

From Chalkboards to Checklists: The Realities of Juggling Education and Ancillary Tasks

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Abstract

The study examines teachers' experiences with ancillary obligations and how these obligations affect their professional and personal lives. Handling these ancillary tasks requires strong time management, organization, and communication skills. This study implores phenomenology as its design to identify the supplementary jobs of teachers, investigate their experiences, understand how they cope with the problems they encounter in performing their tasks, and assess the abilities and attitudes they develop. The study results suggest a need for support networks for teachers for their instructions, professional development opportunities, and balancing work and life tasks. Furthermore, it argues for recognizing the sacrifices of teachers and supporting them to improve their well-being, retention and educational quality.

Keywords: ancillary work, teachers, education, professional development

Introduction

The function of a teacher has changed over several decades. Traditionally, teachers only concentrate on providing the content of lessons and encouraging student learning [11]. However, the obligations given to educators now go beyond these fundamental responsibilities. In addition to teaching, educators must continually evaluate their professional actions, identify the challenges in educational practice and select appropriate solutions while appropriately assessing and adjusting outcomes [1]. They must now participate in ongoing professional development to keep up with the most recent educational trends, technology, and approaches.

Moreover, teachers must adapt to adverse student needs and learning styles, integrating differentiated instruction and inclusive practices [22]. Creating and maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment, which involves managing classroom behavior, fostering student motivation, and addressing social-emotional issues, has also become a crucial part of their role. Moreover, integrating technology in education requires teachers to incorporate digital tools and resources into their lessons, facilitate online learning, and ensure students develop digital literacy skills. This technological integration necessitates ongoing training and a willingness to adapt to new platforms and software. Teachers collaborate with colleagues, parents, and the broader community to share best practices, develop interdisciplinary projects, and contribute to school-wide initiatives. The multifaceted nature of contemporary teaching demands significant time, energy, and resources, highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems to help teachers manage these diverse responsibilities effectively. Today's teachers are expected to engage in

continuous professional development to stay updated with the latest educational trends, technologies, and methodologies. They must adapt to diverse student needs and learning styles, integrating differentiated instruction and inclusive practices into their teaching [9].

Furthermore, teachers are tasked with creating and maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment, which involves managing classroom behavior, fostering student motivation, and addressing social-emotional issues. Additionally, teachers play a critical role in collaborating with colleagues, parents, and the broader community. They work closely with other educators to share best practices, develop interdisciplinary projects, and contribute to school-wide initiatives [8].

However, in contemporary education, today's educators are expected to fulfill various roles besides teaching that require substantial time and effort. Teachers are responsible for imparting knowledge and managing many ancillary tasks that extend beyond the classroom [5]. The administrative workload for teachers has also increased. They are often responsible for record-keeping, reporting, and compliance with educational standards and regulations. This dual position considerably strains their time, energy, and resources [1].

The need for teachers to combine teaching obligations with additional responsibilities, such as administrative work, extracurricular activities, and event management, creates a complicated and frequently stressful work environment [7]. These added duties often demand significant attention and meticulous organization, which can detract from the core mission of teaching [9]. As a result, teachers must navigate a landscape where they are constantly juggling various roles, leading to an increased workload and heightened stress levels.

In the Philippines, teachers face significant challenges as they balance instructional obligations with a wide range of supplementary jobs or ancillary tasks. These increased responsibilities have a substantial impact on their work life and well-being. Understanding these problems offers a better understanding of the demands and limits that Filipino teachers face daily. These ancillary duties provide vital support to the primary activities or operation of an organization and system. According to the operational definition, teachers' ancillary functions are those they perform in addition to teaching in the classroom, such as serving as grade-level advisers, subject coordinators, club moderators, sports coaches, in charge of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and providing community involvement services.

