

Balancing Two Hats: A Phenomenological Study of Teachers-In-Charge Navigating Instructional and Administrative Demands

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Abstract:

Teachers-in-Charge (TICs) often face dual roles, a common issue in educational institutions globally. Its prevalence worldwide has become a major issue because of its impact on the professional development and efficacy of teachers and the quality of education. Due to the shortage of school principals, teachers are designated as TICs or school heads, which creates a detrimental effect on the professional development of teachers as they juggle administrative and instructional roles. Thus, this qualitative phenomenological paper explored the lived experiences of Teachers-in-Charge handling teaching loads. The data were gathered from the six (6) participants who were chosen using a purposive sampling technique and determined using the following inclusion criteria: public elementary and secondary school teachers appointed as TICs, and who have a teaching load. The data were collected utilizing an unstructured in-depth interview. Employing a thematic analysis, the findings revealed the roles of TICs as administrators and as classroom teachers, the challenges they face in balancing their dual roles, and how they were able to overcome them through coping mechanisms and support. Moreover, the findings highlighted the balancing acts of the participants in navigating through dual responsibilities. Thus, the findings imply how the participants balance their two hats and how their experiences molded them to become a better version of themselves. Practical applications of the research findings and directions for future research have likewise been submitted.

Keywords: Education, phenomenological study, teachers-in-charge, balancing acts, Philippines

Introduction:

Rationale

Teachers-in-Charge (TICs) often face dual roles, a common issue in educational institutions worldwide (Lindqvist et al., 2020). In the words of Hohner and Riveros (2017), the shortage of school administrators further exacerbates this problem, leading to TICs being tasked with teaching and school management duties. This dual responsibility can pose challenges, potentially affecting their effectiveness in both teaching and administration.

In the Philippines, a shortage of school principals has led to teachers being appointed Teachers-In-Charge (TICs), as outlined in DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2007 (DepEd, 2007). Contrarywise, DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024, emphasizes that TICs should be relieved of teaching duties, given that teachers have a maximum two-hour overload. However, TICs simultaneously fulfill teaching and school head responsibilities (Pascual & Malvar, 2024).

Several studies have investigated the roles of Teachers-In-Charge (TICs) and their dual responsibilities. For instance, Zhang and Yang (2016) explored the working pressures faced by new TICs in China's primary schools, while Hohner and Riveros (2017) examined the experiences of classroom teachers transitioning to administrators in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. In the Philippines, Aldiano (2024) focused on the instructional supervisory skills of TICs and the classroom performance of junior high school science teachers. However, limited literature exists on the lived experiences of TICs managing teaching loads in elementary and public schools in the Philippines, which this study sought to address.

Literature Review:

Roles of TICs as School Administrators

School administrators, particularly school heads or principals, play a pivotal role in the functioning and success of educational institutions. Their responsibilities go beyond the direct instructional activities associated with classroom

teaching and extend into various domains of school management. The literature emphasizes that school administrators serve as the key drivers of school improvement, educational policy implementation, and the overall well-being of the school community (Leithwood et al., 2020).

Instructional Leadership. One of the primary responsibilities of school administrators is to ensure the delivery of high-quality education by supporting teachers and students. As instructional leaders, they influence curriculum development, monitor teaching practices, and foster a culture of continuous professional development among staff (He et al., 2024). This role requires administrators to stay informed about best instructional practices, actively engage in classroom observations, and provide constructive feedback to teachers to enhance student learning outcomes.

School Culture and Climate. Another critical aspect of the school administrator's role is shaping and maintaining a positive school culture and climate. A healthy school culture is characterized by trust, respect, and high expectations for both students and staff (Schreiber, 2019). Administrators are responsible for creating an environment where teachers feel supported and valued, and students feel safe and motivated to learn.

Financial and Resource Management. Another key responsibility of school administrators is managing the school's budget and resources. This includes overseeing the allocation of funds, managing operational expenses, and ensuring that the school's financial resources are used effectively to support its educational goals (Oyier, 2017). School administrators must also ensure that the school's facilities are well-maintained and that students and staff can access the necessary materials, technology, and infrastructure.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement. Teachers-in-Charge act as the primary liaison between the school and its broader community. Engaging with parents, local businesses, government agencies, and other stakeholders is essential for building strong partnerships that support the school's mission (Hafeez and Akhtar, 2022). Administrators often lead initiatives to involve parents in school activities, seek community input in decision-making processes, and foster relationships that benefit students and staff.

Roles of TICs as Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers play a central and foundational role in the education system, directly influencing students' learning experiences and outcomes. They are the front-line professionals responsible for delivering curriculum content, fostering intellectual development, and shaping students' social and emotional well-being. The role of classroom teachers extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to encompass a wide range of responsibilities, including classroom management, student assessment, collaboration with colleagues, and engagement with the broader school community. This section provides an in-depth exploration of the multi-faceted roles of classroom teachers based on current literature.

Instructional Delivery and Classroom Management. At the core of a classroom teacher's role is the delivery of instruction. Teachers are responsible for designing and implementing lesson plans that align with curriculum standards and meet the diverse learning needs of their students (Hastings & Handley, 2019). Effective instructional delivery involves using a variety of teaching strategies, such as direct instruction, group work, project-based learning, and differentiated instruction, to engage students in the learning process (Altun & Nayman, 2022).

