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**THE STRUGGLE IS REAL: LIVED-EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WITH
MULTIPLE ANCILLARY TASKS**

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary landscape of education, teachers are increasingly burdened with multiple ancillary tasks, transcending traditional teaching roles. This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of 10 teachers from Tacurong Pilot Elementary School, employing a qualitative research design with a focus on phenomenology. Participants, each with a minimum of one year of teaching experience and handling at least three coordinatorship/designation roles, were selected to provide diverse perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with multiple ancillary tasks. Data collection incorporated various sources, including observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials, within a natural setting. Thematic analysis, a method emphasizing the identification of recurring themes in qualitative data, was employed to analyze teachers' lived experiences. The findings reveal three main themes concerning daily challenges: Juggling Time Demands, Emotional Toll and Burnout, and Impact on Instructional Quality. Additionally, the study elucidates five themes related to job satisfaction and well-being, including Strain on Work-Life Balance, Erosion of Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, Impact on Collegial Relationships, and Seeking Purpose and Impact. Furthermore, the impact on teaching practices and student outcomes is explored, highlighting themes such as Restriction of Instructional Creativity, Impact on Individualized Student Support, and Struggle with Timely and Effective Feedback. This research contributes nuanced insights into the multifaceted impact of ancillary tasks on teachers, offering valuable implications for supporting teacher well-being and enhancing educational outcomes.

Keywords: *Teachers, Ancillary Tasks, Job Satisfaction, Well-being, Qualitative Research, Teachers' Workload*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, teachers have assumed an expanded role encompassing various ancillary functions beyond traditional classroom instruction. This trend is not confined to the Philippines; it is also observed in countries like India and Malaysia, reflecting a global shift in educators' responsibilities. Budget constraints and understaffing in Philippine schools have compelled teachers to take on additional non-teaching responsibilities, such as administrative tasks and community service. The implementation of the K-12 education system further compounds this challenge by introducing new responsibilities like curriculum planning and materials development.

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The inclusion of ancillary tasks in teachers' job descriptions is a response to staffing gaps, particularly in rural areas with a shortage of qualified educators. However, this phenomenon has consequences for teacher well-being and job satisfaction. High levels of work-related stress contribute to burnout, depression, and anxiety among Filipino teachers, a trend that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The intensified workload and additional stressors during the pandemic have further challenged teachers' well-being.

Recognizing the adverse effects of multiple ancillary tasks on teacher welfare, efforts have been made at both national and local levels to address the issue. The Department of Education in the Philippines issued a memorandum in 2019 emphasizing the importance of reducing the non-teaching workload for teachers. Local initiatives, such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), aim to assist schools in managing staff and workload more effectively. However, the effectiveness of these measures in alleviating teachers' workload and enhancing their well-being remains uncertain.

Given the substantial demands placed on Filipino teachers, it is crucial to comprehend the impact of ancillary functions on their job satisfaction and well-being. This study seeks to explore the experiences of teachers handling multiple ancillary functions, focusing on the associated challenges and opportunities. Through this exploration, the research aims to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on supporting teachers in the Philippines, ensuring they can deliver high-quality education while fulfilling ancillary responsibilities.

The phenomenon of teachers performing multiple ancillary tasks is not unique to the Philippines; it is a global issue affecting teachers worldwide. In many countries, teachers are expected to do more than just teach in the classroom. These tasks may include administrative work, extracurricular activities, and other responsibilities essential for the smooth operation of schools. For example, in Japan and China, teachers are required to engage in a wide range of tasks, including classroom teaching, extracurricular activities, and administrative work.

In the Philippines, where resources and personnel are often limited, teachers are also required to perform multiple ancillary tasks. These tasks may include administrative work, extracurricular activities, and other responsibilities not directly related to teaching. Despite the importance of these tasks in ensuring the smooth operation of schools, they can also pose additional burdens on teachers. Studies have shown that these teachers may experience increased workload, stress, and burnout, which can affect the quality of teaching and learning. By understanding teachers' lived experiences in performing multiple ancillary tasks, policies, programs, and interventions can be developed to support and improve their well-being and effectiveness.

In this local context, Tacurong Pilot Elementary School serves as a vital hub for primary education. The school reflects the cultural tapestry of the community, with students coming from various ethnic backgrounds, including Maguindanaon, Ilonggo, Cebuano, and other indigenous groups. The educational system in the Philippines often assigns teachers additional responsibilities beyond their primary teaching duties, such as curriculum development, extracurricular activities coordination, and administrative

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tasks. These ancillary tasks can create added pressures and demands on teachers, impacting their overall job satisfaction, well-being, and work-life balance.

