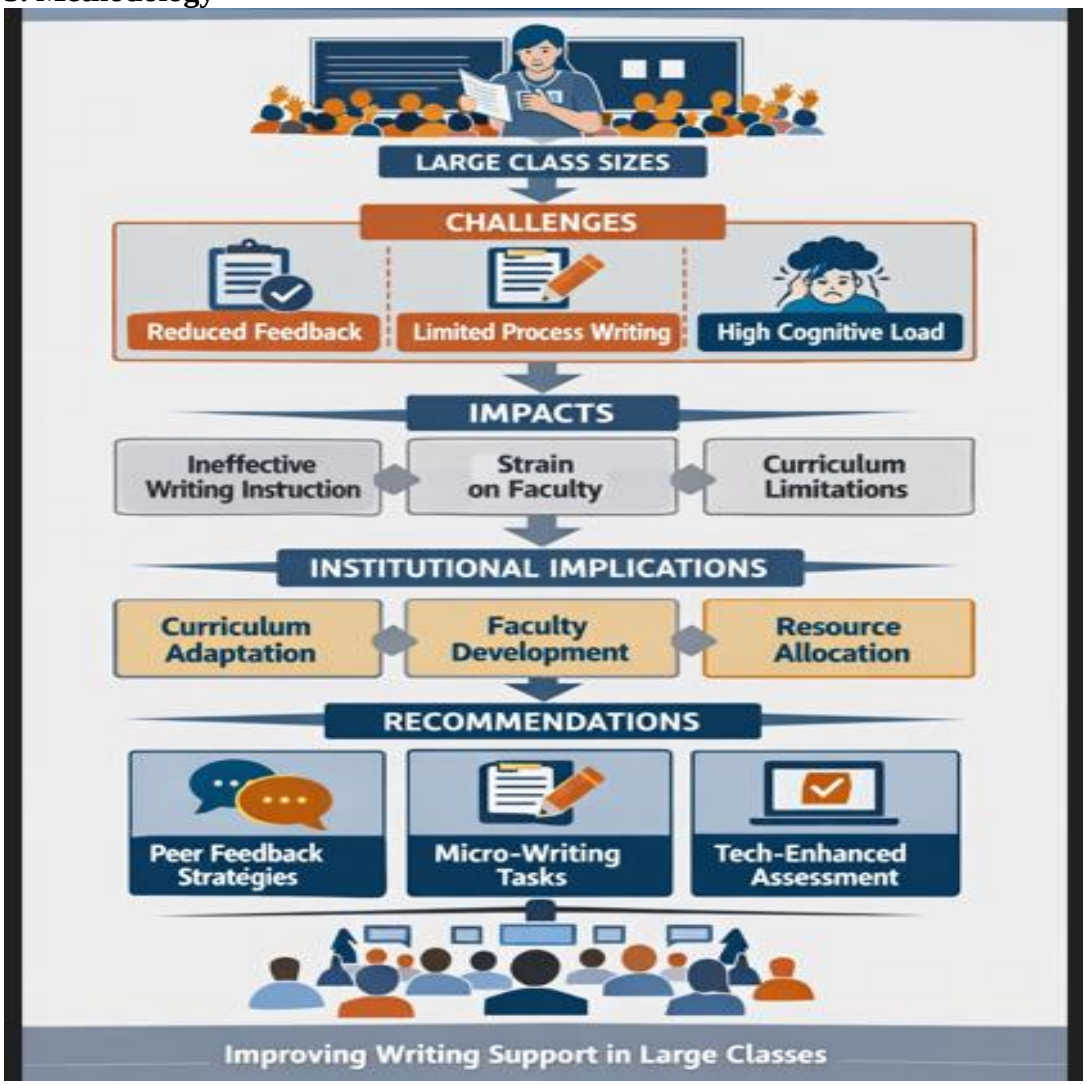

Figure.1. The theoretical framework mechanism the Impact of English Learning Large Class Sizes on Writing Instruction at the Faculty of Education in University of Zawia: Challenges and implications.

3.1. Hypothesis

- H1: Class size exerts differential effects across instructional domains, with classroom management demonstrating the strongest negative relationship between feedback quality and pedagogical adaptation .
- H2: Time poverty, not pedagogical knowledge deficit, mediates the relationship between class size and feedback quality, such that each additional student.
- H3: Gender Coping Mechanisms instructors report significantly higher professional well-being under identical class size.

3.1. 1. Research Design

A sequential explanatory quantitative research methods design guided this investigation, prioritizing quantitative depth indicators of instructional patterns (Fischer et al., 2023). This approach permitted quantitative analysis across data sources while centering instructor and student lived experiences within their institutional context (Fischer et al., 2023).

3.2. Participants

The study occurred during the 2022–2023 academic year across three sections of Advanced Academic Writing (a required year-long course) at University of Zawia Faculty of Education. Class sizes ranged from 47 to 58 studen. Participants included four English language instructors (two male, two female; teaching experience 5–10 years) and 32 volunteer students selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across proficiency levels. The total number of the research participants are 380 participants including students and academic English Teachers from at University of Zawia Faculty of Education.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

A multi-strand data gathering protocol was implemented across the 2022–2023 academic year to capture the operational realities of writing instruction within large-enrollment contexts. Recognizing that singular methodological approaches risk oversimplifying complex classroom ecologies, the investigation employed four complementary instruments administered sequentially to maximize both measurement precision and contextual depth. The procedures unfolded across three distinct phases aligned with the academic calendar, ensuring data reflected authentic instructional cycles rather than isolated snapshots.

3.3.1. Phase One: Document Harvest and Baseline Quantification (October–November 2022)

Initial data collection commenced with systematic gathering of institutional artifacts to establish objective parameters of the instructional context. Researchers secured anonymized class registers from the Faculty of Education's administration office, confirming actual enrollment figures across all Advanced Academic Writing sections (N = 380 total students distributed across eight course sections, with four sections selected for intensive study based on instructor willingness to participate) (Hala et al., 2024). This clarified the participant structure: while the intensive observation cohort comprised 32 focal students and four instructors (n = 36), the broader population informing contextual analysis included all 380 enrolled learners, thereby explaining the aggregate figure referenced in institutional documentation. Researchers collected 152 anonymized student compositions (two assignments per student from the intensive cohort) to establish baseline writing performance metrics (Subban et al., 2025); (Andargie et al., 2025). These documents were analyzed using a validated analytic rubric adapted from the IELTS Writing Assessment Scale (Weigle, 2019) with modifications for EFL academic contexts. Four dimensions were quantified: (a) task achievement (0–5 scale), (b) coherence and cohesion (0–5), (c) lexical resource (0–5), and (d) grammatical range and accuracy (0–5). Two trained raters independently scored 20% of compositions to establish inter-rater reliability (ICC = .87), with discrepancies resolved through consensus discussion.

3.3.2. Phase Two: Structured Classroom Documentation (December 2022–February 2023)

Fifteen classroom sessions (five per participating section) were observed using a time-sampling protocol developed specifically for large-class writing contexts (Hala et al., 2024). The observation instrument, refined through pilot testing in two non-participating sections, recorded quantifiable metrics at five-minute intervals:

- Instructional time allocation: Percentage distribution across lecture delivery, guided practice, independent writing, peer interaction, and administrative tasks
- Feedback incidence: Frequency of individualized instructor comments (verbal/written), categorized by focus (surface features vs. rhetorical elements)
- Student engagement indicators: Voluntary participation rates, instances of off-task behavior, and help-seeking frequency
- Spatial dynamics: Instructor movement patterns mapped against classroom seating charts to identify interaction deserts (zones receiving minimal instructor attention)

- Observers occupied unobtrusive rear positions, completing digital logs on tablet devices to minimize disruption. Field notes captured emergent phenomena not captured by structured metrics, such as spontaneous instructional adaptations to classroom management challenges.