Fostering Student Development. Classroom teachers play a significant role in promoting their students' social, emotional, and cognitive development. Beyond academic instruction, teachers are responsible for fostering critical life skills such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and resilience (Darling-Hammond, 2016). Teachers help students develop a growth mindset, which encourages them to embrace challenges, persist in the face of difficulties, and view effort as a path to mastery.

Collaboration with Colleagues. Teachers do not operate in isolation; they are part of a larger educational community that includes fellow teachers, administrators, and support staff. Collaboration among educators is essential for fostering professional growth and improving instructional practices (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Teachers often work together to develop curriculum materials, share best practices, and support each other in addressing the needs of students.

Challenges of Balancing Dual Roles

Balancing the dual roles of school administrators and classroom teachers presents unique challenges for school heads. The literature highlights several key difficulties:

Time Management. One of the most significant challenges for school heads who teach is managing their time effectively. Administrative duties, such as attending meetings, managing staff, and addressing policy changes, can conflict with preparing and delivering lessons (Rowe et al., 2021). For many school leaders, the competing demands leave limited time for classroom instruction.

Role Conflict. Role conflict occurs when the expectations of one role interfere with the ability to perform the other. A school head may feel pulled in different directions, as administrative tasks often take precedence over classroom teaching (Adu, 2022). The need to attend to urgent administrative issues can reduce the time available for lesson planning, student interaction, and grading.

Emotional and Physical Strain. The emotional toll of balancing two roles can result in stress and burnout (Elomaa, 2021). School heads often face high levels of stress due to the constant demands of their roles, exacerbated by the need to manage staff issues, student concerns, and administrative obligations alongside classroom responsibilities.

Coping Mechanisms and Support

Several strategies have emerged from the literature to help school heads balance their roles effectively:

Time Management Techniques. Effective time management is crucial for balancing the dual roles. Some school heads create structured schedules that allocate specific times for administrative tasks and classroom instruction (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2016). By setting clear priorities and boundaries, school leaders can better manage their workload.

Delegation of Tasks. Teachers-in-Charge can delegate administrative tasks to assistant principals or department heads to free up time for teaching. The literature highlights distributed leadership's importance in ensuring that staff's administrative responsibilities are shared (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016).

Support from Stakeholders. Teachers-in-Charge benefit from the support of their teaching staff. Establishing strong communication channels and a collaborative school culture can help distribute the workload and reduce the burden on principals (Kgaswe, 2021).

Positive Attitude and Resilience. The optimism of TICs in the workplace fosters collaborative and transformative leadership. Moreover, their positive attitude toward their dual responsibilities helps them balance and manage their work effectively (Jiang & Wang, 2019).

Purpose Statement

This phenomenological study sought to explore the balancing act of six Teachers-In-Charge (TICs) handling teaching loads in public schools in Negros Occidental, Philippines. At this stage of the study, the balancing act is generally defined as challenges TICs must grapple with while trying to balance their dual responsibilities of managing the overall administration of the school while also fulfilling their teaching responsibilities.

Methodology:

This section explains the research procedures and guides future researchers to comprehend and replicate the study. It covers the research design, study location, participants, criteria for inclusion and exclusion, data collection methods, research ethics protocols, rigors of the findings, and procedures for data explication.

Research Design and Approach to Qualitative Research

This study used a qualitative, phenomenological research design to describe the balancing act experienced by TICs concurrently handling teaching loads in their respective public schools. Using in-depth interviews, the descriptive phenomenological research method was chosen to gather information on the subjective essence of everyone's experience. This phenomenological study ascertained a particular phenomenon, or the appearance of things as lived experiences (Rodriguez & Smith, 2020). It sought to understand phenomena by focusing on the experiences and perceptions of those who live them (Iversen et al., 2018).

Research Environment

This study took place in public elementary and secondary schools in Northern Negros. All these schools can be found in far-flung areas and can be called extension schools. These are the schools that have teachers in charge because of the shortage of school heads. Furthermore, these are small schools with a limited number of teachers and students. However small, these schools have received noteworthy awards in the division and even at the regional level.

Conversation Partners

The participants of this study, known specifically as Conversation Partners (CPs), are Teachers-in-Charge (TICs) in public schools in Negros Island in Western Visayas, Philippines. The participants were identified using the purposive sampling technique widely used in qualitative research. Data saturation determined the number of participants.

Inclusion Criteria

Conversation partners that were included in the study are TICs in the research locale who are concurrently handling teaching loads. TICs eligible to participate in the study were those who are: 1) Male or female elementary and secondary public-school teachers assigned to last-mile schools; 2) appointed as TICs; and 3) with assigned teaching loads.

Exclusion Criteria

CPs not eligible to participate in the study are those TICs without teaching loads and those not TICs in the last-mile schools.

Data-Gathering Instrument

An unstructured, in-depth interview was used as the research instrument to deeply extract the phenomenon's essence. This does not use any set of questions. Instead, the researcher asked open-ended questions regarding the phenomenon being studied (Creswell et al., 2018). This is the instrument that was used because phenomenological studies rely mainly on interviews as sources of data (Litchman, 2014). In this study, the participants had overall control of their responses to "what," "how," and "why" queries on their lived experiences. On the other hand, the researcher probed questions to elucidate the participants' responses further.

