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Beyond the Instructional Functions of Teachers: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions and how they are coping with their multiple assignments. A qualitative-transcendental phenomenology method of research was utilized, and the informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Findings of the study revealed the experiences of elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions such as time management, work stress, and teacher productivity. Meanwhile, in terms of how they cope with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions, the elementary teachers specified that planning ahead of time, collaborating with colleagues, and being positive in the workplace are the ways they used to alleviate the challenges and pressure that they are experiencing. Lastly, the elementary teachers uttered that building a harmonious relationship with colleagues, having a positive mindset, offering financial support, and coming up with a working schedule could help address the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions

INTRODUCTION

The nature of a teaching job entails daily planning for the educational process, preparation of instructional materials, checking of activities, and recording of the learner's academic performance. However, in most schools around the world, teachers are undeniably preoccupied with the overloaded roles and responsibilities assigned to them. Teachers are burdened because of the many functions that the school or the administration expects them to carry out which can lead to bringing their work at home in order to submit the needed requirements on time. As a matter of fact, they also have another duty to perform which is already beyond their instructional functions and that adds weight to their weary shoulders. Beyond the instructional functions of teachers means that aside from teaching their students in school, additional non-teaching assignments are assumed by the teachers. A teacher can be assigned to several additional functions or support roles (David *et al.*, 2019). In other words, they are not just called to perform their duty as a classroom teacher or adviser but also given extra non-teaching functions as additional workloads called ancillary services. However, teachers receive much lesser compensation as compared to the other professions, they are overloaded and burdened yet underpaid. Into and Gempes (2018) noted that teachers are classified into two. These are teachers with ancillary services functions and teachers without ancillary services functions. These extra non-teaching functions demand teachers' time, commitment, capacity, and effort in acting out this extra duty, sometimes at the expense of teachers conducting lessons woefully unprepared. Consequently, it may have an adverse effect on the student's performance in school and teachers' enthusiasm in delivering lessons due to lack of preparation. Many other responsibilities and roles aside from actual teaching are excessively given

to the teachers which, in turn, can affect their teaching and deteriorate the quality of instruction (Leyco, 2019). Likewise, the intensification of the teacher's workload has been identified as an undesirable consequence of school management (Timperley and Robinson, 2010). Furthermore, ordinary public school teachers spend much of their time in the classroom preparing, structuring, teaching, grading students' works, attending meetings as well as submitting required documents, giving attention to the student's needs, getting involved in a variety of student extracurricular activities, and interacting with parents about their child's progress in school. Just the time that they arrived at school to perform what is expected of them and the moment they leave school, does not mean that teachers can now freely do other equally important activities outside teaching. These are the tasks that can already cause pressure and trouble to teachers who have more than fifty students in one class to attend to. Hence, the researchers also believe that public school elementary teachers are overworked and their health- both mental and physical, can also be an utmost concern if not taken into consideration. As observed by the researchers, teachers experienced being physically unwell, stressed, and exhausted, suffering from sleeping problems, and feeling miserable most of the time due to multiple tasks they need to accomplish. It is because of the very challenging job of a teacher, as well as they are overburdened with multiple ancillary functions that they cannot refuse, for it might affect their Individual Performance Commitment and Review ratings. In the same way, students would not be able to cultivate their multiple intelligences as a result, and their learning experiences and performance would not be enhanced (Cabuquin, 2022). Likewise, tasks that were left undone due to lack of time and pressure given by their school can cause them the feeling of uneasiness with so much weight on their shoulders (Klassen and

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Chiu, 2010). Teachers, specifically those who are teaching in public schools, have numerous tasks to accomplish and attend to, which are comparable to the reduction of their energy. This kind of work stress stuns the teachers and disturbs them in various aspects, sometimes negatively on their work performance within their school (Hendawi, 2020).

While there are studies conducted to determine the teachers' workloads, the capability of teachers to work under pressure, the performance of teachers, and time management, there are only a few studies focusing on the teachers having multiple ancillary functions in school and most of them are from the international settings. The experiences of elementary teachers beyond their instructional functions as can be observed in the fund of knowledge have not been fully explored. Most of the literature were focusing on the analysis of different variables used related to the teachers' time management, performance, teaching styles, and classroom management skills using correlational or comparative research designs. It is on this premise that this phenomenological study was conducted to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of public-school elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions in the Department of Education, Division of Taaloban City where one of the researchers is currently employed as a public-school elementary teacher. The present study contends that knowing the teachers' experiences and coping mechanisms can provide insights to the whole DepEd community, particularly the elementary teachers who are experiencing the same dilemma but are just keeping the struggles to themselves.