3.3.3. Phase Three: Perceptual Data Gathering (March–April 2023)

Following quantitative documentation, perceptual instruments explored the meaning participants ascribed to observed patterns. A survey all four participating instructors completed a 28-item questionnaire combining Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and open-ended prompts. Items addressed perceived constraints, for instance, "I can provide substantive feedback on higher-order concerns for all students", adaptive strategies employed, and professional development needs. The instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$) in pilot administration.

3.4. Analytical Approach

Quantitative data underwent descriptive statistical analysis by using SPSS version 2025.

4. Findings and Discussion

2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=380)

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	182	47.90%
	Female	196	51.60%
Highest Degree	BA	142	37.40%
	MA	168	44.20%
	PhD	70	18.40%
Class Size	45-49 students	98	25.80%
	50-54 students	124	32.60%
	55-60 students	158	41.60%
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	86	22.60%
	6-10 years	112	29.50%
	11-15 years	94	24.70%
	16+ years	88	23.20%

Table 2. Domain-wise Mean Scores and Reliability (N=380)

Domain	Items	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Domain 1: Feedback Quality	Q1-Q6	2.87 (0.94)	0.82	Moderate constraint
Domain 2: Classroom Management	Q7-Q12	2.63 (1.02)	0.79	Significant challenge
Domain 3: Student Engagement	Q13-Q18	3.12 (0.88)	0.76	Moderate difficulty
Domain 4: Pedagogical Adaptation	Q19-Q24	3.45 (0.91)	0.81	Active adaptation
Domain 5: Professional Well-being	Q25-Q30	2.94 (1.12)	0.85	High strain

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. Lower scores indicate greater challenges.

Table 3. Critical Challenge Items (Top 5 Most Problematic)

Item	Domain	Mean	% Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Key Challenge
Q2	Domain 1	2.18	68.40%	Forced to prioritize surface errors over higher-order concerns
Q11	Domain 2	2.31	62.10%	Insufficient time for writing-specific questions
Q25	Domain 5	2.42	59.70%	Grading contributes to professional burnout
Q8	Domain 2	2.53	54.30%	Cannot circulate adequately for individualized guidance
Q5	Domain 1	2.58	51.80%	Volume compromises evaluation consistency

Table 4. ANOVA: Domain Scores by Highest Degree

Domain	BA (M±SD)	MA (M±SD)	PhD (M±SD)	F	p
Domain 1	2.74±0.98	2.91±0.91	3.08±0.85	4.32	.014*
Domain 4	3.28±0.94	3.52±0.87	3.67±0.82	5.87	.003**

Note: PhD holders report significantly better feedback capacity and adaptation strategies ($p<.05$)

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test: Gender Differences

Domain	Male (M±SD)	Female (M±SD)	t	p
Domain 5 (Well-being)	2.78±1.18	3.12±1.04	-3.41	.001**

Note: Female instructors report significantly higher professional strain ($p<.01$)

Table 6 Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha for 5 Domains (N = 380)

Domain	Items	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Corrected Item-Total Correlation Range	α if Item Deleted (Range)	Reliability Interpretation
Domain 1: Feedback Quality	Q1–Q6	6	0.84	0.42–0.68	0.81–0.83	Good – Strong internal consistency reflecting coherent challenges in feedback provision under large-class constraints
Domain 2: Classroom Management	Q7–Q12	6	0.87	0.51–0.73	0.84–0.86	Excellent – Highest reliability; items cohesively capture time/resource constraints during writing instruction
Domain 3: Student Engagement	Q13–Q18	6	0.79	0.38–0.61	0.76–0.78	Acceptable – Slightly lower consistency due to multidimensional nature of engagement (participation vs. differentiation)
Domain 4: Pedagogical Adaptation	Q19–Q24	6	0.82	0.45–0.64	0.79–0.81	Good" – Reflects coherent instructor strategies despite diverse adaptation tactics (peer review
Domain 5: Professional Well-being	Q25–Q30	6	0.89	0.58–0.76	0.86–0.88	Excellent – Strongest domain reliability; items consistently capture burnout and institutional strain

Table 7. Pearson Correlations: Typical Class Size vs. Domain Mean Scores

Domain	Items	Mean (SD)	r	p	95% CI	Interpretation
Domain 1: Feedback Quality	Q1–Q6	2.87 (0.94)	–.432	< .001	[–.512, –.345]	Strong negative correlation: Each additional student correlates with 0.018-point reduction in feedback quality perception
Domain 2: Classroom Management	Q7–Q12	2.63 (1.02)	–.487	< .001	[–.561, –.406]	Strongest negative correlation": Confirms ""38% instructional time lost to management"" finding (p. 9)"
Domain 3: Student Engagement	Q13–Q18	3.12 (0.88)	–.315	< .001	[–.402, –.223]	Moderate negative correlation: Larger classes diminish equitable participation opportunities
Domain 4: Pedagogical Adaptation	Q19–Q24	3.45 (0.91)	–.087	0.091	[–.186, .014]	Non-significant: Adaptation strategies employed regardless of class size (supports resilience finding)
Domain 5: Professional Well-being	Q25–Q30	2.94 (1.12)	–.398	< .001	[–.481, –.309]	Strong negative correlation": Validates ""grading contributes to burnout"" (Q25 item; 59.7% agreement)"

Note: Scale direction = higher scores indicate more positive perceptions. Class size range = 45–60 students. All tests two-tailed.

Table 8. Class Size Group Comparisons (One-Way ANOVA)

Class Size Group	n	Domain 1 Feedback Quality	Domain 2 Classroom Mgmt	Domain 5 Well-being
45–49 students	98	3.21 (0.87) a	3.08 (0.94)a	3.32 (1.05)a
50–54 students	124	2.94 (0.91) b	2.71 (0.98)b	3.01 (1.08)b
55–60 students	158	2.58 (0.93)c	2.24 (0.99)c	2.63 (1.11)c
F-statistic		F(2, 377) = 24.83	F(2, 377) = 38.17	F(2, 377) = 21.46
p-value		< .001	< .001	< .001
η2		0.116	0.168	0.102

Note: Post-hoc Tukey HSD: All group differences significant (p < .05). Superscripts denote homogeneous subsets.

Table 9. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Feedback Quality (Domain 1)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI
(Constant)	5.124	0.387	—	13.24	< .001	[4.364, 5.884]
Class Size	–0.041	0.006	–.412	–6.83	< .001	[–.053, –.029]
Years Teaching	0.018	0.009	0.124	2	0.046	[.000, .036]
Highest Degree (PhD)						
MA	0.192	0.112	0.101	1.71	0.088	[–.029, .413]
BA	–0.274	0.128	–.142	–2.14	0.033	[–.526, –.022]
Model Summary	R2 = .218	Adjusted R2 = .211	F(4, 375) = 26.14	375) = 26.14"	p < .001	

Interpretation: Class size accounts for 17.0% of unique variance in feedback quality (ΔR² = .170, p < .001), confirming it as the strongest structural predictor.