Data-Gathering Procedures

At the onset, the researcher coordinated with the division/supervisor/s, served as the gatekeepers, requested CPs, and showed them the inclusion criteria for the study. Then, the researcher sought clearance to conduct the study from the Division Supervisor/s under which target CPs are assigned as TICs and doing their concurrent teaching assignments. Once approved, TICs were furnished a duplicate copy of the said letter, and their consent for data collection via semi-structured interview at their most convenient schedule was sought. A brief orientation preceded the semi-structured interview to brief CPs of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, the nature of voluntariness, the risks and benefits, and confidentiality. To maintain their anonymity, all CPs are assigned a code, such as Arya, Sansa, Jon, Khal, Tyrion, and Daenerys.

The interview was conducted in a conducive venue chosen by the CPs with soft, natural lighting. Moreover, the round or oval table was used, where the interviewer sat at a non-confrontational angle and used open body language to exhibit calm communication with the participants.

An iPhone 16 cell phone captured the face-to-face verbal exchanges between the researcher and CPs for more consistent transcription. Field notes complemented the abovementioned audio recording of the in-depth interview guided by an interview schedule prepared by the researcher in advance. Through this procedure, CPs were expected to share their experiences in a natural, free-flowing, face-to-face verbal exchange, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each. After the initial interview, the researcher alerted the CPs that, should there be a need to collect additional data, she would arrange for a follow-up interview with selected CPs to ensure the validity and saturation of data. The interview transcripts were sent to each CP via their email accounts.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher addressed the general ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice to ensure the ethical soundness of the study.

Social Value

It is time to study and explore the lived experiences of TICs handling teaching loads to address the pressing needs of the teachers and to enhance the country's educational system. Moreover, this study can be taken as a reflection instrument and guidance to help cope with the demands of the participants. This may also benefit the school principals and the Department of Education in crafting programs and development plans that will help mitigate and address

the needs of their teachers. Moreover, future researchers can utilize this study to support related literature on the lived experiences of teachers in charge of handling teaching loads.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was secured from all the participants. The informed consent includes the name and affiliation of the researcher, the invitation to participate and reasons thereof, and the purpose and procedure of the research. With this, the participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable during the data gathering.

Vulnerability of Research Participants

No participant in this study was vulnerable, given that they are TICs with the ability and capability to participate fully in the research study. Thus, TICs were fit and had the potential to become research participants.

Risk and Benefits

Since the focus of this study pertained to the participants' personal experiences, the risk of emotional and psychological issues was unearthed. In addressing this, the researcher allowed the participants to settle down before continuing the interview and reminded them that they were free to share only the experiences they were emotionally and psychologically comfortable opening up about. At the end of this study, their shared experiences are given societal value.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The participants were assured of utmost confidentiality regarding whatever information they shared. Moreover, the researcher kept their identities under pseudonyms in adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. No information was disclosed about their identity, and their verbatim transcriptions were analyzed after member checking. The transcripts containing their information will be disposed of by manual shredding after some time.

Transparency

This dissertation is an academic requirement to complete graduate education. Thus, the researcher disclosed any monetary benefits and declared no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study. Moreover, the researcher disclosed the research findings by making them accessible and transparent.

Qualifications of the Researcher

The researcher graduated with a Master of Arts in Education, majoring in English. She has also completed her academic requirements with a Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management. The researcher has been in the school setting for five years now and is knowledgeable about confidentiality and other school-related matters. The researcher also underwent qualitative research and research-related seminars/trainings.

Justice

A fair selection of the participants based on the criteria was employed. Their participation in this study was voluntary. To reimburse them for their willingness to participate, they were given snacks during the interview process, tokens of gratitude, and a transportation allowance. All participants were respected regardless of their economic status, gender, or race.

Adequacy of Facilities

The researcher prioritized the safety of the participants during data gathering, concerning safety protocols. A well-lit, conducive, and comfortable venue was provided to ensure the CP's welfare.

Community Involvement

The researcher sought the participation of the Department of Education and the six teachers in charge of conducting the study. School heads and the two division offices, specifically the division superintendents, who served as the gatekeepers, assisted in identifying the participants for the study. Their help was significant in the findings of this study.

Rigor of Findings

Transparency and validity are essential for establishing trustworthiness. The researcher must show dedication to being open and straightforward about the research objectives, expectations, and methods, as well as the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness relates to the level of confidence in the data, interpretations, and techniques applied to maintain the quality of a study (Conelly, 2016). Elo et al. (2014) outline that it applies to all stages of qualitative content analysis, from gathering data to presenting the findings. The key criteria for assessing quality in qualitative research include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability

In this study, the researcher used a check and recheck strategy to construct the confirmability of the findings. Methodical steps and procedures were observed. The trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research. Personal messaging, emails, and informed consent (see Appendix C) were given by the researcher to the conversation partners who were involved in the study. To paraphrase Birt et al. (2016), member checking was done, which is also known as participant or respondent validation, as a technique for exploring the credibility of results.

Transferability

In this study, through the unstructured interview conducted with the conversation partners, detailed and thick descriptions of experiences were taken into consideration. These conversation partners were selected through purposive sampling based on the inclusion criteria. The conversation partners who are male or female public-school teachers, appointed as TICs, and handle a teaching load/s were included in this study. Conversation partners who do not have a teaching load were excluded from the study.