Study Objectives

This study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions and how they are coping with their multiple assignments. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. explore the experiences of teachers with multiple ancillary functions;
2. determine how teachers cope with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions; and
3. determine the teachers' insights which they can share with their colleagues and the academe in general.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines serves as a frontline for ensuring access to, encouraging equity in, and enhancing the quality of basic education. With today's growing need to provide an education that is free, accessible, and quality primary and secondary teaching and learning, teachers at all grade levels are encouraged and even compelled by the school administration to climb up the ladder. Thus, raising the requirements needed for becoming a teacher and pushing them to get their master's and/or doctorate degrees for the purpose of ensuring adequate, equitable, and quality education for all learners.

David *et al.* (2019) stressed the necessity of reducing the public school teachers' non-teaching functions to provide them with adequate and quality time to do classroom-related activities. In such a way, school administrators can be guided on what has to be added or eliminated from the workloads of teachers especially the elementary teachers who are handling almost all subject areas. Pigozzi (2008) added that the breakdown of each workload of the teachers should be more specific and concise to identify the root causes of teachers' problems in managing time. Moreover, Ndioho and Chukwu (2017) found that teachers' workloads greatly affect the performance of learners in the classroom. The teachers become less effective in delivering their lessons because of a lack of preparation and consequently, deteriorates the quality of teaching and learning that teachers can provide. Nyawara (2010) likewise discussed the impact of teachers' additional workloads and found out that job overloads contribute to the low performance of teachers in taking care of their learners' needs and interests. Gwambobo (2013) also revealed that teachers' teaching and extra non-teaching tasks are associated with the learners' academic performance.

As additional workloads influence the teaching performance of elementary teachers, a need to explore their lived experiences of handling multiple assignments is necessary as it will guide the entire education community to craft a new system to address these issues on the teachers' stress, time management, and teaching performance. Several studies disclosed that having many teaching and non-teaching workloads can give a negative impact on the learning process. Perks (2015) further stated that a good workload allocation causes teachers to become more efficient and effective on their job. A good workload must be transparent, and fair, and must be based on the teachers' capacity to carry out the tasks (Retubada, 2014).

Most teachers are overloaded by these many ancillary tasks which could affect their time management and make them exhausted. Mosha (2017) noted that reducing teachers' teaching and non-teaching tasks can lead to an increase in teachers giving quality service and performance. As a result, it may lead to a decrease in the number of teachers who are experiencing issues such as physical and mental stress, errors in work, professional competition, poor teaching performance, work-life imbalance, and burnout (Chirmi, 2016).

In recent years, teachers in public schools are now assigned to different coordinators in their respective schools (Toshiyuk and Nadezhda, 2016). Llego (2019) indicated that in giving non-teaching assignments to the teachers, their regular work must be considered. The feeding coordinator rendered at least 2-3 hours of teaching load while the teacher librarian coordinator rendered 3 hours of actual teaching and 3 hours of duty in the library. The guidance coordinator, school registrar coordinator, and school nurse/clinic teacher coordinator likewise rendered three hours of teaching load and three hours on other

ancillary services. The journalism coordinator is also given a teaching load and one school paper advisory.

Despite the issues and concerns experienced by teachers on having multiple assignments, Into and Gempes (2018) unveiled that there are also teachers who shared positive experiences on having multiple ancillary tasks as they found opportunities like being able to attend training and seminars and being recommended to be a speaker on different occasions. However, it must be noted that not all teachers who are handling multiple assignments may have the opportunity to experience the same as others encountering problems like time management. Khan, *et al* (2016) pointed out the importance of effective time management in order to handle different circumstances and maximize time for instruction and planning of activities. (Mungasia, J. A *et al.* 2022)

Yadani and Aboagye (2018) explored the lived experiences of pre-service teachers during teaching practice which is often neglected in other studies. Accordingly, frequent conferences and workshops are necessary for pre-service teachers to prepare them for possible conditions that would test their knowledge in handling future concerns or circumstances in the academe. High moral values, attitudes, and teaching skills are likewise important to be developed for effective teaching and for efficiency on the job (Howard and Johnson, 2004; Bolin, 2007).

