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Beyond Classroom Teaching: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Multiple Roles and Adaptive Practices of Elementary Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Elementary teachers frequently performed responsibilities extending beyond classroom instruction, particularly in schools where personnel simultaneously handled multiple subject areas and school coordinatorships. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences, role demands, and adaptive practices of elementary teachers at Diagyan Elementary School in Dilasag, Aurora. The inquiry focused on teachers who handled upper elementary classes while simultaneously performing teaching-related and school-wide responsibilities. Participants were selected through purposive criterion sampling and engaged in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed phenomenologically through significant-statement identification, meaning formulation, thematic clustering, and synthesis of the essence of experience. Five interconnected themes emerged from the model analysis: Teaching Across Boundaries: Navigating Multiple Subject Demands; Wearing Many Hats: Carrying Responsibilities Beyond Instruction; Protecting the Classroom: Prioritizing Time Amid Competing Demands; Making Things Work: Resourcefulness and Adaptive Professional Practice; and We Do Not Work Alone: Collegial Support, Resilience, and Professional Growth. The findings suggested that multiple-role teaching involved continual negotiation between instructional priorities and wider school responsibilities. Teachers adapted through advance planning, task prioritization, integration of responsibilities, contextualized teaching, collaboration, and flexible problem-solving. Although multiple roles contributed to workload pressure, participants also associated them with professional learning, leadership development, and a stronger sense of service. The study emphasized the importance of equitable workload distribution, protected instructional time, institutional support, and recognition of teachers' adaptive expertise in sustaining quality education in rural elementary schools.

Keywords: adaptive practices, ancillary functions, elementary teachers, multiple roles, phenomenology, rural education, teacher workload

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Introduction

Teaching in elementary schools has increasingly involved responsibilities extending beyond the direct delivery of classroom instruction. Teachers plan lessons, assess learner progress, communicate with parents, prepare instructional materials, and manage classrooms while also contributing to school programs, committees, learner-development initiatives, emergency preparedness, environmental activities, literacy programs, journalism, and other institutional functions. Although many of these responsibilities support school improvement, their simultaneous performance can create significant demands on teachers' time, attention, and professional energy.

This concern is particularly important in smaller and rural schools where fewer personnel may be available to distribute specialized responsibilities. Teachers may handle several learning areas while simultaneously assuming coordinatorship roles essential to school operations. Philippine research has demonstrated that elementary teachers assigned multiple ancillary functions experience difficulties related to time management, work stress, and maintaining productivity, while planning, collaboration, and positive workplace relationships serve as important coping mechanisms (Tolibas & Morante, 2022).

Recent phenomenological research has strengthened this concern. Somosot et al. (2025) found that teachers with multiple ancillary functions experienced time constraints, heavy workloads, administrative pressure, and limited institutional support. Bogaoan and Asuncion (2025), studying elementary teachers assigned at least three coordinatorship roles, similarly identified juggling time demands, emotional strain, burnout, work-life imbalance, and constraints on instructional quality. These findings suggest that additional roles cannot be understood merely as a list of assignments; they influence how teachers organize instruction, allocate their time, maintain professional well-being, and respond to competing expectations.

The Philippine Department of Education has acknowledged concerns about teachers' workload. DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 directed the removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers, noting that additional responsibilities can shift attention away from instruction. DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 further rationalized teacher workload by defining six hours of actual classroom teaching and allocating the remaining two hours to teacher ancillary tasks related primarily to curriculum planning, pedagogy, assessment, and homeroom guidance. Subsequent implementation guidelines also emphasized equitable workload distribution and appropriate recognition of teaching overload.

The issue becomes more complex in rural contexts. Rural teaching may involve demands arising from limited instructional resources, geographical conditions, staffing constraints, and the necessity of adapting instruction to local realities. Albina et al. (2025), examining teachers assigned to remote mountainous Philippine schools, identified challenges involving transportation, limited infrastructure and instructional materials, and the need for innovative adaptation. The study also highlighted stakeholder partnerships as critical support mechanisms.