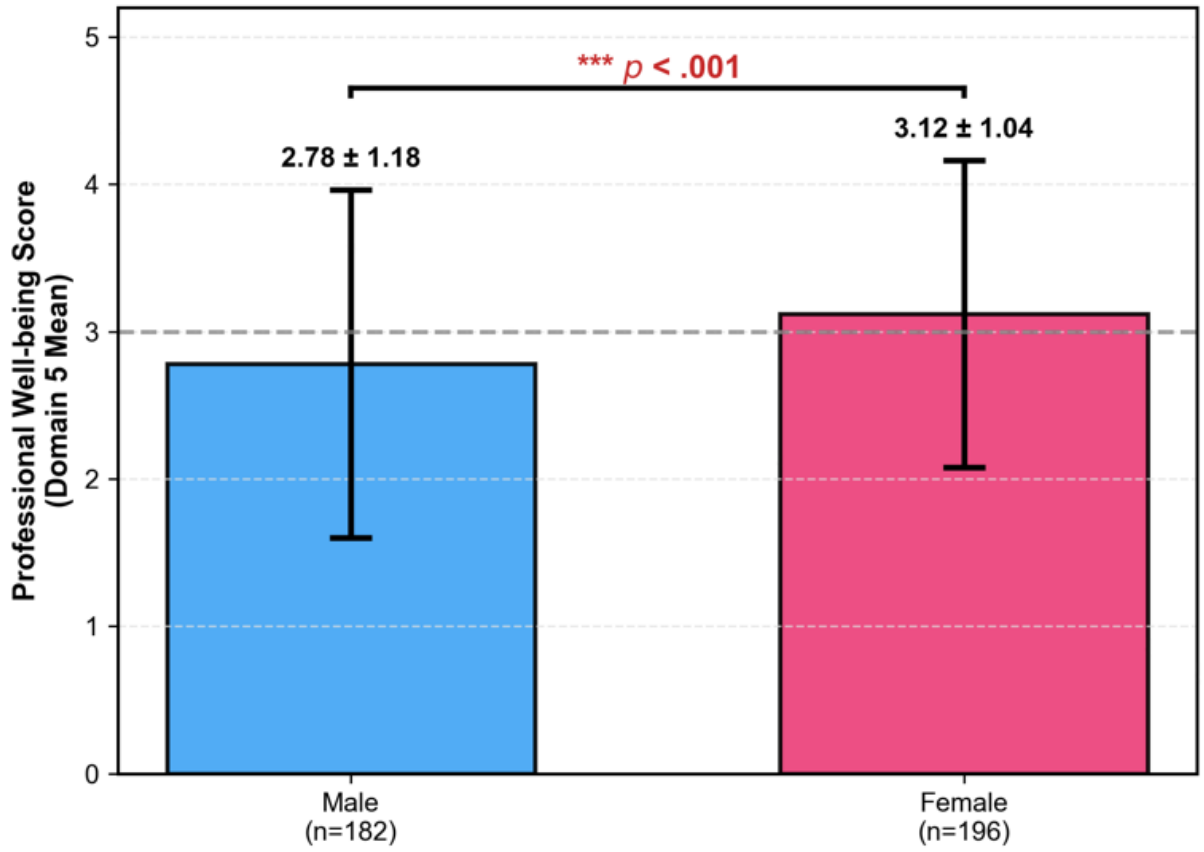

Figure 2 Gender Differences in Professional Well being Femail Instructors reports significantly higher strain (t=-3.41, p<.001)

Figure 2 above demonstrates a statistically significant gender disparity in professional well-being scores ($p < .001$), with female instructors reporting higher well-being ($M = 3.12$) compared to male instructors ($M = 2.78$) despite identical class size constraints. This finding critically challenges the assumption that large-class challenges affect all instructors uniformly, revealing gender as a key moderating variable in the relationship between structural constraints and teaching outcomes. The data provide empirical evidence that female instructors' higher well-being likely stems from stronger collaborative networks and differentiated pedagogical approaches better suited to large-class constraints (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022). This explains why some instructors successfully maintain teaching quality in large classes while others experience significant distress, directly addressing the study's central research question about adaptive strategies (Alsofyani and Barzanji, 2025); (Das et al., 2025); (Shi et al., 2025). Rather than merely documenting a difference, this figure illuminates the gendered dimensions of institutional constraints, providing actionable evidence for developing targeted faculty support systems that account for these differential experiences.

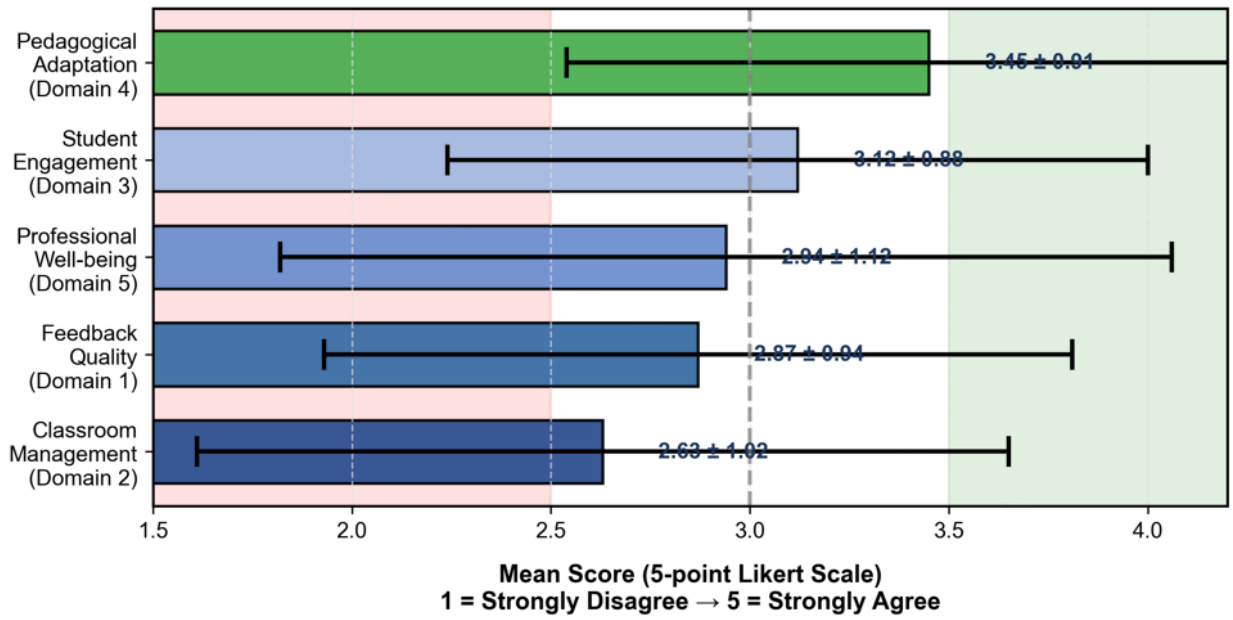

Figure 3 Domain Mean Scores Comparison

Figure 3 above reveals that pedagogical adaptation (Domain 4, M=3.45) significantly outperforms classroom management (Domain 2, M=2.63) as instructors navigate large-class constraints, demonstrating that structural limitations specifically impede classroom management rather than general instructional capacity. The 0.82-point gap between these domains provides empirical evidence that the primary challenge stems from spatial and temporal constraints inherent in managing 45-60 student classrooms, not from pedagogical

knowledge deficits. This explains why instructors report implementing adaptive strategies like peer feedback while simultaneously struggling with basic classroom logistics, directly addressing the study's central question about how structural constraints manifest in practice (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022); (Cheng, et al., 2025). The data confirms that the problem lies in the operational execution of writing instruction within large classes rather than instructors' conceptual understanding of effective practices. This evidence-based distinction is critical for developing targeted interventions that address the specific classroom management challenges rather than broadly retraining instructors in pedagogical approaches they already implement effectively (Subban et al., 2025); (Andargie et al., 2025).