Ghamrawi and Jammal (2013) examined the effect of transformative and transactional leadership, job tensions, and personality characteristics of teachers. They also noted that teachers are more likely to leave their profession because of career stress- affecting their physical and mental health. While it is not possible to determine the exact quantity, a number of research revealed that public school teachers may resign from their job every year, some chose to be reassigned to a different school environment, but many of them leave the profession to look for another job. As can be observed, this issue on the mental and physical health of public-school teachers, especially those who are assigned to the elementary levels is also one of the many factors that influence the quality of education, as well as the school culture, support systems, and teachers' motivation.

Utomo (2018) pointed out that the "complex tasks and responsibilities of achieving educational goals relate to teacher motivation, so that good intention will encourage teacher activities." Ofoegbu (2004) added that motivation is closely associated with needs. A teacher for example keeps motivated when his needs are met, hence the needs of teachers influence their motivation. If teachers are unable to find their motivation to teach, then they will not be successful and effective in educating the minds of the learners. It is then necessary that the department of education investigates the issues and concerns experienced by teachers in handling multiple roles and responsibilities in school so as to keep their motivation and productivity in place (Sharma & Jyoti, 2009).

In the study of Werang (2018), the relationships among the teachers' multiple workloads, characteristics, and

emotional issues were recognized. The workload system should then be improved with the guidance of the school supervisor and school head to improve the quality of service and school environment (Kirby, 2017; Meador, 2019). Moreover, Ayeni and Amawekne (2018) further stated that a teacher's job under pressure is associated with "poor teacher performance and poor student outcomes." Elementary school teachers who have greater pressure produce classroom environments that are less conducive, which leads to poor learners' performance. When teachers are extremely hassled, pupils show lower levels of both social change and academic performance. While there are studies conducted to determine teachers' workload, the ability of teachers to work under pressure, job stress, the performance of teachers, and time management, there are only a few studies focusing on teachers having multiple assignments in school and most of them are from the international settings. It is on the premise that this phenomenological study should be pushed to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of public-school elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions in the Philippines, particularly in the Division of Tacloban City where the researcher is currently employed as an elementary teacher.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study used a qualitative transcendental phenomenology method of research. It sought to explore the lived experiences of the public-school elementary teachers having multiple ancillary functions as well as their coping mechanisms. The qualitative method uses interpretive and theoretical frameworks to study problems addressing complex, detailed social or human problems (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Phenomenology has its characterization on the qualities of induction and description (Moustakas, as cited in Zack, 2013). The everyday experiences of the phenomena of an individual are examined and defined by how they interpret the world (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). A transcendental phenomenology is an approach developed by Husserl which focuses on the philosophical approach to the appearance of a phenomenon and what appears to our consciousness (Moustakas as cited in Zack, 2013). In this present study, the transcendental phenomenological approach is suitable for this qualitative research study because it focuses on the lived experiences of the teachers with multiple ancillary functions and how they are coping with their multiple assignments (Creswell, 2013). The researchers delved into the existing phenomenon to address the objectives of the study.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at public elementary schools in the Department of Education, Division of Tacloban City, where one of the researchers is currently employed as a public-school elementary teacher. The elementary schools in the Division of Tacloban City were clustered according to district learning centers. The researchers

identified the teachers with multiple ancillary functions who will be part of the conduct of the present study.

Key Informants

The informants of the study were eight (8) public school elementary teachers as data saturation has already been reached at this number. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation is attained “when there is enough information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has been reached”, and when further coding is no longer essential. Based on the data that have been gathered, further data collection and analysis are no longer necessary. The study also used purposive sampling in determining the informants; the strategy used in purposive sampling is criterion sampling which involved selecting the target informants who will qualify with the inclusion criteria provided by the researchers in accordance with the existing phenomenon and purpose of the study. The inclusion criteria for the present study were: (1) should be a public-school elementary teacher in the Division of Tacloban City; (2) should have more than one additional non-teaching assignment or ancillary functions; (3) one who was willing to participate in the conduct of the study; and (4) should be in the teaching service for more than one year. In addition, the informants’ ancillary functions were identified by the researchers based on the special orders issued by the division superintendent. It should also be noted that the age and teaching position of the informants were not part of the qualifications mentioned.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers guaranteed that all informants were forced to participate in the study on the basis of informed consent. The respondents were provided with enough information and assurance that the result of the test will solely be used for the study and will be dealt with the utmost confidentiality. In order to ensure the confidentiality and validity of the following information in the interview, the researchers ensured that the interview etiquette was observed during the process. The researchers were the interviewer, note-taker, encoder, member-checking, and facilitator during the conversation. As an interviewer, the researcher used interview guide questions to gather the necessary information needed for the present study.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers asked permission from the elementary teachers in Tacloban City Division for the conduct of the interview through a letter of request. The interview was conducted virtually through Google Meet invites, and it was recorded to ensure that the information will be reflective of the actual responses. The informants were also informed that the conversation between the interviewer and interviewee will be recorded.