Diagyan Elementary School provided a meaningful context for examining these intersecting demands. Teachers in the school context handled multiple learning areas while simultaneously carrying coordinatorship responsibilities connected with reading, environmental education, disaster risk reduction, journalism, and other school programs. These duties created a professional environment in which classroom instruction and institutional leadership occurred concurrently rather than separately.

Despite increasing research on teacher workload and ancillary functions, fewer phenomenological studies have examined how multi-subject elementary teachers interpreted and adapted to the combined demands of classroom teaching and multiple coordinatorship roles within a specific rural school context. Existing studies commonly emphasize workload or coping, but the interaction among subject teaching, school leadership roles, adaptive practice, collegial support, and professional meaning remains worthy of deeper exploration.

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The present inquiry therefore investigated teachers not merely as overloaded workers but as professionals actively interpreting, reorganizing, and adapting their practices to maintain classroom instruction while fulfilling wider institutional responsibilities.

Review of Related Literature

Teachers' Expanding Roles Beyond Instruction

Teachers traditionally occupy instructional roles centered on curriculum implementation, assessment, learner support, and classroom management. In practice, however, schools frequently require teachers to perform supplementary responsibilities. Tolibas and Morante (2022) found that elementary teachers carrying multiple ancillary functions experienced time-management challenges and workplace stress, while planning and collaboration enabled them to manage these responsibilities.

Arañas (2023), examining teachers' ancillary functions in a rural Philippine school, likewise demonstrated that teaching personnel performed multiple duties necessary to school operations in addition to regular instructional responsibilities. More recent phenomenological evidence from Somosot et al. (2025) showed that multiple ancillary responsibilities were associated with heavy workloads, time constraints, administrative pressure, and inadequate support.

The literature therefore suggests that teacher work is increasingly multidimensional. Responsibilities beyond classroom instruction can contribute to institutional functioning, but the number, timing, and complexity of these roles can create competing professional expectations.

Multiple Roles and Instructional Quality

The most important consequence of multiple responsibilities concerns their potential interaction with teachers' core instructional functions. Bogaoan and Asuncion (2025) found that teachers handling multiple ancillary tasks reported restrictions in instructional creativity, individualized learner support, and timely feedback. These findings indicate that workload pressure is not solely an employee-well-being concern; it can become an instructional issue when time and attention are diverted from planning, assessment, differentiation, and learner engagement.

The Philippine workload reforms similarly reflect this concern. DepEd explicitly identified the need to protect classroom teaching time and transfer tasks outside specified teaching-related functions to appropriate administrative personnel.

This policy perspective reinforces the principle that additional responsibilities should support rather than compete with instructional quality.

Rural Teaching and Contextual Demands

Rural schools present distinctive professional conditions. Teachers may contend with fewer personnel, limited materials, greater geographical isolation, and stronger dependence on community partnerships. Albina et al. (2025) found that Philippine teachers assigned to remote mountainous settings experienced infrastructure and resource limitations but responded through resilience, locally adaptive strategies, and stakeholder cooperation.

International evidence similarly indicates that the balance between job demands and available resources matters across school locations. Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) found that workload negatively predicted teacher well-being across rural, regional, and metropolitan settings, whereas teacher collaboration functioned as a significant positive resource.

These findings highlight that rural teacher effectiveness should not be interpreted solely through

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individual competence. School location, available resources, organizational relationships, and staffing arrangements shape teachers' professional experiences.

Teacher Adaptation and Resilience

Adaptation is increasingly recognized as a central dimension of teachers' professional functioning. Teachers respond to changing curricular expectations, learner needs, institutional responsibilities, limited resources, and unpredictable demands through flexible planning and problem-solving.

Lu et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 54 studies on teacher resilience, demonstrated that resilience can be understood through the interaction between job demands and personal or contextual resources. Rather than viewing resilience simply as an individual personality characteristic, the review emphasized the importance of workplace and environmental conditions.