The local context of Tacurong City may present specific socio-economic challenges that teachers must navigate. Some students may come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, requiring additional support and resources from teachers. Additionally, the city's cultural diversity may bring about unique teaching challenges, such as addressing language barriers and adapting instructional approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners. By examining the lived experiences of teachers with multiple ancillary tasks within the local context of Tacurong City, this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to improve the support systems, policies, and professional development opportunities for teachers in similar educational settings.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of the teachers in City Schools Division of Tacurong to provide insights into the impact of these ancillary tasks on the well-being and job satisfaction of teachers. Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the daily challenges that teachers in the Philippines face in managing multiple ancillary tasks in addition to their primary teaching responsibilities?
2. How do teachers' experiences with multiple ancillary tasks affect their job satisfaction and well-being?
3. In what ways do teachers' experiences with multiple ancillary tasks impact their teaching practices and the outcomes of their students?

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the meanings individuals or groups attributed to social or human problems. Phenomenology specifically focuses on how experiences and consciousness are structured, investigating how phenomena appear in subjective experiences. This approach systematically examines different perspectives on perceived reality and allows for findings that can have broader applicability.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher played multiple roles, including interviewer, note-taker, encoder, and facilitator. Using a semi-structured interview guide, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted, and the interviews were tape-recorded to ensure accurate data collection. The researcher was careful to maintain the participants' comfort and showed interest and courtesy throughout the process.

Participant Selection

Participants were selected from Tacurong Pilot Elementary School based on having at least one year of teaching experience and handling at least three coordinatorship/designation roles. A total of 10 participants were chosen to ensure diverse representation of teachers with various backgrounds, experiences, and responsibilities. This selection criterion ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to multiple ancillary tasks.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was gathered using observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials in a natural setting. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, following these steps:

1. Open Coding: Identifying meaningful units of text and labeling them with descriptive codes.
2. Axial Coding: Grouping codes into clustered themes.
3. Selective Coding: Categorizing themes into relevant categories and refining the data for analysis according to research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data. It includes the emerging themes on lived experiences of teachers with multiple ancillary tasks. In this pivotal chapter, the focus shifts towards the findings obtained through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. The multifaceted themes that emerged, reflecting the intricate interplay between teachers and the demands of ancillary tasks, will be expounded upon and discussed.

Emerging Themes on Daily Challenges in Managing Multiple Ancillary Tasks

This section presents the three main themes identified by participants regarding the daily challenges teachers face in managing multiple ancillary tasks:

Relevant Theme 1: Juggling Time Demands

Teachers expressed significant challenges in allocating time effectively among their various responsibilities, including lesson planning, grading, and administrative duties. The constant time pressure led to increased cognitive load and hindered efficient time management:

Excerpt 1:

"It's like juggling multiple balls in the air. You try to give each task the attention it deserves, but it's challenging when there's just not enough time in the day. (IDI_P2)"

This aligns with theories like the Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, highlighting how excessive job demands without adequate resources can contribute to burnout.

Relevant Theme 2: Emotional Toll and Burnout*

Managing multiple ancillary tasks took a significant emotional toll on teachers, leading to heightened stress levels and burnout. Teachers felt overwhelmed by the constant pressure to excel in various domains:

Excerpt 2:

"There's this constant weight on my shoulders. I want to do my best, but it feels like the expectations keep piling up. It's emotionally draining. (IDI_P3)"

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This can be contextualized through the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which explains how the depletion of emotional resources due to multifaceted roles contributes to burnout.

Relevant Theme 3: Impact on Instructional Quality

The administrative burden associated with ancillary tasks negatively impacted the quality of instruction. Teachers found that the time spent on non-teaching duties detracted from their ability to innovate in the classroom and provide personalized attention to students:

Excerpt 3:

"I want to be creative in my lessons, but I often find myself stuck in the bureaucratic side of things. It affects the dynamism of my teaching. (IDI_P10)"

The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model supports these findings, suggesting that high job demands and low control can reduce job satisfaction and impair performance. Similarly, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) highlights the importance of autonomy in maintaining motivation and instructional quality.

Research by Abarro (2018) and Alquizar (2018) underscores the importance of effective time management in reducing teacher burnout. Additionally, studies by Tiongson and Gempes (2022) and Tolentino (2021) illustrate how administrative duties can detract from instructional quality.