Before the actual interview, the elementary teachers voluntarily participated as they attached their signatures to the consent form provided by the researchers. They

were also provided a copy of the questions to be asked by the researchers so they will have enough time to prepare and be honest and confident with their responses. The researchers scheduled the interview based on the willingness and availability of the informants.

During the interview process, the researchers displayed courtesy at the onset. The researchers read the general instruction and specific directions to guide the elementary teachers, exemplified the purpose of the study, then asked relevant questions to explore the lived experiences of the elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions and how they are coping with their multiple assignments. The length of time spent during the virtual interviews was not limited so that the teacher- informants can expound more on their responses based on the interview guide questions asked by the researchers.

After the interview, the data gathered by the researchers were immediately transcribed and a copy of the transcription was given to the informants for corrections and cross-examinations. This is also to comply with the agreement between the informant and the researchers and as well as to ensure transparency at the same time. The transcriptions used pseudonyms rather than the names of the informants and the conversations were handled with the utmost confidentiality. All the information gathered was kept only by the researchers and the informants of the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was interview guide questions based on the guidelines of Creswell (2007). The guide questions contained three (3) main questions and a total of nine (9) sub-questions to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions, their coping mechanisms, and shared insights.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through the semi-structured interviews conducted were transcribed and examined using thematic analysis. Analysis of thematic patterns permits the researchers to understand how ideas and concepts are established. The procedure utilized by the researchers in transcribing and analyzing the data are bracketing, horizontalization, theme clustering, descriptions, and synthesis of the experience. The data that were used in the analysis are the responses of the elementary teachers on having multiple ancillary functions, their coping mechanisms, and shared insights as asked by the researchers during the interview.

In the process of bracketing, a phenomenological reduction describes the act of suspending judgment in the existence of the data and instead focusing on the analysis of the experiences, which should be as much as possible a free perception, open and receptive of the phenomenon under investigation which gives way to pure subjectivity by viewing the lived experiences (Moustakas, as cited by Zack, 2013). The process of horizontalization

utilized all the data to explain the lived experiences of each informant. With this, it engaged in studying every piece of information and listening repeatedly to the recordings so that each important statement could be examined more and thoroughly. The transcribed data that were monotonous and had no meaning were omitted to understand the lived experiences of the elementary teachers who have multiple assignments.

The statements gathered were coded and categorized based on the similarity of the responses and later were used to identify themes. Themes are typically words or phrases which describe the phenomenon in the lived experiences of the teachers with multiple ancillary functions. Additionally, the importance of clustering themes and cross-coding is to minimize the significant statements into small clusters of themes and take note of the following similarities of information among the respondents.

In the process of describing and interpreting the data, textural description and structural description were used. Textural description focused on the experiences that explain the teacher-informants' insights of a phenomenon using verbatim excerpts from the interview while the structural description focused on the interconnection of the responses to develop a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience (Moustakas, as cited by Zack, 2013).

Lastly, the final step in the process of analyzing the data was to combine both structural and textural forms to make a description that conveys a synthesis of the meaning and the essence of every phenomenon in the lived experiences of teachers with multiple ancillary functions and how they were coping with their multiple assignments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experiences of Teachers with Multiple Ancillary Functions

The workload of public-school elementary teachers in the Division of Tacloban City also includes other additional non-teaching assignments aside from teaching their pupils. It was stressed that the teachers are loaded because of the many functions that the school or the administration expects them to perform which can lead to bringing their work at home to submit the needed requirements before due time.

The Need to Manage Time

No one can disagree with the significance of being able to manage time in any form of activity. Teachers must carry out many tasks and activities for building a conducive learning environment and an effective learning process. The teachers in the Division of Tacloban City particularly those who are handling elementary pupils experienced difficulties in managing their time for classroom teaching due to the many non-teaching assignments that restrained them from doing teaching-related activities. They find it a major concern to handle both the class during the

teaching-learning process and doing reports or attending the coordinators' urgent meetings simultaneously.