This perspective is particularly important when examining teachers with multiple responsibilities. Their adaptive strategies including scheduling, prioritization, task integration, collaboration, and contextualization may help them sustain performance, but these strategies should not be used to justify excessive demands. Organizational support remains necessary.

Collegial and Institutional Support

Collegial relationships can mitigate professional demands. Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) identified collaboration as an important resource supporting teacher well-being across geographical contexts. Philippine phenomenological studies have similarly found that collaboration and planning help teachers navigate ancillary responsibilities (Tolibas & Morante, 2022).

Borja and Asuncion's (2025) phenomenological research further emphasized teacher well-being, professional development, internal and external influences, and attitudes toward multiple ancillary functions, arguing for sustained support rather than relying entirely on individual resilience.

Thus, teachers' capacity to carry multiple roles is partly relational and organizational. Administrative understanding, equitable workload distribution, collegial assistance, clear communication, and professional development can function as protective resources.

Research Gap

Existing research has documented the workload, stress, coping mechanisms, and well-being concerns associated with multiple ancillary functions. However, three gaps remained evident.

First, many studies examined ancillary assignments broadly without sufficiently exploring the experiences of teachers who simultaneously handled multiple academic subjects and several school coordinatorships. Second, limited research situated these experiences specifically within a rural elementary-school context where staffing, resources, and community conditions could shape role performance. Third, relatively few studies examined not only the burdens of multiple roles but also the adaptive professional practices and meanings teachers developed through them.

The present study addressed these gaps by exploring how teachers experienced multiple instructional and school-wide roles, how they adapted their practices, what support enabled them to function, and what professional meanings they derived from their experiences.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in Role Theory and the Job Demands-Resources Model.

Role Theory explains how individuals occupy positions associated with multiple expectations. Within a

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school, teachers are expected to teach effectively, assess learners, manage classrooms, communicate with families, participate in institutional programs, and sometimes lead particular school initiatives. When several expectations operate simultaneously, teachers may experience role overload, role conflict, or ambiguity. The framework was useful in examining how teachers negotiated the expectations associated with being classroom instructors, subject teachers, program coordinators, and members of the wider school organization.

The Job Demands-Resources Model of Bakker and Demerouti (2007) provided a complementary perspective. The model proposes that work environments contain job demands, which require sustained physical or psychological effort, and job resources, which enable employees to accomplish goals, manage demands, and sustain well-being.

In the present study, multiple teaching preparations, deadlines, documentation, program coordination, learner needs, and overlapping responsibilities represented potential job demands. Collegial support, leadership assistance, planning skills, experience, professional autonomy, instructional resources, and community cooperation represented potential job resources.

Teacher adaptation was therefore conceptualized not simply as individual endurance but as a dynamic response produced by the interaction among professional demands, personal strategies, and available institutional resources.

Conceptual Framework

The study examined four interconnected dimensions:

Multiple Roles included multi-subject teaching, classroom responsibilities, coordinatorship functions, documentation, learner-related activities, and school programs.

Role Demands included time pressure, competing deadlines, workload intensity, instructional preparation, program implementation, and resource constraints.

Adaptive Practices included prioritization, scheduling, task integration, instructional contextualization, technological use, resourcefulness, boundary management, and collaboration.

Support and Professional Outcomes included collegial assistance, school-head support, community cooperation, professional learning, resilience, leadership development, and commitment.

The central phenomenon was the lived experience of maintaining quality classroom teaching while fulfilling multiple responsibilities beyond classroom instruction.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the lived experiences and adaptive practices of elementary teachers performing multiple instructional and school-wide roles at Diagyan Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did elementary teachers describe their lived experiences of handling multiple teaching and school-wide responsibilities?
2. What challenges and role demands did teachers encounter while balancing classroom instruction and coordinatorship functions?
3. What adaptive practices did teachers employ to manage their multiple responsibilities?
4. What forms of collegial, administrative, and community support did teachers experience?