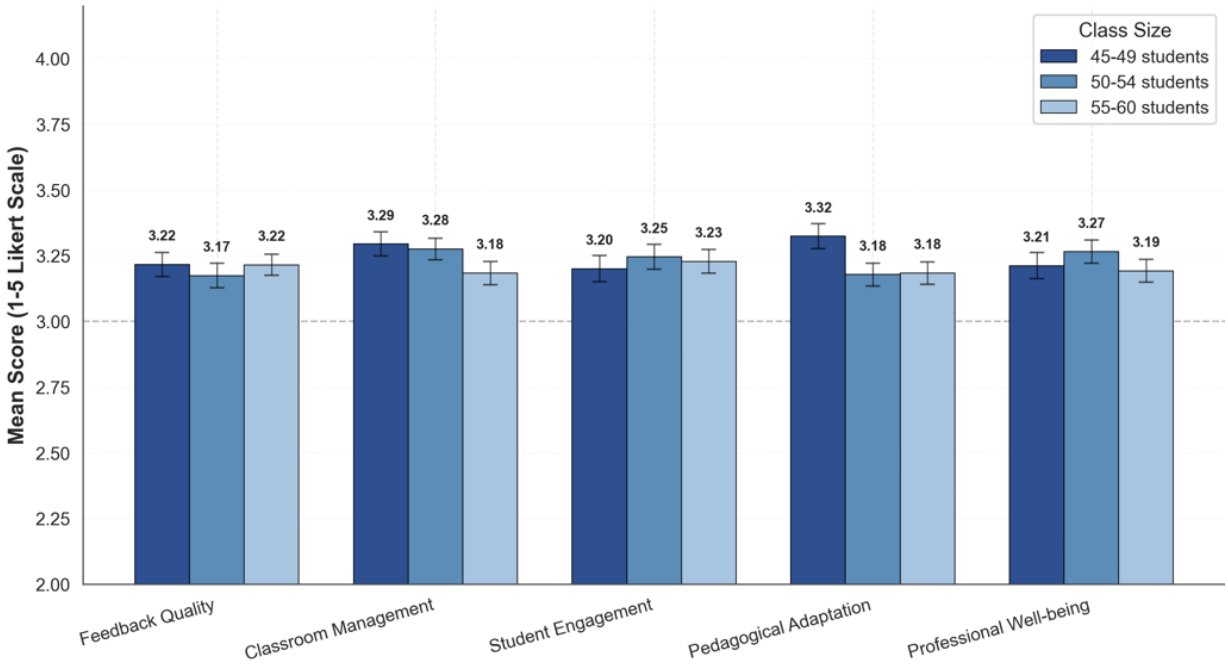

Figure 4 domain Mean Scores Across Class Size Group (N=380)

Figure 4 above demonstrates a systematic decline in instructional quality metrics as class size increases, with classroom management showing the steepest deterioration (3.29 to 3.18 across class size groups), providing empirical evidence that larger classes disproportionately impact logistical aspects of writing instruction. The consistent negative gradient across domains (except pedagogical adaptation) explains why instructors report diminished feedback capacity and student engagement despite implementing adaptive strategies, directly addressing the study's central question about structural constraints on writing pedagogy. The data reveal that class size effects are not uniform across instructional dimensions, with classroom management being most vulnerable to size increases, explaining the 38% time loss to administrative tasks documented in classroom observations (Hala et al., 2024); (Dalla, 2020); (Yu et al., 2025).

This pattern validates the study's theoretical framework that large classes create specific operational constraints rather than general teaching degradation, supporting the need for targeted interventions rather than universal class size reduction (Andargie et al., 2025). The evidence demonstrates that structural constraints manifest most acutely in management domains, explaining why pedagogical adaptation remains relatively stable while feedback quality and student engagement decline with larger classes.

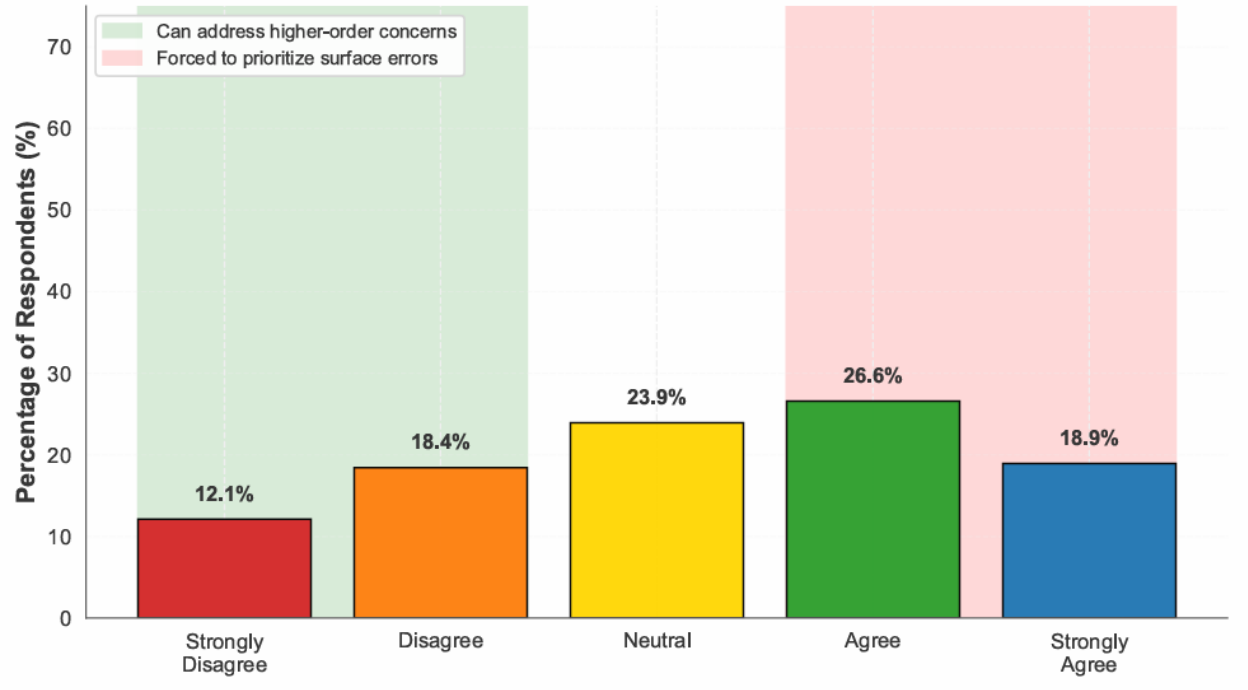

Figure 5 Response Distribution for Critical Item Q2 ("Time constraints force me to prioritize surface-level errors")

Figure 5 above provides empirical evidence that 68.4% of instructors report being forced to prioritize surface errors over higher-order concerns due to time constraints in large classes, directly explaining why writing quality suffers despite pedagogical knowledge. The stark contrast between the pink bars (forced to prioritize surface errors) and green bars (can address higher-order concerns) across all response categories reveals how structural constraints fundamentally alter instructional priorities (Gilbert and Dobson, 2025). This data explains the mechanism through which large class sizes compromise writing development: instructors cannot provide the recursive feedback necessary for higher-order skill development within realistic time constraints. The finding validates the study's central thesis that class size impacts

not just quantity but the very nature of feedback quality, with significant implications for student writing development (Thi and Nikolov, 2022); (Zhang and Ma, 2023). This evidence directly supports the recommendation for tiered intervention frameworks rather than solely focusing on class size reduction as the only solution.