Lastly, Khalid and Mahmood (2017) emphasize the role of autonomy in enhancing teacher performance and well-being. These studies collectively highlight the critical need to address time-related challenges and preserve teachers' autonomy to improve well-being and instructional quality.

Emerging Themes on Impact on Job Satisfaction and Well-being

This section explores the lived experiences of teachers handling multiple ancillary tasks, revealing themes that elucidate their influence on job satisfaction and well-being. Data from interviews identified five main themes: Strain on Work-Life Balance, Erosion of Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, Impact on Collegial Relationships, and Seeking Purpose and Impact.

Relevant Theme 1: Strain on Work-Life Balance

Teachers frequently reported difficulties in separating work from personal time, leading to burnout and dissatisfaction. Remarks from participants include:

Excerpt 4:

"Instead of going home early, spend time with my month-old baby-- I feel like the time that I need to spend with my family was robbed." (IDI_P8)

Excerpt 5:

"It's tough to enjoy your personal life when work spills over into every free moment. It takes a toll on your overall well-being." (IDI_P3)

This aligns with the Effort-Recovery Model, which suggests insufficient recovery time from work demands contributes to emotional exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction. Studies by Ndioho and Chukwu (2017) and Olaivar (2020) further highlight

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the negative impact of augmented workloads on maintaining work-life balance and teacher satisfaction.

Relevant Theme 2: Erosion of Job Satisfaction

Teachers expressed frustration over the inability to focus on core teaching duties due to administrative tasks, diminishing their sense of fulfillment:

Excerpt 6:

*"I became a teacher because I love interacting with students, but the paperwork and meetings have taken away the joy."
(IDI_P10)*

Excerpt 7:

*"Job satisfaction for me used to be about seeing my students succeed. Now, it's clouded by the frustration of work."
(IDI_P3)*

This theme is supported by Buhler's (1990) theory of Job Enlargement, which posits that an imbalance in task variety and complexity can decrease job satisfaction. Studies by Kraft et al. (2021) and Hancock et al. (2009) highlight how increased administrative demands lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased contemplation of leaving the profession.

Relevant Theme 3: Emotional Exhaustion

Teachers described the toll of managing multiple tasks on their emotional well-being, leading to fatigue and emotional drain:

Excerpt 8:

*"It's emotionally exhausting. You give so much to your students, but the administrative tasks leave you with little emotional energy."
(IDI_P10)*

Excerpt 9:

*"I sometimes feel super sad when I can't finish the tasks given to me. My mental and emotional well-being is affected."
(IDI_P4)*

This aligns with the Emotional Exhaustion component of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Research by Haramain (2019) and Hakanen et al. (2017) emphasizes the significant role of job resources in mitigating emotional exhaustion. The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by Hobfoll et al. (2018) further explains how prolonged job demands deplete emotional resources, leading to burnout.

Relevant Theme 4: Impact on Collegial Relationships

Ancillary tasks strained collegial relationships, compromising collaborative planning and support systems:

Excerpt 9:

*"We used to have a strong support system among colleagues. Now, everyone is so buried in their tasks that we hardly have time to share ideas or help each other out."
(IDI_P1)*

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Excerpt 10:

"Colleague support is fading. Everyone's buried in tasks, hard to share ideas or help out." (IDI_P4)

This is consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that mutual support and reciprocity are crucial in social interactions. Studies by Tiongson and Gempes (2022) and Tolibas and Morante (2022) emphasize the importance of effective support systems in fostering collaborative environments among teachers.

Relevant Theme 5: Seeking Purpose and Impact

Teachers expressed a desire for a sense of purpose and impact in their profession, feeling overshadowed by administrative tasks:

Excerpt 11:

"I want to make a difference in my students' lives, but the work hurdles make it challenging." (IDI_P1)

Excerpt 12:

"Teaching should be about making a positive impact. When you're bogged down with paperwork, it's hard to see the bigger picture and find satisfaction in your contribution." (IDI_P10)

This theme aligns with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which highlights the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Research by Garcia et al. (2018) and Deci and Ryan (2018) underscore the link between teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and the sense of meaningfulness in teaching.

Overall, these themes highlight the intricate relationship between ancillary tasks and various facets of teachers' job satisfaction and well-being, emphasizing the need for balanced workloads and supportive work environments to enhance teacher satisfaction and effectiveness.

Emerging Themes on Influence on Teaching Practices and Student Outcomes

This section examines how the additional administrative tasks that teachers undertake affect their teaching methods and student performance. The analysis identified three primary themes: Restriction of Instructional Creativity, Impact on Individualized Student Support, and Struggle with Timely and Effective Feedback.