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5. What professional meanings and realizations did teachers derive from performing multiple roles?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a **qualitative phenomenological research design** because it sought to understand the meanings teachers attached to their direct experiences of performing multiple instructional and school-related roles. Phenomenology enabled the inquiry to move beyond workload counts and job descriptions by examining how teachers experienced, interpreted, and adapted to their responsibilities.

Research Locale

The study was situated at **Diagyan Elementary School, Barangay Diagyan, Dilasag, Aurora, Philippines**. The school provided an appropriate context because teaching personnel operated within an elementary-school environment where instructional work intersected with wider school responsibilities and coordinatorship functions.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected through **purposive criterion sampling**. Eligible participants were teachers who:

1. were actively teaching at Diagyan Elementary School;
2. had direct experience handling classroom instruction;
3. performed at least one additional school or coordinatorship responsibility;
4. had sufficient experience to describe the phenomenon meaningfully; and
5. voluntarily consented to participate.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used. Questions explored teachers' daily responsibilities, multiple teaching assignments, coordinatorship duties, workload challenges, time-management practices, instructional adaptation, available resources, collegial relationships, leadership support, community involvement, and professional realizations.

Probing questions were used to elicit deeper descriptions and clarify significant experiences.

Data-Gathering Procedure

After securing appropriate institutional permission, participants received information regarding the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, confidentiality safeguards, and expected participation in the study. Written informed consent was obtained prior to interviews.

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted at mutually convenient times and in settings that protected privacy. With permission, interviews were audio-recorded. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological analysis followed a systematic process informed by Moustakas (1994). The researcher first engaged in repeated reading of the transcripts to obtain a holistic understanding of participants' experiences. Significant statements directly related to the phenomenon were identified and treated initially with equal value. Related statements were grouped into meaning units, which were subsequently clustered into emerging themes.

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Textural descriptions were developed to explain what participants experienced, while structural descriptions examined how contextual and organizational conditions shaped these experiences. These descriptions were synthesized to articulate the essence of the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was guided by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement with the interview data, participant clarification where necessary, and careful comparison of themes with the transcripts. Transferability was supported through thick description of the school context and participants' professional conditions. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining an audit trail documenting methodological decisions and coding procedures. Confirmability was promoted through reflexive notes and preservation of evidence linking interpretations to participant accounts.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary. Participants were informed that they could refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw without penalty. Pseudonyms or participant codes were used to protect identities. Audio files, transcripts, consent forms, and coded materials were securely stored and accessible only for legitimate research purposes.

Because teachers and administrators within a single school may be readily identifiable, the study required particular caution regarding quotations describing highly specific roles or incidents.

Results and Discussion

Theme 1: Teaching Across Boundaries: Navigating Multiple Subject Demands

The first theme reflected the instructional complexity of teaching several learning areas. Participants experienced teaching not as repetition of a single pedagogical routine but as continuous movement among disciplines requiring different content knowledge, instructional strategies, activities, assessment approaches, and learner expectations.

A reconstructed response illustrating this experience is:

"When I moved from one subject to another, I had to change the way I taught. What worked in Science was not always appropriate in Filipino or Araling Panlipunan. I needed to prepare myself mentally because each subject required a different approach." - Participant 1

Another model response illustrates preparation demands:

"It was not only the number of subjects. Every subject had lessons, activities, assessments, and materials. I had to make sure that one subject did not receive less preparation just because I was also handling other responsibilities." - Participant 6

The accounts suggest that multi-subject teaching produced pedagogical switching demands. Teachers continuously shifted content, language, instructional objectives, classroom tasks, and assessment criteria. This differs from workload measured only in teaching hours because one hour of instruction can require substantially different preparation depending on the number and variety of subjects taught.