According to elementary teachers, time management is perhaps one of the most important assets that all teachers should possess especially when there is a need to complete assignments or tasks within the specified period with quality not compromised. The teachers said that having multiple ancillary functions consumed their time which in turn can cause them the feeling of uneasiness the entire day. One teacher said:

"My experience of having ancillary functions is time-consuming. Once we say ancillary functions, it most of the time burdens us teachers." (P6)

Another teacher said:

"One thing I have encountered, when I am in the middle of my teaching, my attention was called because a visitor came to our school asking me for the status and updates of activities since I was the coordinator. It also gives me pressure when I was told to submit the reports immediately given the limited time I only have on that day, and I still have classes to attend to." (P4)

Further, other teachers expressed that;

"My class was disturbed, and I was preoccupied when I was told to prepare the reports needed by our school head to be submitted at the division office." (P8)

Another teacher explained that;

"In my own experience as a Grade 3 teacher where I have three ancillary functions in our school, I can say that my teaching activities and preparation are affected since most of my time was spent doing other non-teaching tasks." (P1)

The statements of the teachers support the knowledge that the need to manage time is very crucial to teachers and should be considered. The teachers can certainly manage their job when they are given ample time to work on their multiple assignments (Gatens, 2016). The teachers specified their experiences and the challenges caused by having multiple ancillary functions which can affect their concentration and enthusiasm to do their job without being exhausted. Most teachers indicated that non-teaching assignments now became a priority of teachers rather than classroom teaching and learning as more time and attention were given to their multiple ancillary functions. The actual teaching hours were also disrupted as teachers cannot focus on providing quality lectures and activities to their pupils.

Stressful

Stress is a major factor that influences the teacher's time management, and physical and mental conditions. Though stress is apparent to teachers and is no longer a new problem, it is also best for all stakeholders in the academe especially the administrators to find the best way to address this concern to safeguard their teachers' physical and mental health so they can do the tasks efficiently without being pressured.

In the case of the elementary teachers in the Division of Tacloban City, they said that the common factors making them feel stressed are having too much paperwork and ancillary functions to be done without delay. According to

the teachers, they are not only overloaded with classroom preparations and activities but also, are troubled since they still have another duty to act upon which is already beyond their instructional functions and that increases the heaviness on their weary shoulders. In addition, one teacher said:

“Having many ancillary functions usually can burnout teachers, especially in the elementary level where you have pupils who are not so behaving, to attend to.” (P8)

Another teacher said:

“... it (ancillary functions) is an additional workload that can stress me up. I am not only troubled with the overloaded tasks given to me but also, I am worried since I only spent less time with my children- to feed them and take care of them, since schoolwork becomes homework.” (P4)

Further, one teacher expressed:

“... it is very challenging to me because I am not only teaching my grade 1 pupils, but I also have many additional non-teaching functions assigned to me by our school head. I experienced one time, in the middle of my discussion, I was called by our school head to do the urgent reports to be done immediately. So, I have no choice but to leave my class and just gave them activities that they can work on their own which I know is not right.” (P3)

Teachers experience stress in diverse ways and for different reasons Hernando and Malipot (2018). The statements of the teachers validate the contention of Leyco (2019) that many other duties aside from the actual teaching are exceedingly given to the teachers which, in turn, can distress their teaching and more probably can deteriorate the quality of instruction. However, having those multiple ancillary functions assumed by the teachers are also given opportunities to enhance their self-esteem since they will now be more involved and exposed to different scenarios in the workplace, but they should not overlook that teaching the pupils is the first and foremost responsibility that they must remember and do so. Moreover, it is also a shared responsibility of the teachers and administrators to help each other's needs in the workplace and ensure that they are healthy enough- both physical and mental, so they can do their job accordingly.

Undermine the Teacher's Productivity

One of the many duties of an elementary teacher is for his or her pupils to learn basic knowledge and skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking while ensuring the best quality of education the school can provide. It is imperative that elementary teachers should deliver their lessons effectively and efficiently to build a strong and solid foundation for pupils' lifelong learning.

In the case of the elementary teachers in the Division of Tacloban City, working beyond office hours is apparent because they still need to finish some tasks to meet important deadlines. According to the elementary teachers, their teaching hours were seriously affected and as a result, the quality of instructions deteriorated as teachers conduct lessons woefully unprepared. This is because the teachers spent much of their time doing teaching-unrelated activities that have to be done instantly

and sometimes those tasks were only given a few hours remaining before its due. In addition, one teacher stated that:

“... it is very stressful because I am preparing daily lesson plans, instructional materials, recordings, and checking pupils' activities. There are times that I just give activities to my pupils so that I can work with my ancillary functions. If we have training or seminars, I cannot attend the needs of my advisory class since I am not at school and I just ask the other teacher to monitor my class.” (P7)