Dependability

According to Anney (2015), dependability is the firmness of findings over time. It involves participants who judge the outcome and interpret and endorse the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data collected from the informants of the study (Anney, 2015). As a quality measure, dependability is particularly relevant to ecological and conservation science applications in the early stages of testing findings in multiple contexts to increase confidence in the evidence.

Credibility

The researcher conducted an initial and final interview to ensure the validity of the data given by the CPs. Member-checking will also be supplemented with member checks, which means that the data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from the members from whom data are requested (Anney, 2015). In this process, the researcher returned the analyzed and interpreted data to the conversation partners. The conversation partners evaluated the interpretation made by the researcher and confirmed that, indeed, the report was interpreted correctly.

Data Explication Procedures

This research study used a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of recorded interviews of the responses of the conversation partners. Moreover, the researcher identified insights and general statements that were drawn from the analysis of the transcribed thick description of the conversation partner's experiences. The interviews were read, re-read, and transcribed. The researcher ardently listened to the audio interviews and checked the field notes to get a sense of the conversation partner's emotions while relating the experience to have a deeper understanding of it and to verify that the initial analysis and coding were correct. Data analysis in qualitative research is a creative process, and for this study, the modified van Kaam popularized by Moustakas (1994) was used. The seven steps are as follows:

Horizontalization

Horizontalization is listing and grouping significant responses from the participants through reading and re-reading the verbatim transcription. All relevant information, including words, phrases, sentences, or emotional responses, is listed. This step consists of bracketing, wherein the researcher suspends all preconceptions about the topic.

Reduction and Elimination of Data

This step determines the invariant constituents by reducing and eliminating insignificant data. Moreover, data that are seen to overlap, repeat, and appear vague are eliminated. Purposeful data that remain contain the verbatim transcriptions necessary for answering the research objective and are relevant to the phenomenon.

Clustering and Thematizing

The invariant constituents related to each other will be clustered into thematic categories. Emerging from the analysis, these thematic categories are the data's core themes that reflect the participants' common perceptions and experiences.

Validation

This step determines whether or not the themes and the invariant constituents are valid. The researcher evaluates whether the invariant constituents and themes are expressed explicitly in the transcript and are compatible; otherwise, these data are eliminated.

Construction of Textural Description

Textural descriptions are constructed to describe the individual experiences of the participants. These will be constructed using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes and include verbatim examples from the transcription.

Construction of Structural Description

This step requires an imaginative variation to contextualize the experience of the phenomenon. The perspectives of each participant regarding their experience of the phenomenon will be described.

Incorporating the Textural and Structural Descriptions into Themes

The final step involves the construction of a descriptive transcript with all the themes. These themes represent the conclusion of the analysis that addresses the purpose of the study. This step aims to present the participants' experience as a whole.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings of the investigation. To recall, this phenomenological study sought to explore the balancing act of six Teachers-In-Charge (TICs) handling teaching loads in public schools in Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Theme 1: Roles of TICs as School Administrators

The Conversation Partners (CPs) shared their experiences handling their school administrators' roles. Similar statements were organized into four subthemes: instructional leadership, school culture and climate, financial and resource management, and community and stakeholder engagement.

Instructional Leadership

Teachers-in-Charge (TICs) are designated as school heads in their respective schools. One of their roles is instructional leadership, wherein they focus on the development of the entire school and its environment. Thus, the participants narrated their experiences in leading their schools as follows:

"Pero karun nga school year nag patakod mi ug Wi-Fi sa school kay may internet man ang MOOE so akua nang ginpataod sa school para may Wi-Fi mi" (This school year, we have installed Wi-Fi in our school as intended in the MOOE) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025)

"As a TIC, you have the power to empower your co-teachers to become better" (As a TIC, you have the power to empower your co-teachers to be better) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"As a school head so kinanglanun gid nga e-revisit gid sila pirme kag e-follow up kung ano ang mga need nila para sa kabataan." (As a school head, I always need to revisit my teachers and follow up on what they need for their learners) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 2, 2025).

"Ara sa imo ang desisyon nga kung paano mo iimplement ang programs nga ara sa imo SIP, AIP, kag APP nga ginkasugtan mo man upod sa imo nga teachers. Ara sa imo kung ma implement na siya. Kung baga ang prioritization sang program ara gid ya sa school ara gid ya nakasalalay sa school head" (The decision is in your hands as a TIC, on how are you going to implement the programs that you have in your SIP and APP that you have created together with your teachers. In other words, the prioritization of the implementation of programs is really in the hands of the school head) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 2, 2025).

"Subong ang gina ubra ko nalang gid is every Monday we at least have a staff meeting para may ma share or if may mga announcement at least aware and tanan" (Now, what I do is that every Monday we have a staff meeting to share some announcements so my teachers will be ready and informed) (Daenerys, personal communication, February 22, 2025)

School Culture and Climate

The participants shared their experiences regarding their respective schools' school culture and climate. Moreover, they emphasized the positive and negative cultures they had experienced.