To further elucidate the understanding of ancillary work, the Department of Education categorizes teachers into classroom teachers and teachers with ancillary functions. Some are designated coordinators, advisers, statisticians, and more. These tasks are reinforced by the "Magna Carta for Public School Teachers," Republic Act No. 4670, which states that teachers' teaching hours cannot exceed six hours. The six hours of real classroom instruction must cover a teacher's whole workload as outlined in the class program. The Department of Education (DepEd) has issued Memorandum 291 s. 2008 allows teachers to devote six hours per day to classroom instruction and the remaining two hours to teaching-related duties such as advisership chores and special assignments as appointed coordinators of the school's programs and activities. However, more than two hours is needed to accomplish those teaching-related responsibilities. Schools under the category of Large Schools and Mega Schools with a bigger number of teachers are fortunate since a larger workforce can accomplish these tasks. In contrast, schools with fewer teachers under the small and medium category must take on numerous ancillary responsibilities that require effort and hard work to complete successfully because of the restricted number of workers. To support the Department of Education and the school they work for, teachers go above and beyond what is asked of them to perform and complete these ancillary responsibilities.

Managing these numerous tasks substantially influences a teacher's professional efficacy. The constant balancing act between teaching and non-teaching tasks often results in decreased classroom preparation time, which may adversely affect the quality of instruction. When teachers are stretched thin, their ability to deliver practical lessons and provide individualized attention to students can diminish [13]. This situation not only affects their performance but also contributes to a sense of frustration and burnout [19]. Furthermore, the pressure to perform well in teaching and ancillary duties can decrease job satisfaction and overall well-being. Teachers may feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of tasks, leading to a sense of being perpetually behind. This chronic stress can negatively affect their mental and physical health, potentially resulting in higher professional turnover rates [21, 10]. However, there is also a positive view of having ancillary functions, as stated in the study of Sappa et al. (2015). It shows that teachers found that having multiple ancillary roles positively impacted their well-being. Emotionally, taking on additional roles helped them distance themselves from school-related issues and maintain a balanced perspective. Professionally, engaging in diverse activities provided a source of strength and constant stimulation. Instructionally, teachers experienced several benefits from holding multiple roles, such as enhanced credibility with their students.

Moreover, the performance of teachers in the classroom and how they manage ancillary tasks influences the overall growth of students enrolled in private and public schools [13]. Therefore, it is recommended for some research that addressing these challenges is crucial. Schools and educational policymakers must provide adequate resources, administrative support, and professional development opportunities to effectively help teachers manage their multifaceted roles [12, 14]. In doing so, the educational environment can become more sustainable, allowing teachers to thrive in educating students while managing their additional responsibilities efficiently.

This study aims to explore and understand the real-world experiences of teachers at a public primary school in Baguio City who handle multiple ancillary responsibilities.

Methodology

Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design. Phenomenological research investigates a phenomenon through the experiences of those most closely involved [6]. This study aims to explore the challenges faced by teachers with ancillary work. The phenomenological design was selected because it seeks answers to research questions descriptively through interviews or observations of those directly experiencing the phenomenon [6].

Participants and Settings

The participants included 14 elementary teachers from a small public school in Baguio with two or more ancillary work aside from teaching.

Data Gathering Materials

An Aide, Memoire, was used for interviews with key informants. Interview questions were developed to address the research problems based on a priori codes. Working definitions and questions related to online teaching and learning challenges were presented to teachers and students. Open-ended questions allowed for various responses, and follow-up questions ensured information saturation. Interviews were conducted

via Messenger (video and call) and email, with questionnaires sent to those unable to participate in calls. Data analysis was conducted to complete the triangulation process.

Ethical Considerations

Letters were sent to participants explaining the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and the ability to withdraw at any time. Detailed information was provided on data collection, storage, and usage, ensuring transparency. Participants were assured of anonymity in publications or presentations. After data collection, a summary of the findings was shared with the participants to acknowledge their contributions and maintain ethical standards. This thorough communication aimed to create a respectful and collaborative research environment, upholding ethical principles.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Rigor of Data

An audit trail and member-checking were conducted to ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of the data. Key informants reviewed the data to ensure no misinterpretation of their views [3]. An audit trail provided a transparent description of the research steps, allowing key informants to correct inaccuracies and validate the data.

Mode of Analysis

Post-interview responses were transcribed and translated into English if necessary. Key informants validated the transcribed data. As Boyatzis (1998) described, thematic analysis was used to formulate themes from the participants' answers. This approach, which identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns within data, was chosen for its flexibility and ability to facilitate communication of findings, interpretation of meanings, and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Results and Discussion

In addition to their primary responsibilities of delivering instruction and fostering student learning, teachers often undertake a variety of ancillary duties that are crucial to the holistic development of the school environment. Ancillary functions are defined as engagements that provide vital support to the primary activities or operation of an organization or system. The ancillary functions among teachers are operationally defined as that aside from being classroom teachers, they have other school-related functions, such as being designated as grade level advisers. Subject coordinators/chairs, club moderators, athletic coaches, in charge of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and community participation services are only some of the ancillary tasks of teachers. These additional roles not only enhance the operational efficiency of educational institutions but also contribute significantly to student welfare and community engagement [**Error! Reference source not found.**].