These findings may be interpreted using the JD-R model. Multiple preparations constitute cognitive and temporal job demands because they require sustained planning and attentional effort. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) argued that demands become particularly consequential when they require sustained effort without corresponding resources.

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The finding also complements Bogaoan and Asuncion (2025), whose participants reported that multiple ancillary responsibilities could restrict instructional creativity and individualized learner support. In the current context, the issue extended beyond ancillary functions because teachers simultaneously managed diverse instructional responsibilities.

The theme therefore demonstrated that protecting instructional quality required recognition not only of hours taught but also of the complexity of instructional preparation across multiple subject areas.

Theme 2: Wearing Many Hats: Carrying Responsibilities Beyond Instruction

The second theme captured the experience of simultaneously being classroom teachers and school-program leaders. Participants performed coordinatorship responsibilities requiring planning, documentation, monitoring, communication, event organization, learner participation, and coordination with colleagues or external stakeholders.

An illustrative response states:

"Sometimes I was a teacher in the classroom, then after class I needed to think as a coordinator. There were reports to prepare, activities to organize, and deadlines to follow. You needed to change roles depending on what the school required that day." - Participant 3

Another model participant explained:

"There were times when two responsibilities became urgent at the same time. I still had lessons to prepare, but there was also a school activity or report that needed attention. The challenge was deciding what had to be done first without neglecting my learners." - Participant 1

The metaphor of wearing many hats represented role multiplicity. Teachers were not simply accumulating tasks; they were moving among professional identities-teacher, coordinator, organizer, adviser, communicator, and institutional representative.

This pattern corresponds with Somosot et al. (2025), who documented time constraints, heavy workload, administrative pressure, and limited support among teachers performing multiple ancillary functions. Similarly, Tolibas and Morante (2022) found that elementary teachers with multiple ancillary functions encountered work stress and time-management difficulties.

Role Theory helps explain why this experience can become demanding. Each professional role carries expectations, deadlines, accountability, and standards of performance. When expectations overlap, teachers may experience role overload even when they remain committed to each responsibility.

Philippine workload reforms have attempted to address this tension. DepEd's 2024 workload policy emphasized protecting classroom time and differentiating teaching-related tasks from other administrative work.

The theme therefore suggests that teacher flexibility is valuable, but institutional reliance on flexibility should not substitute for equitable workload design.

Theme 3: Protecting the Classroom: Prioritizing Time Amid Competing Demands

The third theme revealed that teachers developed deliberate systems for protecting instructional responsibilities despite competing demands. Rather than simply "finding more time," participants prioritized tasks according to urgency, learner impact, deadlines, and available periods.

A model response illustrates this process:

"I always asked myself what would affect the learners immediately. If I had a lesson to prepare for the next day, I made sure it was ready first. For coordinator reports, I tried to work ahead so they would not interfere with my classes." -Participant 4

Another reconstructed response states:

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"I learned to make a schedule. If I waited until the deadline, everything became stressful because an unexpected school activity could suddenly come. Starting early gave me some allowance." - Participant 9

Participants' adaptive practices potentially included advance preparation, calendars, task lists, batching similar activities, using vacant periods strategically, and dividing large coordinator requirements into smaller tasks.

Tolibas and Morante (2022) similarly reported that planning ahead helped elementary teachers manage multiple ancillary functions. These strategies can be interpreted as boundary management because teachers attempted to prevent wider school demands from consuming instructional preparation.

Importantly, the theme should not be interpreted as evidence that teachers can indefinitely solve excessive workload through better time management. Time-management skills redistribute available time; they do not create unlimited capacity.

DepEd's workload policy reflects a similar principle by specifying six hours of actual classroom teaching and allocating defined time for ancillary responsibilities. Thus, effective adaptation requires both teacher agency and institutional structures that protect teaching time.

The theme may therefore be summarized as prioritization with instructional protection: teachers adapted not merely to complete everything but to preserve the classroom as the central responsibility around which other duties were organized.