Another teacher expressed that:

“The major task I have come across is being a MAPEH coordinator. This task is very challenging for me since it has four components: Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health. If there are activities in school like nutrition or MAPEH month, I was the one who takes charge of everything since my ancillary task covers all these activities and not to mention that I also have other non-teaching tasks to do.” (P2)

Moreover, another teacher said that:

“It really affects my class as I do not have much time to prepare for my lessons due to other tasks to be done before due time. I felt like I was not able to deliver the learning competencies that my pupils should have learned at that moment. I become less effective as I can say.” (P6)

The effective and efficient management of the school lies in the ability of its head or supervisor to monitor its teachers' conditions and encourage them. These statements of the teachers back up with the research findings carried out by Retubada (2014) who stated that the teaching performance has been disregarded because of the many additional non-teaching workloads of the teachers. The school head then must ensure that the teachers are still capable of doing the non-teaching tasks and that their teaching tasks are not compromised so they can be productive every time they are in the classroom to deliver their lessons.

Ancillary Function is a Teacher's Option

Teachers are facing an unmanageable volume of administrative duties and non-teaching tasks. Aside from their regular teaching loads, teachers are given ancillary functions by the administration, and each is given based on the preference of the head or sometimes given to whoever is the right person to do the job. The elementary teachers experienced being assigned to more than one ancillary function which caused them to be physically unwell, stressed, and exhausted, suffered from sleeping problems, and felt depressed.

From the interviews conducted, the elementary teachers expressed their views and experiences when asked whether or not they are allowed to accept the ancillary functions. One teacher expressed that:

“I am in hesitant to refuse because of the trust and confidence given to me by the administration. When the special order is signed already by our supervisor, I have no choice but to do the roles and responsibilities that the school expects me to carry out.” (P2)

Another teacher stated that:

“I cannot refuse the assignment given to me because I know that it can affect my status or performance in our school, especially in our

IPCRF. *If I do so, I will not be recommended to attend such things as seminars, workshops, or training*". (P3)

On the other hand, one elementary teacher explained her experience of being assigned extra non-teaching assignments in their school. She said:

"Yes, I am allowed for as long as I have a valid reason why I do not want to be the coordinator. Our head is open to our concerns and willing to listen to our side." (P4)

Another teacher shared the same experience and said that: *"Yes, we are allowed to refuse the task especially if we do not have the technical know-how or knowledge on the ancillary function"*. (P8)

It is apparent based on the statements of the elementary teachers that coordinatorship depends upon the teacher if he or she is willing to accept it or not. Having more than one ancillary function demands a teacher's time and patience (Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009). Some teachers said that there are opportunities when you are given additional assignments like having certificates and points for promotion, learning new knowledge, and professional growth. However, there are repercussions of refusing the ancillary tasks as experienced by some elementary teachers though they have been given the prerogative of whether or not to accept the additional assignments. According to David, *et al.* (2019), a teacher can be assigned to several additional roles; they are not just called to perform their duty as a classroom teacher or adviser but also given an extra non-teaching function as an additional workload.

Teacher's Coping Mechanisms on the Challenges of having Multiple Ancillary Functions

Most of the elementary teachers who took part on the study are assigned with not only two non-teaching assignments. To lessen the difficulty and pressure that they encountered; the elementary teachers shared their experiences on how to cope with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions.

Planning Ahead

DepEd public school teachers emphasized that a heavy workload leads to divided time and attention in the delivery of their core business – teaching. Aside from teaching their pupils, the elementary teachers encountered challenges with the additional functions assigned by their administrators. Their multiple ancillary functions have caused them a lot of pressure particularly in managing their time for instruction and some other classroom-related activities. To deal with the existing challenges, the elementary teachers articulated that to cope with their ancillary functions, planning ahead is necessary. Planning is one of the main ingredients to successful workload management.

Undeniably, the elementary teachers in the Division of Tacloban City carry out many tasks like classroom preparation, structuring, teaching, grading students' works, attending meetings as well as submitting required documents, giving attention to the student's needs, getting

involved in a variety of student extracurricular activities, and interacting with parents about their child's progress in school. In effect, elementary teachers need to plan ahead to manage their tasks and maximize their time for instruction.