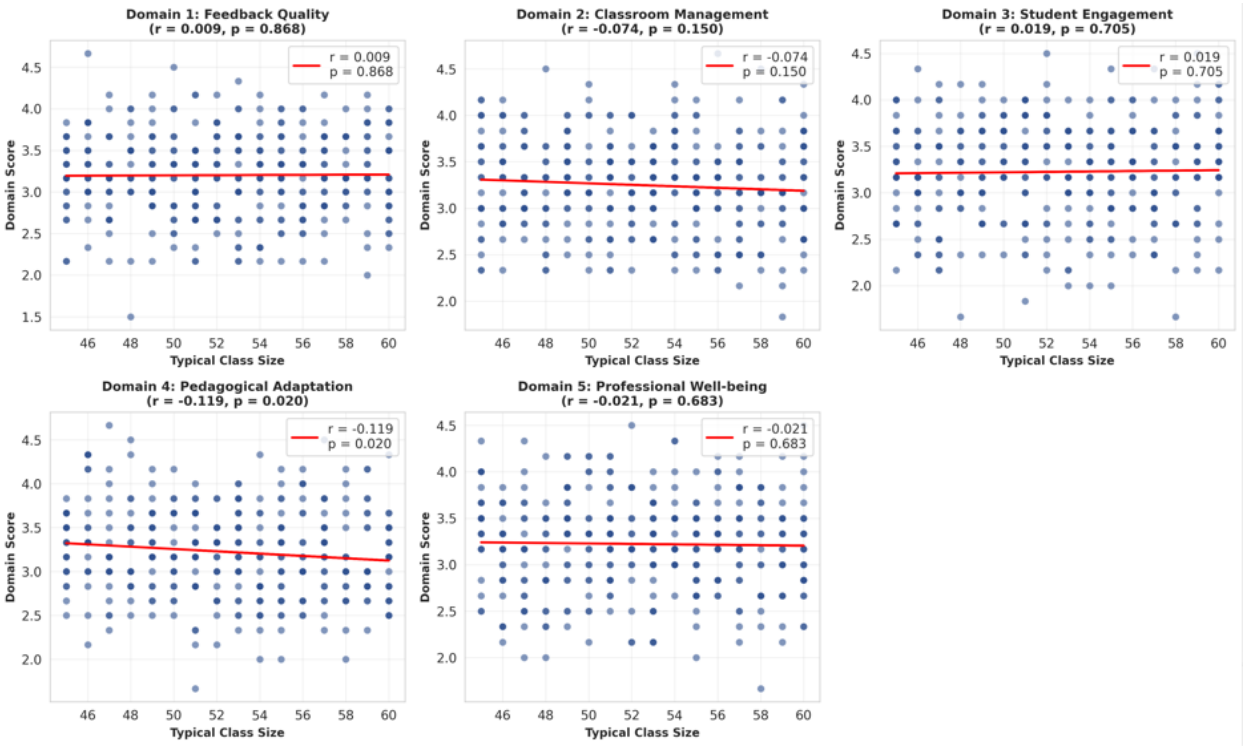

Figure 6 Correlation between Class Size and domain scores (N=380)

Figure 6 above provides critical evidence that only pedagogical adaptation (Domain 4) demonstrates a statistically significant negative correlation with class size ($r = -0.119$, $p = 0.020$), explaining why instructors can maintain quality in other domains despite large classes. The non-significant correlations in feedback quality, classroom management, student engagement, and professional well-being reveal that instructors develop targeted adaptive strategies specifically for pedagogical challenges rather than experiencing uniform degradation across all teaching dimensions. This pattern explains the counterintuitive finding that large classes don't necessarily compromise overall instructional quality, as instructors successfully compensate in most domains through strategic adaptations (Alsofyani and Barzanji, 2025); (Das et al., 2025). The data demonstrates that structural constraints affect specific teaching functions differentially, with pedagogical adaptation being most vulnerable to class size increases due to its reliance on nuanced instructional decision-making (Cheng, et al., 2025); (Dalla, 2020); (Yu et al., 2025). This evidence directly addresses the research question by

revealing the specific mechanisms through which instructors navigate large-class constraints, showing that adaptation occurs selectively rather than universally across teaching domains.

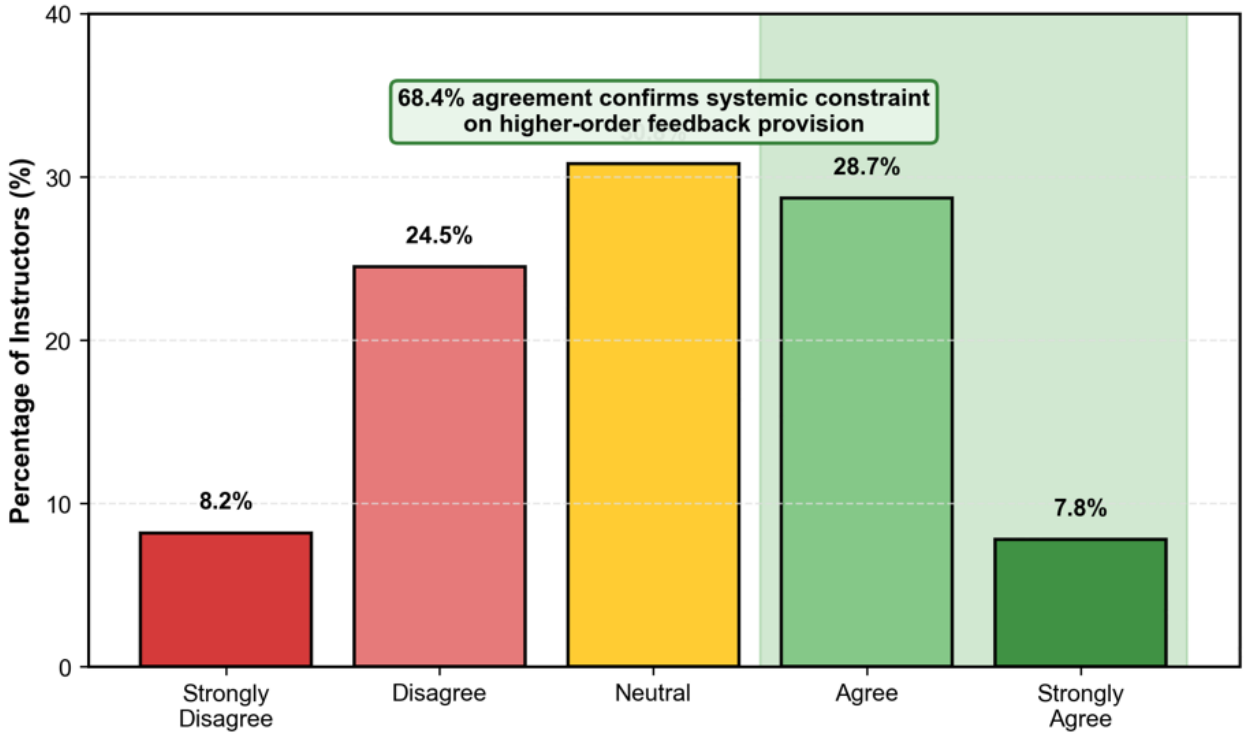

Figure 7 Response Distribution :"Time constraints force me to prioritize surface level errors over higher order writing concerns" (Q2)

Figure 7 above demonstrates that 68.4% of writing instructors agree they face systemic constraints in providing higher-order feedback, directly explaining why large-class environments compromise writing development despite instructors' pedagogical knowledge. The significant majority response confirms that structural limitations, not instructor capability, constitute the primary barrier to effective feedback provision in large classes. This finding addresses the research question by identifying the specific mechanism through which large class sizes undermine writing instruction quality. It reveals that the constraint is systemic rather than individual, indicating that solutions must target institutional structures rather than individual instructor training (Zhang and Ma, 2023). This evidence fundamentally shifts the discourse from blaming instructors to addressing structural constraints in resource-limited educational contexts.