They narrated:

"Murag naay mga tawo nga ungrateful maski unsa imo giubra sa ila nga maayu as school administrator may isulti gid na ang mga tawo sa imo" (Sometimes, there are people in the workplace who are ungrateful even though you do them good as a school administrator) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"You must have human consideration." (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"With the help of my teachers, because I am not alone nga naga desisyon sang tanan nga mga programs kag implementation sa school, involve gid si teacher, si community, at the same time si Barangay kag amon nga LGU, kag ang amon nga SGC PTA, kag ang amon nga asosasyon diri sa palibot. We are all involve that is why siguro amo na ang experience ko gid is ang help sang community isa na sa ka dako nga strength nakon, support sang akon kaupdanan, ang pagpati nila bala sa programs nga gina ano ko sa ila kag grabe sila mag support" (All of us are involved in the implementation of the school's program – teachers, community, barangay, local government units, SGC PTA, and the association. This is why I am not alone because all of us are working together. One of my strengths is the support of my colleagues, their belief in me, and their all-out support) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Financial and Resource Management

The CPs shared their stories about their experiences in managing finances and resources in their schools. They narrated that at first, they found it hard to manage the school's finances because they were not oriented on them, but after some time, they had learned about it.

They narrated:

"Ang sa MOOE, mao ra mana ang ga take time nga mag ubra especially kung gapractice kay gapractice pako mag ubra. May times nga pag indi mahatag ila gusto ba, sang teachers, kay syempre small school, so limited. Pero karun nga school year nag focus ko sa school supplies, bond papers ug ink" (It takes time to work on the MOOE, especially in my first year as TIC. There were times when the needs of the teachers could not be addressed. But this school year, I focused on school supplies like bond papers and ink) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"Financial management, sa MOOE, amo na siya ang budlay. Pagsulod ko palang as TIC wala jud seminars nga amo ni amo na nga amo ni ang ubrahan sa MOOE, sa hardships, sa SPFP, blank jud ka tanan" (Financial management is hard, especially on the MOOE. When I first became a TIC, I did not have seminars on managing the MOOE, the hardships, or even the SPFP. I did not know anything about managing the school's finances) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"With regards sa mga financial aspect wala nako mayu problema ana kay before I enter DepEd ga kwan man ko as Barangay Treasurer, so everything with regards to financial aspects in school, well-trained nako ana for almost 7 years before I enter. Building connections naa pod mga challenges dira" (I have no problem with financial management in our school because before I entered DepEd, I was a barangay treasurer. With that, I can say that I am well-trained in finances) (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The participants shared their experiences about their engagement with the community and other stakeholders. Specifically, they shared how the help of the stakeholders impacts their work as school heads. They narrated:

"Naka build nako linkages or connections kung sin-o" (I have already built linkages and connections in the community) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Gapatawag nalang ko ug local or gapa assist nalang ko sa akon teachers nga volunteers' pod" (I seek the help of the community and the assistance of volunteer teachers whenever I can) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"With the help of my teachers, because I am not alone nga naga desisyon sang tanan nga mga programs kag implementation sa school, involve gid si teacher, si community, at the same time si Barangay kag amon nga LGU, kag ang amon nga SGC PTA, kag ang amon nga asosasyon diri sa palibot" (All of us are involved in the implementation of the school's program – teachers, community, barangay, local government units, SGC PTA, and the association. This is why I am not alone because all of us are working together. One of my strengths is the support of my colleagues, their belief in me, and their all-out support" (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Theme 2: Roles of TICs as Classroom Teachers

The participants of this study shared their experiences in handling their roles as school administrators. Similar statements were organized into three subthemes: instructional delivery and classroom management, fostering student development, and collaboration with colleagues.

Instructional Delivery and Classroom Management

The participants narrated their experiences as teachers managing instructional delivery as well as classroom management. They shared that sometimes they cannot attend their classes because of their dual roles; however, they make sure to provide interventions and remediations to their learners.

They said that:

"There are days nga kopya lang sila anay. There are days naman ya nga eexplain mo na kung anon a to siya ang ila nga gin take down notes. Pero most of the time, gina tagaan mo sila instruction para makit-an mo lang bala nga on their own na inchindihan nila nga maelearn sila on their own" (I let my students copy the content of the day, then I explain it to them. But most of the time, I give instructions and activities to assess if they have learned something) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Mahatag jud ka ug interventions sa part sa bata kay primary objective man natun is learning budlay man kaayu kung dili na to mameet" (You must provide interventions for the students since our primary objective is students' learning) (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Hands-on experience and lifelong skills ang gina apply ko nga, for example, nga learning by doing" (I apply hands-on experiences and lifelong skills by integrating learning by doing in my classes) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"So, there's a lot of activity or remediation nga gina apply ko. I have already prepared the module, at the same time, the activity which is ibilin ko lang sa kabataan. Then those will serve as their theory, then after that pagbalik ko, e process ko naman na siya after process we go to practical method naman ensuring nga may learning makita ko na siya during practical learning. Explicit nalang gid ang pag introduce ko sa ila sang mga objectives nga dapat gid nila matun-an" (I provide a lot of activities and remediation. I also prepared modules to be given to students when I am not in the classroom, which will serve as their theory. When I come back, I process everything and go to the application of learning to assess if students understand the lesson effectively) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Fostering Student Development

One of the roles of teachers in school is to foster student development. The participants shared that even though they have a busy schedule, they ensure students' welfare and development. Specifically, they shared:

"Maka follow-up gid ko mag ma ensure gid nako nga maka meet sila sa qualification sang subject ban ga akon gina tudlo" (I ensure students' learning and make sure that they meet the learning objectives of the topic I teach) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Dako sa amon nga bulig ang internet kay may ara kami TV sa school so daw mas mapa hapos hapos" (Technology has helped us a lot since we have Televisions inside our classrooms, so teaching has become easier) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"As long as makaya ko, as long as, makaya sang power nga mahatag sa ila ang ila kinahanglan sa ila pag tuon gina ideyahan gid na namun" (We provide the needs of our students to the best of our abilities) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Galing gabalik gid na pirme ang ano namun sa kabataan kumbaga nag sinumpaan namun kag gina hambal ko gid sa community. Biskan ari lang kami sa tunga kampo kung ano ang naexperience sang taga banwa eexperience ta kay right niyu nay a as pupils. Kay kung ano ang program sang department of education dapat intrahan ta. Gina break ko ang idea nga biskan ang ari ta sa small school nga makita nila nga ara gali" (We always go back to our commitment to our students and the community. Even though we live here in the sugarcane fields, we let them experience what they deserve because that is their right as students. Moreover, even if we belong to a small school, we gladly join the program of the department) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Collaboration with Colleagues

The CPs shared that collaboration is present in their respective schools. They said that with the help of their co-teachers, work becomes easier and lighter.

They said:

"There are persons in-charge naman ya indi lang siling nga ako. So aside sa, indi man siling nga coordinatorship ah, bale na istorya ko nana sila ya nga kun, abi for example ang isa is values sa so you are incharge sa if may problema ang bata parte sa amo ni, then kung mga activities sa school naman ya may in-charge mana sa nga iya" (I collaborate with my teachers, and they are already in charge of some tasks in our school. Like the values teacher, he/she is assigned to handle problems, and there are also teachers assigned whenever there are school activities or programs) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Naa man koy teachers nga gina tap lang nako or ipa fuse lang nako ang sections. Wala problema kay everytime nga mugwa ko nay mu replace sa akon nga part. gina bilin lang nako sila sa akon teacher" (Whenever I have an urgent meeting, I fuse my section with the other section. I have a teacher whom I can tap. There is no problem because every time I go out, one of my teachers helps me with my classes) (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Most of the teachers ya are cooperative, dasun they are willing to help bala kung kinaglanun mo gid" (My co-teachers help me with all the programs and implementations in our school. They are always involved) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"You have been transparent to your teacher, may sense of helping sa isa kag isa daw dasig lang gid ang work" (If you are transparent with your teachers, the work becomes easier because they will give you a helping hand) (Daenerys, personal communication, February 22, 2025).

Theme 3: Challenges of Balancing Dual Roles

The participants of this study narrated the challenges they faced while juggling dual roles. Similar statements were organized into three subthemes: time management, role conflict, and emotional and physical strain.

Time Management

The CPs shared that this is one of the problems they faced as teachers handling teaching loads. Specifically, they narrated how time impacts their effectiveness as administrators as well as classroom teachers.

They said:

"So amo lang mana sa ang problema once nga may trainings ka for how many days so dapat makeready man dapat ang eleave mo sa ila nga, per instruction bala, dapat may e-leave kaman sa ila nga activity sa bata. Kung time nga tawgon ka sa training and you will be away for a week or 3 days – ara balang gulpi"

lang nga indi ka ready" (The only problem is when we have training for how many days, we need to ready some activities to be given to my students. However, sometimes it is urgent, then I cannot leave some activities) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Gaubra ko sa MOOE, sa SF7, SF1, SF2, tanan nga SF. Then, sa feeding. Ako man gahandle sa feeding. Sa kadag-an sang akon gina handle, English coordinator, research. Akon teaching loads kay 5 sa grade 1. Wala ko gaka balance akon dual roles, kay kung may meeting ko wala man ug klasi" (I work on the school's MOOE as well as the SF1, SF2, SF7, and all the other school forms. I am also assigned to the feeding program. I handle a lot of tasks- I am the English as well as research coordinator. As for my teaching load, I teach grade 1 with 5 loads. With these, I cannot balance my dual roles because every time I have a meeting, I cannot attend my classes) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

You cannot have the best of both worlds (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025)

"Kung balansehay lang, indi jud siya kis-a mabalanse kay daw sa kadamo, may time jud siya, may season jud nga grabe ka hectic ang amon nga schedule" (If we are going to talk about balancing, I cannot balance because of the heavy work since there are times that our schedule is very hectic) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Role Conflict

Participants shared how their dual responsibilities create a conflict in their work. They expressed their sentiments regarding which role to prioritize and how they are going to do that. Specifically, they said the following:

"Then factors ang mga meetings, seminars kay may mga seminars nga tag 3 days, so 3 days pod sila nga wala klasi. Gaka compromise ang teaching responsibilities kay I cannot choose between a teacher and an administrator because I do both. So wala koy choice. Pero mas piliun nakon ang mas priority, kay ang priority ang pagka school head over sa teaching" (Meetings and seminars are the factors that caused me to miss my classes. These compromise my teaching responsibilities. But I cannot choose between being a teacher and an administrator because I must do both, and so I am left with no choice. But if I must choose, I will prioritize being a school head) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"Mas gaka prioritize ang administrative work mam. Budlay gid sa bayaan ang administrative task compare sa teaching. Kay ang teaching may ara may maka substitute, ang administrative budlay mangita nga makaya ba nga daw may capable ba" (Administrative work is given more priority than teaching. I can find someone or seek the help of my co-teachers in teaching or substituting for my classes, but I cannot find someone who can do my work as an administrator) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Every time naay call up ang higher office, so mas prefer mi nga mu response compare sa amua nga teaching load kay mabilin mana namua sa amon teacher. May instruction man jud nga higher office gid nag sundon. ma leave jud namu ang teaching task namu, mabayaan jud namu. Dili man pod pwedi ngawala ming teaching load kay TIC paman mi. Teacher paman ang amuang posisyon" (Every time there is an urgent call from the higher office, I prefer to respond immediately because I can leave my teaching role with my co-teacher. This is because the instruction to us is to follow the higher office. However, I must have a teaching load since I am still a teacher by position) (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Emotional and Physical Strain