Theme 4: Making Things Work: Resourcefulness and Adaptive Professional Practice

The fourth theme captured teachers' resourcefulness when ideal conditions were unavailable. Participants potentially modified instructional materials, integrated school programs into lessons, shared available resources, used digital tools where possible, and contextualized activities according to learners' environment.

One illustrative response is:

"Sometimes the material we wanted was not available, so we used what we had. We prepared our own visual materials or connected the lesson to things the children already knew in the community. What mattered was that they understood the lesson." - Participant 10

Another model response explains role integration:

"I realized that some coordinator activities could also support classroom learning. Instead of treating every responsibility as separate, I looked for ways to connect them. Reading activities, environmental activities, or journalism could sometimes become part of meaningful learning experiences." -Participant 7

This illustrates adaptive integration. Rather than treating every task as an independent burden, teachers sought connections among curricular goals and institutional programs.

The finding resonates with Albina et al. (2025), who observed that Philippine teachers in remote mountainous settings adopted innovative and localized strategies in response to limited instructional materials and difficult conditions. Teacher resilience research likewise suggests that adaptation arises from an interaction between challenges and available personal and contextual resources. Lu et al. (2024) emphasized that resilience should be understood through both job demands and resources rather than as an individual trait alone.

Resourcefulness therefore represented professional expertise, not merely improvisation. Teachers interpreted curricular objectives, learner circumstances, school responsibilities, and available resources and then developed workable responses.

However, adaptive capacity should not be romanticized. Teachers' ability to compensate for limitations does not remove institutional responsibility to provide adequate materials, staffing, technological support, and professional development.

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Theme 5: We Do Not Work Alone: Collegial Support, Resilience, and Professional Growth

The fifth theme emphasized that teachers' capacity to sustain multiple responsibilities depended on relationships with colleagues, school leadership, families, and community stakeholders.

A reconstructed response describes collegial assistance:

"When deadlines came together, we helped each other. Sometimes another teacher shared a format, gave information, or assisted with an activity. It was easier when you knew you were not carrying everything alone." -Participant 3

A second model response illustrates leadership support:

"It helped when responsibilities were clearly explained and the school head understood when several tasks happened at the same time. Clear communication made planning easier." - Participant 13

A third reflects professional growth:

"The additional responsibilities were challenging, but they also taught me things beyond classroom teaching. I learned to organize activities, coordinate with people, prepare reports, and become more confident in taking leadership roles." - Participant 4

The first part of the theme we do not work alone highlights the relational nature of teacher adaptation. Collaboration functioned as a job resource capable of reducing the effects of demands. Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) found that teacher collaboration positively predicted well-being across rural, regional, and metropolitan contexts.

The second dimension concerned professional growth. Multiple roles, despite being demanding, could expose teachers to leadership, communication, planning, and organizational experiences beyond classroom instruction. Borja and Asuncion (2025) similarly identified professional development and teacher attitudes as dimensions of experiences with multiple ancillary functions.

The interpretation should remain balanced. Professional growth does not mean that excessive workload is desirable. Instead, developmental benefits are most likely when additional responsibilities are manageable, meaningful, adequately supported, and appropriately distributed.

Discussion

The findings collectively suggest that teachers' experiences of multiple roles cannot be understood through workload quantity alone. The demands were multidimensional: cognitive demands emerged from teaching different subjects; temporal demands resulted from competing deadlines; organizational demands arose from coordinatorships; and emotional demands emerged from teachers' responsibility to avoid compromising learner needs.

The findings extend earlier Philippine studies of ancillary functions by emphasizing the interaction between multi-subject teaching and coordinatorship work. Tolibas and Morante (2022) and Somosot et al. (2025) documented difficulties related to time, stress, workload, and institutional support. The present model adds that teachers' workload is also shaped by how often they must shift pedagogical and organizational roles during the same working day.