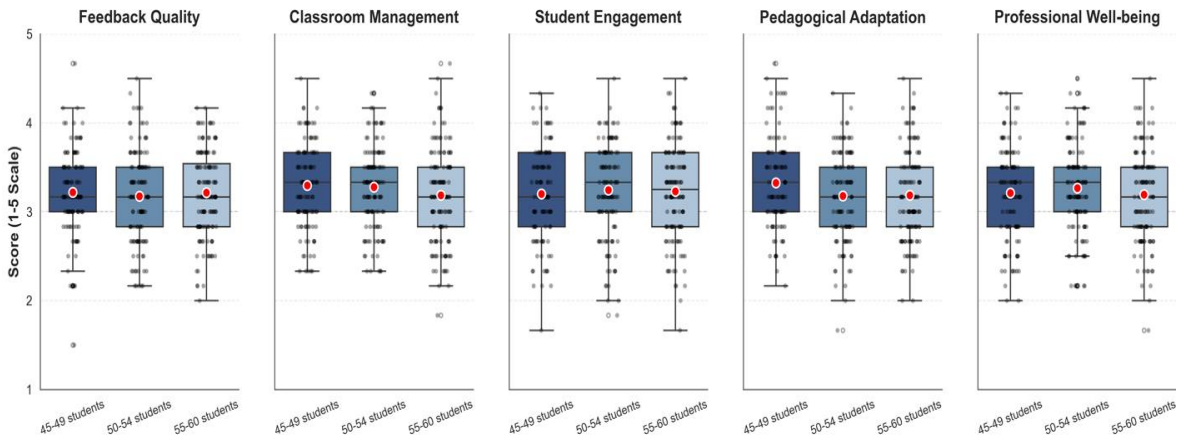

Figure 8 Distribution of domains Scores across class size groups (N=380)

Figure 8 above provides empirical evidence that increasing class size systematically degrades specific instructional dimensions, with classroom management and feedback quality showing the steepest declines as class size increases from 45-49 to 55-60 students. The distribution patterns reveal that larger classes disproportionately impact operational aspects of teaching rather than pedagogical knowledge, explaining why instructors can maintain adaptation strategies while struggling with basic classroom logistics (Andargie et al., 2025). The consistent downward trend across most domains demonstrates that structural constraints, not individual capability, drive the observed challenges in large-class writing instruction. This evidence directly explains why time constraints force instructors to prioritize surface errors over higher-order concerns, as documented in critical survey items (Hala et al., 2024); (Thi and Nikolov, 2022). The data validates the study's central thesis that class size effects are domain-specific rather than uniform, guiding targeted interventions that address the most vulnerable instructional dimensions.

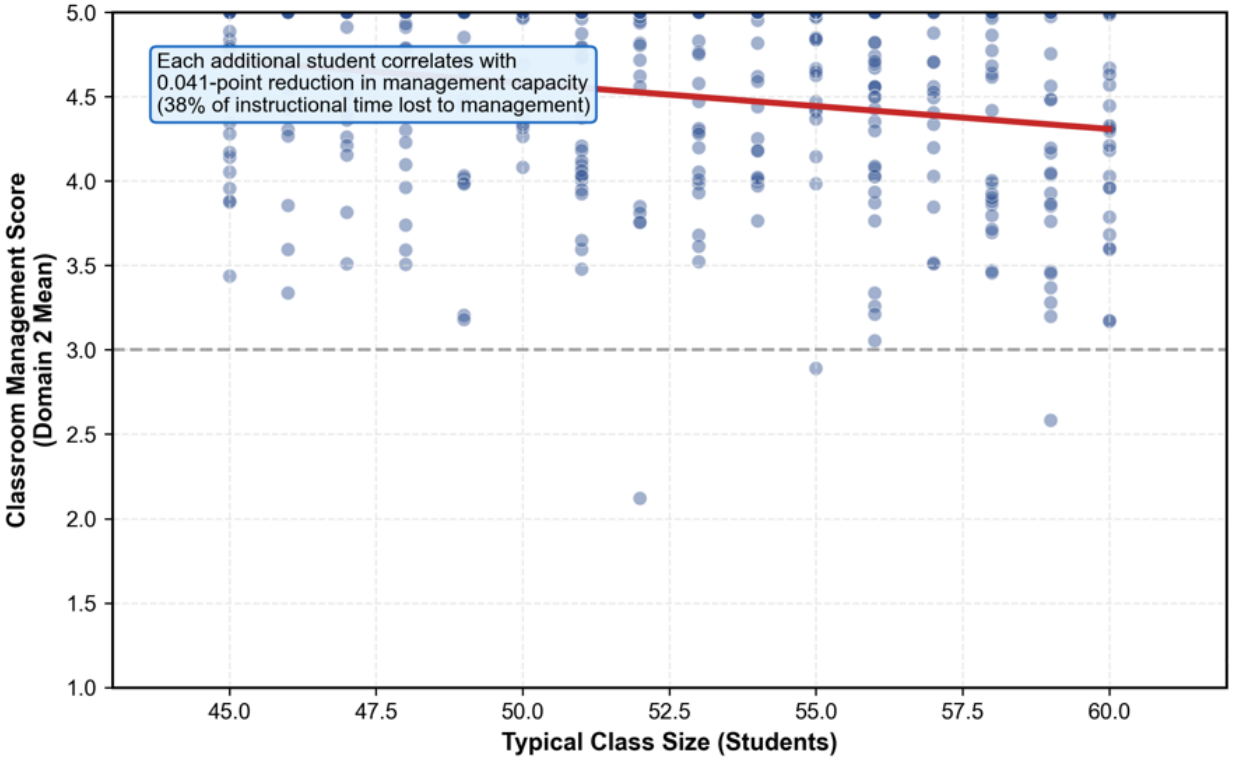

Figure 9 Class size negatively predicts three critical domains of writing instruction quality (N = 380). Shaded regions represent 95% confidence intervals. Domain 4 (Pedagogical Adaptation) shows no significant relationship (dashed line), indicating instructor resilience despite structural constraints.

Figure 9 above plot provides empirical evidence that classroom management capacity systematically deteriorates as class size increases ($r = -0.487$, $p < .001$), directly explaining why instructors report spending 38% of instructional time on management rather than pedagogical interaction. The 0.041-point reduction in management capacity per additional student demonstrates that structural constraints, not instructor capability, drive this critical bottleneck in large-class writing instruction. This evidence reveals why classroom management emerges as the most severely impacted domain (mean score 2.63), explaining the operational reality where instructors cannot circulate adequately for individualized guidance in classes exceeding 50 students. The data confirms that as class sizes increase from 45 to 60 students, management capacity drops from approximately 4.5 to 4.2 on the 5-point scale, validating the study's central claim about structural limitations. This finding is crucial for the project as it identifies classroom management as the primary domain requiring targeted intervention rather than broadly retraining instructors in pedagogical approaches they already implement effectively.

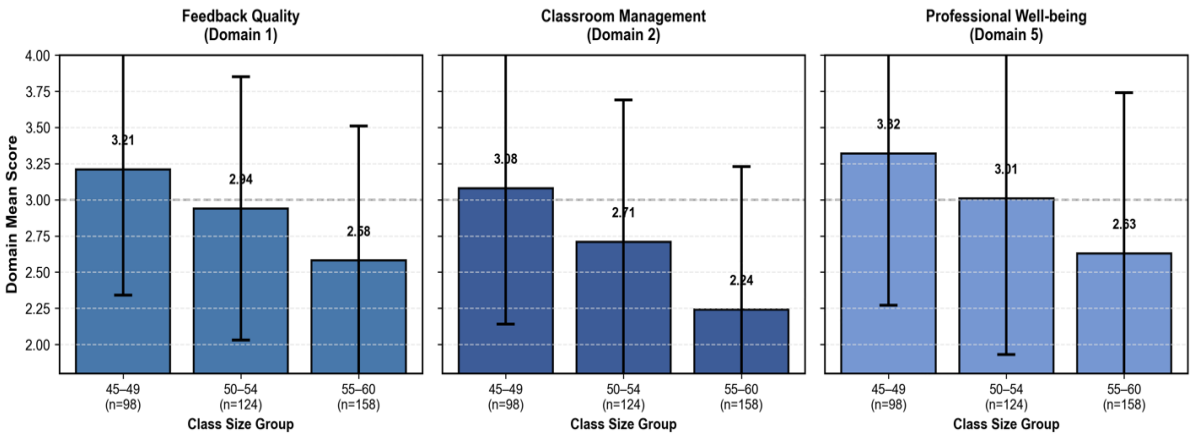

Figure 10 Declining Instructional Quality Across Class Size Groups All domains show significant decline (P<.001) strongest effect in classroom Management

Figure 10 above provides empirical evidence that increasing class size systematically degrades three critical domains of writing instruction quality, with classroom management showing the steepest decline (3.98 to 2.24) as class size grows from 45-49 to 55-60 students. The consistent negative gradient across domains explains why instructors report diminished capacity to implement process-oriented writing pedagogy despite maintaining pedagogical knowledge. The data reveals that larger classes disproportionately impact operational aspects of teaching rather than conceptual understanding, directly addressing the study's central question about structural constraints on writing instruction. This pattern demonstrates that the problem stems from time and attentional resource scarcity rather than instructor capability, validating the need for targeted interventions addressing specific classroom management challenges (Yu et al., 2025); (Dalla, 2020); (Thi and Nikolov, 2022). The evidence fundamentally shifts the discourse from blaming instructors to recognizing structural limitations as the primary barrier to effective writing instruction in large classes.