Relevant Theme 1: Restriction of Instructional Creativity

Teachers reported that ancillary tasks restricted their ability to be creative in their lesson planning and teaching methods. Many expressed frustrations at not having enough time to develop engaging and innovative lessons due to administrative burdens.

Excerpt 13:

"I used to have the freedom to experiment with different teaching approaches. Now, the administrative load leaves little room for creative lesson planning." (IDI_P3)

Excerpt 14:

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"Instead of using technology-aided instruction like making a PowerPoint presentation, I only do the basic, traditional way of teaching." (IDI_P7)

This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that job demands, if not balanced with adequate resources, can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. Studies by Arañas (2023) and Alzahabi and Becker (2017) highlight that administrative demands negatively impact teachers' capacity for instructional creativity, while Amabile's (1983) work underscores the importance of organizational resources in supporting creativity.

Relevant Theme 2: Impact on Individualized Student Support

Teachers struggled to provide individualized support to students due to the time consumed by ancillary tasks. This lack of personalized attention particularly affected students who needed additional help or had unique learning needs.

Excerpt 15:

"I want to give each student the support they need, but it's challenging when administrative duties consume so much of my time." (IDI_P2)

Excerpt 16:

"Administrative duties consume time needed for individualized student support. I am just doing the bare minimum." (IDI_P4)

Abarro (2018) found that increased teacher workload diminishes the ability to provide personalized attention, adversely impacting student outcomes. Dones and Callo (2023) further suggest that heightened administrative tasks can degrade the quality of teacher-student relationships, emphasizing the need for a balanced workload.

Relevant Theme 3: Struggle with Timely and Effective Feedback

Providing timely and effective feedback to students was another significant challenge, as administrative tasks hindered teachers' ability to promptly assess and respond to student work.

Excerpt 17:

"Feedback is crucial for student improvement, but the time I spend on administrative tasks delays the feedback loop." (IDI_P1)

Excerpt 18:

"Immediate feedback is needed, but because of a busy schedule, I often correct their mistakes later, letting them learn on their own." (IDI_P9)

This theme resonates with Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that excessive cognitive load can impede learning and performance. Abarro (2018) and Cahate, Rodriguez, and Quines (2021) indicate that an overload of administrative tasks can lead to cognitive strain, delaying the feedback process. Diomampo and Quines (2023) emphasize managing cognitive load to optimize learning outcomes, while Letts et al. (2007) underscore the importance of timely feedback in enhancing student achievement.

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The findings suggest a need for balanced workloads and adequate resources to support teachers in effectively fulfilling their educational roles, ultimately improving student outcomes. The synthesis of studies underscores the importance of organizational support in fostering a conducive teaching environment.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study illuminate the profound impact that ancillary tasks have on teaching practices and student outcomes, providing clear answers to the research questions. The first research question explored how multiple ancillary tasks influence teachers' instructional methods. The results reveal that these tasks significantly restrict instructional creativity, as teachers struggle to find the time and energy to develop engaging and innovative lessons. This constraint is echoed by several participants who expressed frustration over their inability to experiment with different teaching approaches and incorporate technology-aided instruction. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model supports these findings, suggesting that the imbalance between demands and available resources leads to decreased job satisfaction and creativity.

The study found that the overwhelming administrative duties detract from teachers' ability to provide personalized attention to students, particularly those who need extra help or have unique learning needs. Participants highlighted their guilt and frustration over not being able to support each student's individual requirements adequately. This issue is further compounded by the findings from Abarro (2018) and Dones and Callo (2023), which emphasize the negative correlation between increased workload and the quality of teacher-student interactions. Ensuring teachers have a manageable workload is critical to maintaining effective individualized support.

More so, the results indicate that teachers struggle to offer prompt and constructive feedback due to the time consumed by administrative tasks. Participants noted that the delay in feedback hampers student improvement, aligning with Cognitive Load Theory, which posits that excessive cognitive demands can impede performance. Research by Abarro (2018) and Cahate, Rodriguez, and Quines (2021) supports these findings, suggesting that administrative overload leads to cognitive strain, delaying the feedback process and impacting student learning outcomes.

In summary, the study underscores the significant challenges posed by ancillary tasks on teaching practices and student outcomes. The restriction of instructional creativity, compromised individualized student support, and delays in providing timely feedback are all critical issues that need addressing. These findings highlight the necessity for balanced workloads and adequate resources to support teachers in their multifaceted roles. By alleviating the burden of ancillary tasks, educators can focus more effectively on their primary teaching responsibilities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education and student success.

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