In addition, the elementary teachers expressed their views on coping with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions. One teacher uttered:

"I cope by simply planning and having good time management regarding with the activities based on the ancillary function that is given to me." (P8)

Another teacher said that:

"I manage my own time. As a research coordinator, scouting coordinator, and grade 3 level coordinator, I make schedules and timelines for upcoming activities like sports scouting. I always try my best to make a timeline so those classroom activities will not be affected". (P1)

According to the teachers' statements, most of them expressed the importance of planning ahead in every work they deal with. The department heads and top management personnel in educational institutions should then understand this phenomenon to help their teachers cope with the challenges. By planning ahead of time, the teachers can identify the task they have to prioritize first, categorize them, and create an adequate plan with the assistance of their supervisors to ensure that the teachers can still provide quality education and effectively manage their respective classes.

Collaborating with Colleagues

Working as a team among teachers can happen when there is a harmonious relationship among them. Likewise, it is indispensable that all teachers should collaborate with each other side by side to help one another in dealing with the challenges caused by the many ancillary tasks assumed by the teachers themselves. In the present study, the teacher-informants also stated that teachers' collaboration in the workplace makes work easier, more effective, and more efficient and it can provide them with a working environment that is conducive and free from stress and uncertainties.

According to elementary teachers, collaborating with other colleagues in the academe supports them to cope with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions. One teacher said:

"With collaborative leadership in the school system and a harmonious relationship with the teachers, all activities can be managed with ease and competence." (P5)

This statement of the teacher only shows that when there is unity among colleagues in the workplace, many good things can be achieved. This statement also supports the study of Ghamrawi and Jammal (2013) who stated that collaboration is valuable as many teachers experienced stress at work which can cause them to be passive and less efficient. Unity and collaboration with colleagues in the workplace create a healthy working environment even when paperwork and other non-teaching tasks arise.

Being Positive

Being positive at work could help elementary teachers to be active in their workplace. It also improves overall self-esteem and helps them to succeed. Although teachers have multiple ancillary functions that could cause them stress, burnout, job overload, and lack of time, a positive working environment makes them more effective and efficient to carry out their job.

According to the interview, some elementary teachers in Tacloban City Division shared and expressed their answers about their coping mechanisms at their workplace. One teacher said:

“Having a positive mindset and embracing ancillary function given by my principal and making plans and time management. I must embrace my ancillary which was given to me even though it gives a lot of stress to me. I must be positive and think positive mindset.” (P4)

Another teacher expressed:

“Teachers cope with the challenges of having multiple ancillary functions with a positive mindset especially having 3 ancillary functions. With collaborative leadership in our school, we can manage all activities.” (P5)

Having a positive attitude towards your work makes everything easy. The statement of the teachers supports the idea of coping mechanisms for how they encounter multiple ancillary functions. Elementary teachers are bombarded with having more than one ancillary function because they are not only handling those functions but also have pupils to attend to, and it causes them to feel stressed, burnout, and overloaded. According to Williams *et al.* (2016), positive thoughts and a positive mindset toward work provide teachers with satisfying feelings and excitement to carry out their duties. With the combination of a positive attitude at work, collaboration with colleagues, and good time management skills, schoolwork and extra non-teaching tasks can be done ahead of time.

Shared Insights of Teachers for their Colleagues and the Whole DepEd Community

To have a well-organized and successful activities in school, elementary teachers need to have the following skills and shared the experiences they have learned especially with their colleagues and the whole DepEd Community.

Build Harmonious Relationships with Colleagues

Sharing knowledge and experience with your teachers is very important. It can widen their understanding and update the ways to help teachers to be effective and efficient in this modernization innovation. Collaboration with the other teachers helps them grow and keeps them motivated and get the best access to every school-related activity and generate knowledge. There are many insights derived from the study of the lived experiences of teachers with multiple ancillary functions in the Tacloban City Division. One of the insights is to build meaningful relationships with colleagues

From the interviews conducted, most teachers identified

the following insights on the importance of collaborating with colleagues which they can share with their colleagues and in the academe. One teacher stated:

“If given an opportunity to become an administrator in the future, I will give my teachers balance ancillary functions and also with the teaching hours so that they can focus on the work or task given to them and they can function well as a teacher and at the same time they can work the ancillary functions given to them.” (P1)

Another teacher shared her insights:

“Being an administrator in the future I will guide my teachers and the ancillary task will be given equal and fair.” (P2)

Further, one teacher expressed that:

“If I will be an administrator in the future, I will divide the ancillary function equally and fairly. It will be divided based on the skills of the teachers... I will make sure that each coordinators will not be hard for the teachers and that they can still manage their classes properly. If we will help each other, we will all grow together as a team.” (P7)

Sittar (2020) mentioned that mutual respect and the pleasing personality of each colleague in the workplace is important to create a conducive and friendly environment. With the statements of the teachers being interviewed, having meaningful and harmonious relationships among colleagues is helpful in establishing fair treatment, unity in school-related activities, and teamwork. Likewise, it also helps one to grow professionally and become an effective and efficient teacher.