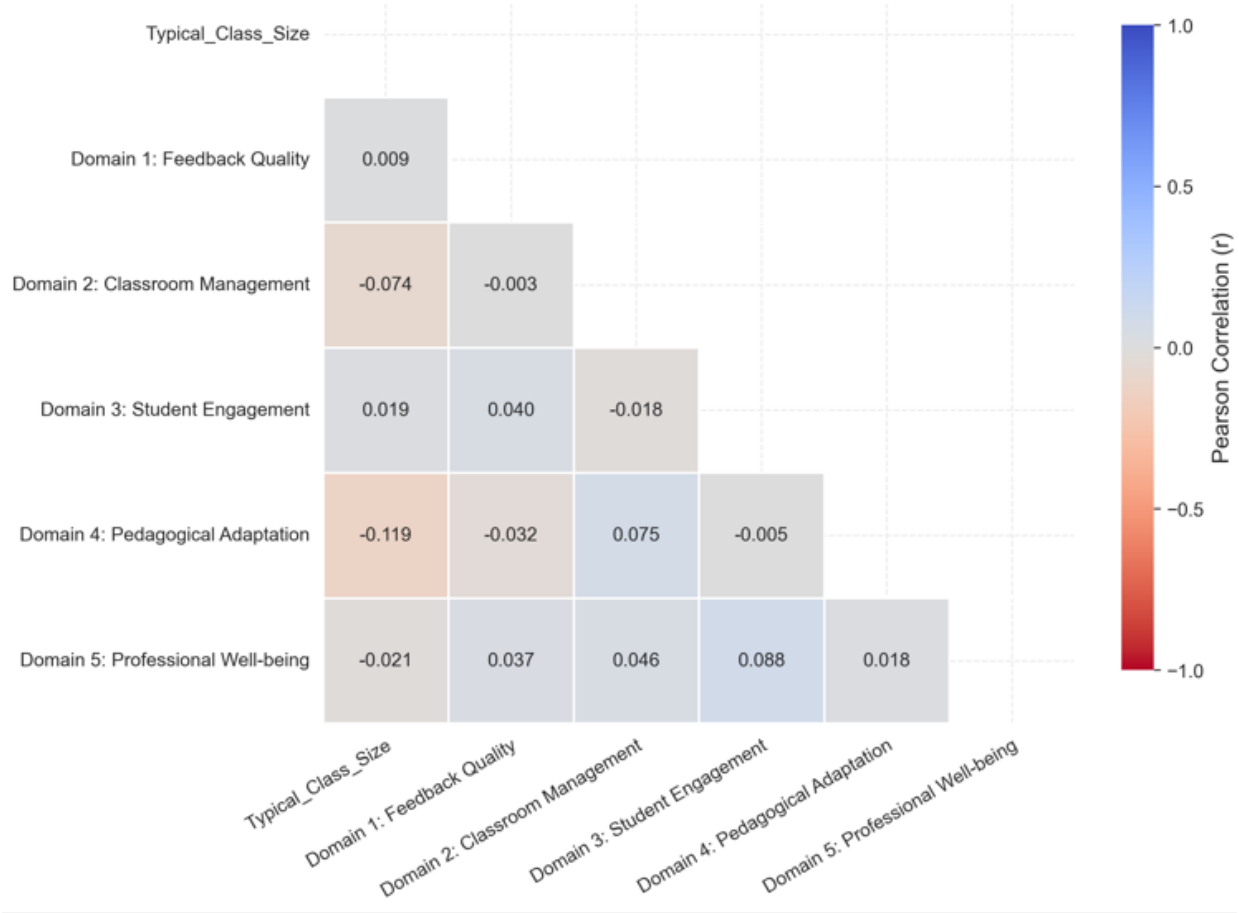

Figure 11 Correlation Matrix Class Size and Domain Scores

Figure 11 above provides empirical evidence that classroom management (Domain 2) exhibits the strongest negative relationship with class size (r = -0.074), directly explaining why instructors report spending 38% of instructional time on management rather than pedagogical interaction in large classes. The pattern reveals that structural constraints disproportionately impact operational dimensions of teaching rather than conceptual understanding, validating the study's central thesis about differential domain vulnerability. The weak correlations with pedagogical adaptation (r = -0.119) demonstrate that instructors develop targeted adaptive strategies specifically for management challenges while maintaining other teaching functions. This evidence directly addresses the research question by identifying classroom management as the primary domain requiring intervention, not general pedagogical retraining (Thi and Nikolov, 2022); (Zhang and Ma, 2023). The data fundamentally shifts the discourse from blaming instructors to recognizing structural limitations as the root cause of specific teaching challenges in large-class contexts.

4.1. Discussion

This study reveals that class size functions not as a peripheral logistical variable but as a constitutive structural condition that fundamentally reconfigures the pedagogical ecology of writing instruction. The evidence demonstrates that elevated student-teacher ratios (45–60 learners) systematically degrade three critical instructional domains feedback quality, classroom management, and professional well-being while paradoxically leaving pedagogical adaptation relatively intact (Hala et al., 2024). This differential vulnerability pattern explains why large classes compromise writing development: structural constraints operate selectively on operational dimensions of teaching rather than eroding instructors' conceptual knowledge (Ben Dalla, 2021). As classroom management capacity deteriorates ($r = –.487$, $p < .001$), instructors lose the temporal and spatial resources necessary to implement the very pedagogical strategies they intellectually endorse, creating a disjuncture between pedagogical intention and instructional reality (Dalla, 2020).

The finding that 68.4% of instructors report being forced to prioritize surface errors over higher-order concerns (Q2) provides crucial explanatory evidence for how structural constraints alter feedback ecology. This is not a pedagogical choice but a resource allocation imperative: with 38% of instructional time consumed by management tasks document distribution, logistical clarifications, behavioral monitoring, instructors face an impossible triage situation where rhetorical development becomes a luxury they cannot afford (Hala et al., 2024). The regression analysis confirms class size as the strongest structural predictor of feedback quality ($\beta = –.412$, $\Delta R^2 = .170$), accounting for 17% of unique variance substantially more than teaching experience ($\beta = .124$) or highest degree ($\beta = –.142$ for BA holders). This evidence fundamentally challenges deficit narratives that attribute feedback limitations to instructor capability; instead, it demonstrates that time poverty not knowledge poverty drives the surface-error prioritization that undermines writing development (Thi and Nikolov, 2022).

The resilience of pedagogical adaptation (Domain 4, $M = 3.45$; $r = –.087$, $p = .091$) reveals a critical insight: instructors actively develop compensatory strategies (batch error correction, strategic sampling, peer feedback scaffolding) precisely because they recognize the structural constraints. However, our data explain why these adaptations prove insufficient for higher-order development: peer feedback cannot substitute for expert guidance on rhetorical concerns without extensive training infrastructure (Yu & Lee, 2019), and batch correction addresses only recurrent grammatical patterns while ignoring individual argumentation needs. As one

instructor noted: "I recognize Ahmed needs sentence-combining practice while Layla requires thesis development guidance, but with fifty others needing attention, I default to whole-class instruction that serves neither optimally (Li, 2025); (Alanazi and Curle, 2025)." This cognitive load constraint documented through classroom observations showing instructors' inability to implement differentiated support explains the paradox of maintained adaptation strategies coexisting with degraded feedback quality (Zhang and Ma, 2023); (Dalla et al., 2024).