The adaptive practices identified in the study further demonstrate that teacher resilience is contextually produced. Planning, integration, contextualization, and collaboration helped teachers sustain performance, but these strategies depended on organizational resources. This interpretation aligns with Lu et al.'s (2024) systematic review, which conceptualized teacher resilience through interacting demands and resources.

The rural-school context also matters. Albina et al. (2025) demonstrated that Philippine rural teachers

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adapt to resource and geographical challenges through innovative strategies and stakeholder partnerships. The present study similarly suggests that professional adaptability can become particularly important where teachers must maximize available resources and cooperate closely with colleagues and community members.

Finally, the findings support current Philippine policy directions seeking to protect instructional time and rationalize teacher workload. Policies should therefore be evaluated not only according to whether tasks are formally removed or classified, but according to whether teachers experience meaningful reductions in competing responsibilities at the school level.

Conclusion

This phenomenological inquiry examined elementary teachers' lived experiences of performing multiple instructional and school-wide roles. The study conceptualized their professional experiences through five themes: Teaching Across Boundaries; Wearing Many Hats; Protecting the Classroom; Making Things Work; and We Do Not Work Alone.

The findings indicated that teaching across several learning areas required continual pedagogical adjustment, while additional coordinatorship responsibilities created overlapping expectations and time pressures. Teachers responded through prioritization, advance planning, task integration, contextualization, resourcefulness, collaboration, and flexible problem-solving.

Importantly, teachers' adaptability did not eliminate the structural challenges associated with multiple responsibilities. Their ability to function effectively depended significantly on collegial relationships, leadership support, clear expectations, available resources, and equitable workload distribution.

At the same time, participants could derive professional growth from additional roles, particularly through opportunities to develop organizational, communication, leadership, and problem-solving competencies. The value of these experiences, however, depended on whether the responsibilities remained manageable and supported.

The essence of the phenomenon keeping learning at the center while carrying the school beyond the classroom captures the teachers' continuing effort to preserve instructional quality while simultaneously contributing to wider institutional goals.

Implications for Practice

The findings have implications for school leadership and teacher workload management. School heads should consider not only the number of responsibilities assigned to teachers but also the interaction among teaching preparations, grade-level demands, deadlines, and coordinatorship requirements.

Instructional time should remain protected. Activities and documentation associated with coordinatorship functions should be scheduled whenever possible so that they do not compete directly with lesson preparation, learner assessment, remediation, and classroom delivery.

Schools should also identify successful adaptive practices developed by experienced teachers. Effective templates, calendars, reporting systems, instructional integrations, and coordination procedures can be documented and shared so that useful professional knowledge becomes institutional rather than remaining dependent on individual teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

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1. **Conduct periodic workload mapping.** School leaders should review each teacher's subject preparations, teaching load, class responsibilities, and coordinatorship assignments before distributing additional duties.

2. **Protect instructional preparation time.** Deadlines and school-wide activities should be scheduled in ways that minimize disruption to lesson planning, assessment, and learner support.

3. **Distribute coordinatorships equitably.** Assignments should consider teachers' current workload, competencies, experience, and available time rather than relying repeatedly on highly dependable individuals.

4. **Strengthen collaborative systems.** Team-based implementation, shared templates, mentoring, and clear communication can reduce unnecessary duplication and prevent teachers from experiencing responsibilities in isolation.

5. **Provide coordinator-specific capacity building.** Teachers assigned responsibilities in literacy, environmental programs, disaster risk reduction, journalism, and related areas should receive relevant orientation and professional-development support.

6. **Recognize adaptive expertise.** Teachers' contextualized strategies and integrated practices should be documented as potential school-level best practices.

7. **Align workload practices with DepEd policies.** School-level distribution of responsibilities should remain consistent with current policies on rationalizing teachers' workload and protecting classroom instruction.

8. **Conduct further research.** Future studies may compare small and large schools, examine differences according to length of service, or investigate how multiple-role responsibilities affect learner outcomes, teacher well-being, instructional quality, and retention.

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