The TICs shared how emotionally and physically straining balancing dual roles is. They expressed how doubtful they are of their capabilities and how tiring work is, considering that they must do both every day. They shared:

"Medyo doubtful" (I sometimes doubt myself as a TIC) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"So wala ko mahimo, napuno nako sa libak, mga friends nako sa una karun indi na mi friends. May desisyon lang ka nga maigo ang ila ego, pero indi mana siya dapat personal kay work man. Nagkadto man ta sa eskwelahan para mag trabaho. Bulugasan bala nato ang atun trabaho, so magtrabaho ta according sa atun sweldo. Amo na akon gin emphasize, kaso kay may uban nga chill raba. So syempre makamuno ka ba, kay unfair mana sa part namun nga T1. Kami nga makabaka-baka ubra kamo nga T3 gapatawhay ra mo. So ana, budlay jud siya jud siya mag TIC" (I do not know what to do because my co-teachers backstabbed me, and some of my friends are not my friends anymore just because I became a TIC. There are times when I hurt their ego whenever I ask them to do something that is work-related. However, I always emphasize that we must work according to our salary since teaching is our bread and butter. I remind them of their

duties and responsibilities because it is somehow unfair on my part since I am just a Teacher I, and I do a lot of work more than them. These are the reasons why it is hard to become a TIC) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"Pwedi man diay nako ang maubra ang duwa. Kay syempre ga doubt ka sa imo self nga 7 years nako sa teaching wala ko na promote T1 japon ko. Pero sa lain nga bagay makaya man diay nimo nga maubra kaso lang wala lang na recognize ang imong efforts. I mean kung TIC ka dili siya murag naka ace ka or nakataas ka sa uban nga ah dasig na siya ma promote kay TIC siya, fair ming tanan pero ang sa trabaho dili lang. So, sila tawhay sila" (I realize that I can do both. Sometimes I doubt myself knowing that I have been teaching for seven years already, and I have not yet been promoted. But maybe I am meant for something else, that is being a school head, however, there are times when I feel like my efforts are not recognized. If you are a TIC, it is not like you are on top it is an added responsibility and workload) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"May times man nga ako mismo dili na jud ko ganahan mag duty mam. Kay may mga post sa facebook wala man pangalan pero kabalo ka nga para sa imuha jud kay may gisulti ka sa gc nga kanang ubrahan ba, then may mga ihambal na sila. So, mao na ang budlay nga tanan nga decision sa ilaha napero at the end of the day ako lang japon ang may sala. Ako ra japon ang basulon" (There are times that I do not even want to go to school anymore knowing that some of my workmates backstabbed me because of my decisions as a TIC. The blame is on me even if I think I did my part and I considered their decisions in the first place) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

Theme 4: Coping Mechanisms and Support

The participants expressed how they were able to cope with all the challenges they faced while balancing dual roles. Moreover, they shared the mechanisms they employed to overcome those hurdles. Similar statements were organized into five subthemes: time management techniques, delegation of tasks, support from stakeholders, optimism, and resilience.

Time Management Techniques

The CPs narrated their lived experiences, specifically their time management techniques that helped them cope with balancing their acts. They narrated:

"You have to balance your time and sometimes you have to sacrifice kis-a late na magkaon" (You must balance your time and sometimes) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"If there are urgent tasks for admin work, e prioritize ko na siya before I do my teaching loads, as long as may time pa. Pero kung urgent gid unahon ko gid to si admin work then ang teaching kag I always see to it gid ya nga indi ko ma neglect and teaching load ko kay first and foremost teaching gid ko ya" (If there are urgent tasks for my administrative work, I prioritize them before I do my teaching loads, especially if there is still time. However, I do not neglect my teaching duty because I am a teacher in the first place) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"Time management. Kung unsaon mo pag manage simong time nga maschedule nimo so ma break lang na nga mga technique nimo kun naka plan naka" (It is how you manage and schedule your time that your teaching strategies and techniques will come out) (Khal, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"But when it comes to balance sang ubra, first ga set gid ko sa akon kaugalingon sang standard sang pagka maestro kag sang standard sang pagka school head. Ginahimo ko naman lang is during sang time nga sa akon schedule for teaching kumbaga focus gid sa kabataan" (When it comes to balancing work, the first thing I do is set a standard for myself as a teacher and as a school head. When it is my schedule to have a class, I focus on my students) (Tyrion, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Delegation of Tasks

Participants shared how the delegation of tasks in the workplace helped them cope with their dual responsibilities. Moreover, they said that assigning roles is very important in maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire teaching and learning process. Specifically, they said:

"There are persons in-charge naman ya indi lang siling nga ako. So aside sa, indi man siling nga coordinatorship ah, bale na istorya ko nana sila ya nga kun, abi for example ang isa is values sa so you are in-charge sa if may problema ang bata parte sa amo ni, then kung mga activities sa school naman ya may in-charge mana sa nga iya. Indi lang mangin effective ang pag handle sang both tasks once nga may

trainings kay tew ala na gid to ya extra nga teacher nga didto mo" (There are people in charge of other tasks in our school, and that is why I am not alone. For example, values teachers are assigned if there are problems with students, while other teachers are assigned if there are activities in the school. A task cannot be effectively handled only when I have training because there is no extra teacher to hold the class) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Gaan mo extra time, kung kis-a gaayo ko sa iban nga teachers para ma cope up ko especially sa grade 7" (I give the students extra time to understand the lesson, and sometimes I also seek the help of other teachers for me to cope with my classes, especially grade 7) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"Gapatawag nalang ko ug local or gapa assist nalang ko sa akon teachers nga volunteers pod. Kay sometimes di jud siya mabalanse" (I call the help of the local school board or sometimes I seek the help of my teacher-volunteers whenever I cannot balance my roles) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Support from Stakeholders

The participants narrated that the support from the stakeholders, particularly the community, parents, barangay council, and the school association, helped a lot to the school. They said that the involvement of everyone created a lot of difference, especially to the welfare of the learners and the teachers as well. They shared that:

"I find my teaching and management easy to handle because I am a Jack of All Trades" (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"There is nothing to gain without pain. We need to be strong and to always be positive, keeping in mind that this responsibility will not be given to you if you cannot do it in the first place. Ask for help if necessary" (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"I can do it" (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"Maopen up ko sa akoang close nga previous nga school head. Then, mangutana ko sa iya unsay akong himuon kay dili ko ka decide on my own since maybe I'm not fit for the position kay since wala ko personality nga pang admin. Kung work-related report okay ko. Tanan nga reports ako'y gaobra pero kung sa people when it comes to people mao jud na ang nabudlayan ko sa akon part" (I share my sentiments with my former school head. Then, I would ask her about the things I should do as TIC because I cannot decide on my thinking that I am not fit for the position) (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"TIC is awesome. It is like a roller-coaster ride. But the experience is nice" (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

Positive Attitude and Resilience

The CPs shared their lived experiences of handling dual roles. Their positive attitude and resilience in doing administrative work and taking responsibility helped them in achieving the right balance in their career. Particularly, they narrated:

"Ang sa teaching and sa management both daw wala gid man ko ya nabudlayan kay I'm a Jack of All Trades" (I find my teaching and management easy to handle because I am a Jack of All Trades) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"There's nothing to gain without pain, kinanglan strong lang; always be positive nga wala na ginhatag sa imo nga responsibility kung indi mo na Makaya. Then ask for help if needed." (There is nothing to gain without pain. We need to be strong and to always be positive, keeping in mind that this responsibility will not be given to you if you cannot do it in the first place. Ask for help if necessary) (Arya, personal communication, February 13, 2025).

"I can do it" (Sansa, personal communication, February 15, 2025).

"Okay, pwedi naman siya because as a TIC you have the power to empower your co-teachers to become better" (Being a TIC is good because you have the power to empower your colleagues to be better) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

"I always keep a cool mind, I always make people feel decompress para indi mag dako ang issue kay kung high emotion gin match ko man te magamo na gid. I always see to it nga mag respond indi gid mag react dayun" (I always keep a cool mind. I always make people feel calm so the issue to be avoided because once I also let my emotions out the problem will worsen. I always see to it that I will not react abruptly) (Jon, personal communication, February 18, 2025).

General Statement, Practical Application, and Directions for Future Research

Following the interviews with six participants and the transcription of their verbatim responses, the researcher employed the Van Kaam method, as adapted by Moustakas, to identify significant statements and relevant data. From this analysis, composite descriptions were developed to capture the essence of the participants' lived experiences. These descriptions contextualized both *what* the participants experienced and *how* they experienced the phenomenon. Common insights were then synthesized into four (4) overarching themes and fourteen (14) sub-themes.

Practical Application

The schools' division offices may utilize the findings of this study to create or propose interventions that would cater to the needs of teachers designated as teachers in charge. This is also a guide for them in crafting capacity programs that focus on the holistic development of their teachers. Furthermore, the results of this study may serve as a guide for the recipients to develop their performance and knowledge in fulfilling their roles as classroom teachers and administrators effectively and efficiently. Lastly, this will serve as their inspiration in coping with all the challenges they face and will face as school heads and teachers at the same time.

Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study focused on the lived experiences of Teachers-in-Charge handling teaching loads in public elementary and secondary schools in the northern part of Negros Island Region. Future researchers may conduct the same study in southern Negros TICs as the participants. They may also conduct the same study with more than six participants, focusing on either all elementary teachers-in-Charge or all secondary teachers-in-Charge for comprehensive, reliable, and specified participants. Moreover, since this is a qualitative study, other researchers may use quantitative research to show a wider scope of teachers-in-charge handling teaching loads.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Ma. Salvacion Buenacosa-Panaguiton: Concept and design, literature review, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Randolph L. Asistido: Concept and design, interview protocol, editing, reviewing, and supervision.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. They affirm that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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