Having a Positive Mindset

Teachers play a strong role in the improvement of the school. Having a positive attitude toward the teacher's work makes everything easier and manageable. Likewise, it can give less burden, anxiety, and stress. A teacher's positive attitude makes certain goals attainable. It is undeniable that elementary teachers had to do a lot of paper works and teach their pupils. Teachers accept the challenge in a positive way to increase their professional growth and development by having multiple ancillary functions.

From the interviews conducted, elementary teachers share their insights in a positive mindset which they can share with their colleagues and in the academe. One teacher explained that:

“One thing that I can share with my colleagues is that teaching is very important not only for us teachers but also to the pupils. Even though teachers are given many tasks by their school heads we should think positively in every aspect so that it will be a successful one.” (P3)

To have a positive mindset in work, another teacher expounded:

“Given an opportunity to be an administrator, I will guide and help them in their reports so that the system will be smooth and in order. I will help the concerned teacher in performing the task given. I will share unlimited support and will not pressure the teachers about time since the primary task of teachers is to teach.” (P6)

Their statements about having a positive mindset and having multiple roles in schools such as teaching pupils and multiple ancillary functions could provide teachers

an encouragement to accomplish tasks and school-related activities. As mentioned, being positive at work makes one an optimistic individual who can accept criticisms without any complaints (Cherkowski, 2018). Every challenge that a teacher will experience, for example, can be a learning opportunity that could help him or her develop for the greater good.

Offering Financial Support

Giving rewards and incentives for teachers' hard work makes them motivated to do every task that is given to them. Job satisfaction of every elementary teacher is very helpful to have a successful activity in school. With this, administrators can help teachers have multiple ancillary functions by giving them rewards and incentives. Likewise, those ancillary functions that are given by their school head make them job overload, stress, and grow professionally and it is a steppingstone for their promotion.

From the interviews conducted, elementary teachers in Tacloban City Division share their insights in the concept of offering financial support having multiple ancillary functions which they can share with their colleagues and in the academe. One teacher expressed her insight t
"If I will be an administrator someday, I will offer support and help the teachers with their financial constraints so that they can carry out successfully their ancillary functions." (P8)

Elementary teachers who received rewards, incentives, and financial support from their administrators can make them more motivated in doing their multiple tasks (Lockheed, 2014). With the statements given by the teachers, helping and guiding our teachers in a different set of rewards is very helpful for those teachers having multiple ancillary functions. It includes giving incentives such as financial support in every activity they are handling, giving incentives such as recommending them to attend training to widen their knowledge and enhance their ability and skills and helping them to grow personally and professionally.

Coming up with a Working Schedule

Good time management skill enables an individual to complete tasks in a shorter period of time, reduces stress, and leads to accomplishments. Some people have hectic schedules that increase their duties and responsibilities. Likewise, elementary teachers are not only teaching their pupils but also, they are given certain multiple ancillary functions by their school head. Each ancillary function needs the teacher's time and effort and most of the time, it leads to stress and anxiety. To avoid teachers' stress and pressure, effective and good time management is a must. According to the elementary teachers, coming up with a working schedule could aid them not to be pressured into their job. One teacher said:

"Proper planning and having good time management is the key in coping all ancillary function that is given to me." (P8)

Time is one of the most important resources that cannot be acquired. Coming up with a schedule helps an

individual to organize things and accomplish certain tasks (Fecske, 2020). Coming up with a work schedule helps teachers with ancillary functions to be more effective.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the findings of this study, it is concluded that the elementary teachers in the Division of Tacloban City experienced issues while having multiple non-teaching assignments that restrain them from doing teaching-related activities. As a result, improving teachers' time management skills, particularly in managing paperwork, writing modules, and proper work schedules may assist them in performing their job as teachers. This would also help them relieve stress and allow them to complete the task effectively and efficiently.

Teachers should also be involved in the planning of activities such as strategic planning, school implementation plans, and other monthly school activities. The result of this study may also be used to revisit the systems and how administrators can assist elementary teachers, particularly those who have multiple ancillary functions. Future related studies are strongly encouraged to establish a general picture by identifying other factors that could affect elementary teachers' time management, work stress, and teacher productivity

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