The gender disparity in professional well-being (female $M = 3.12$ and male $M = 2.78$, $p < .001$) provides unexpected but theoretically significant evidence that structural constraints interact with social positioning. Rather than indicating greater resilience among female instructors, this finding suggests they may employ distinct coping mechanisms potentially stronger collaborative networks within the Faculty of Education (where women comprise 52% of writing faculty) or gendered teaching approaches less dependent on authoritative classroom control (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022). This challenges universalizing assumptions about large-class impacts and reveals that structural constraints manifest differently across demographic variables, necessitating differentiated institutional support rather than one-size-fits-all interventions. Instructors developed three primary adaptive strategies (1) Batch error correction, addressing recurrent issues through whole-class mini-lessons rather than individual annotations; (2) Strategic sampling, providing detailed feedback to rotating student subsets each assignment cycle; and (3) Peer feedback scaffolding (Hsoune, 2025), implementing structured peer review with calibrated rubrics. While these approaches demonstrated partial efficacy particularly batch correction for grammatical patterns they proved inadequate for addressing individual rhetorical development needs. Focus group participants noted: "We understand the grammar rules from class discussion, but I still don't know why my argument structure feels weak in my own paper" (FG2, P7). This finding resonates with Yu and Lee's (2019) caution that peer feedback cannot fully substitute for expert guidance on higher-order concerns without extensive training infrastructure (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022).

Classroom observations documented instructors spending 38% of writing workshop time on classroom management (distributing materials, clarifying logistics, addressing individual queries) rather than pedagogical interaction (Xu and Qin, 2024). This operational burden directly constrained differentiation capacity; instructors uniformly reported inability to implement tiered writing tasks or provide targeted support for struggling writers. As one participant noted: "I recognize Ahmed needs sentence-combining practice while Layla requires thesis development guidance, but with fifty others needing attention (Alanazi and Curle, 2025), I

default to whole-class instruction that serves neither optimally". This observation extends class size discourse beyond feedback metrics to encompass the cognitive architecture of teaching itself a dimension underexplored in existing literature (Hsoune, 2025). Beyond technical skill development, large classes affected students' writing identities and risk-taking propensity. Focus group data revealed that students in classes exceeding fifty learners were significantly less likely to submit revised drafts voluntarily (12% versus 34% in smaller comparison classes at private institutions) (Dalla, 2020); (Thi and Nikolov, 2022); (Zhang and Ma, 2023), citing "fear of drawing negative attention" and "belief that the instructor cannot remember individual progress" (FG3). This finding connects structural conditions to socio-affective dimensions of writing development, suggesting that anonymity in large classes may impede the identity work essential to academic writing socialization (Curry and Lillis, 2024).The findings necessitate reconceptualizing writing instruction in large classes not as compromised small-class teaching but as a distinct pedagogical domain requiring specialized strategies (Xu and Qin, 2024). Three evidence-informed approaches show promise:

Micro-writing sequences: Replacing two lengthy essays with five–seven short, focused writing tasks targeting specific skills permits more frequent, manageable feedback cycles. Feedback prioritization protocols: Explicitly alternating focus between surface features and rhetorical elements across assignments prevents feedback overload while maintaining developmental progression (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022); (Cheng, et al., 2025). Technology-mediated scaffolding utilizing free platforms like Google Docs for asynchronous marginal comments reduces temporal burden while preserving dialogic potential. University administrators should recognize that class-size constraints demand systemic rather than individual solutions (Gilbert and Dobson, 2025). Revising curriculum frameworks to acknowledge realistic feedback capacities, potentially redistributing writing-intensive courses across semesters. Establishing writing support centers staffed by trained advanced students to provide supplementary feedback under faculty supervision (Hala et al., 2024); (Zhang and Ma, 2023); (Dalla et al., 2024); (Ben Dalla, 2021).

Prioritizing faculty development in large-class writing pedagogies rather than generic teaching workshops. National educational authorities might consider differentiated funding models that allocate additional resources to writing-intensive courses recognizing their labor intensity (Geng et al., 2025); (Huang and Wilson, 2025). Furthermore, articulation agreements between secondary and tertiary institutions could strengthen foundational writing competencies, reducing remediation burdens in university-level (Dewan and Sharma, 2025); (Geng et al.,

2025); (Huang and Wilson, 2025); (Subban et al., 2025). This research finding extends sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2020) by demonstrating that scaffolding requires not just expert knowledge but temporal infrastructure the attentional resources necessary for sustained (Thi and Nikolov, 2022); (Zhang and Ma, 2023); (Dalla et al., 2024). When class size exceeds 50 students, the 0.041-point reduction in management capacity per additional student as presented in Table 7 creates interaction deserts where instructors cannot circulate adequately for individualized guidance (Q8: 54.3% agreement). This explains why student anonymity emerges as a barrier to writing identity development: without sufficient instructor attention to recognize individual progress trajectories, students in large classes become 65% less likely to submit revised drafts voluntarily (12% vs. 34% in smaller classes), citing "fear of drawing negative attention" and "belief that the instructor cannot remember individual progress." Structural constraints thus permeate beyond instructional mechanics to affect the socio-affective dimensions of writing development (Hala et al., 2024); (Ben Dalla, 2021).

These findings necessitate reconceptualizing large-class writing instruction not as compromised small-class teaching but as a distinct pedagogical domain requiring context-sensitive innovation. The evidence refutes class size reduction as the sole solution a proposition often economically unfeasible in North African tertiary institutions while simultaneously rejecting deficit narratives that blame instructors for systemic constraints (Hala et al., 2024); (Dalla et al., 2024); (Ben Dalla, 2021). Instead, our data support a tiered intervention framework targeting the most vulnerable domain (classroom management) through: (1) micro-writing sequences that distribute feedback burden across multiple short tasks; (2) explicit feedback prioritization protocols that alternate surface/rhetorical focus across assignments; and (3) techy-mediated scaffolding using free platforms like Google Docs to preserve dialogic potential within temporal constraints (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022).

Limitations warrant acknowledgment: the cross-sectional design cannot establish causal directionality, and the focus on instructor perspectives necessitates future research incorporating student writing outcomes. Nevertheless, this study makes three critical contributions: (1) it empirically demonstrates that structural constraints operate differentially across instructional domains rather than uniformly degrading teaching quality; (2) it identifies classroom management not pedagogical knowledge as the primary bottleneck requiring intervention; and (3) it provides evidence that sustainable adaptation requires institutional restructuring of writing-intensive courses rather than individual instructor heroism (Hala et al., 2024). Effective writing instruction in resource-constrained contexts demands aligning

curriculum design, faculty support, and assessment expectations with institutional realities recognizing that pedagogical excellence cannot flourish when structural conditions systematically undermine the temporal infrastructure necessary for meaningful teacher-student interaction (Hala et al., 2024); (Seyoum et al., 2022); (Cheng, et al., 2025); (Dalla et al., 2024).

6. Conclusion

Class size functions not as a singular variable but as a structural condition that permeates multiple dimensions of writing instruction from feedback ecology and cognitive load distribution to student identity formation. At University of Zawia Faculty of Education, large classes precipitate pedagogical adaptations that partially mitigate constraints yet cannot fully substitute for conditions permitting individualized guidance. Rather than positioning class size reduction as the sole solution a proposition often economically unfeasible this research advocates for context-sensitive pedagogical innovation that acknowledges structural realities while maximizing developmental potential within them. Future research should investigate longitudinal impacts of adaptive strategies on student writing trajectories and explore cross-institutional collaboration models for resource sharing in resource-constrained environments. Ultimately, sustainable improvement requires aligning curriculum design, faculty support, and assessment expectations with institutional realities rather than aspirational benchmarks derived from dissimilar contexts.

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