The following provides an overview of the ancillary duties handled by teachers, as well as their experience in these roles.

Overview of Ancillary Duties and Experiences of Teachers

Teachers who take on ancillary jobs go beyond their core function of instructing students in the classroom. These responsibilities are necessary for the school to run smoothly and help provide a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere for students, faculty, and the larger school community [23]. Administrative,

logistical, and extracurricular tasks are frequently included in ancillary responsibilities. These tasks are vital to the school's functionality and success.

The ancillary roles undertaken by teachers as mentioned in the Department of Education Memorandum No. 291 S 2008 are crucial in nurturing a comprehensive educational environment. These roles ensure the smooth functioning of the school, enhance student experiences, and foster community engagement [16]. Teachers' dedication to these responsibilities demonstrates their unwavering commitment to their students and school community, significantly enriching the educational landscape. With extensive teaching experience, many teachers integrate their classroom insights into broader school activities, creating a cohesive and supportive environment that benefits academic and administrative processes [11].

Furthermore, teachers' involvement in ancillary duties such as organizing events, managing clubs, and participating in school governance helps build a sense of community and fosters an inclusive school environment. These roles allow teachers to develop and refine leadership, communication, and project management skills, promoting professional growth and continuous learning. By embracing these responsibilities, teachers play a crucial role in shaping a dynamic and engaging school environment that enhances student participation and school spirit, ultimately benefiting the entire school community [**Error! Reference source not found.**].

Moreover, years of teaching experiences might have an impact of the ancillary work given to teachers. The number of years teaching in public school ranges from 4 to 26, while the number of years handling the same ancillary duties varies from 3 to 10.

On average, these teachers have been teaching in public schools for around 13.14 years, indicating a generally experienced group. This extensive teaching experience is paralleled by a significant commitment to ancillary duties, with an average of 5.92 years spent handling these additional responsibilities.

Examining the data more closely, Respondent 1, a relatively newer teacher with four years of experience, has already handled ancillary duties for three years. This quick uptake of additional responsibilities early in their career may reflect high adaptability or institutional expectations for new teachers. In contrast, Respondent 2 exemplifies a veteran teacher with 19 years of teaching experience and 10 years managing ancillary duties, highlighting a deep integration of these tasks into their professional role.

Respondents 3 and 4 have extensive teaching experience, 18 and 19 years, but differ in their years handling ancillary duties, with 3 and 8 years, respectively. This suggests that the integration of ancillary duties can vary widely, even among those with similar teaching tenure. Respondents 5, 6, 7, and 9, with 9 to 10 years of teaching experience and five years of handling ancillary duties, demonstrate a balance that develops midway through their careers. They represent a group that likely needed help to balance these responsibilities during a critical professional development phase.

Respondent 8 stands out with the longest teaching career of 26 years and seven years of ancillary duties. This combination indicates a likely progression into ancillary duties later in their career, potentially reflecting a shift in focus or additional recognition of their expertise. Respondent 13, with five years of teaching and three years of ancillary duties, represents newer teachers quickly adapting to the dual responsibilities. Meanwhile, Respondent 14, with 14 years of teaching and 10 years of handling ancillary duties, further underscores the significant role ancillary tasks play over a long teaching career.

One possible interpretation of these data is that teachers with more years of experience in public schools tend to have a longer tenure in handling the same ancillary duties. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as the development of expertise and efficiency in managing these duties over time, or the increased job security and satisfaction that often comes with more teaching experience. However, the data also

shows some exceptions, where teachers with fewer years of experience are still handling the same ancillary duties for an extended period.

Previous research has explored the relationship between teaching experience and job satisfaction, with studies suggesting that teachers with longer teaching experience tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. This could be a contributing factor to the patterns observed in the data, as teachers who are satisfied with their roles and responsibilities may be more inclined to continue handling the same ancillary duties over an extended period.

The data underscores the considerable experience and commitment teachers have towards balancing their primary teaching duties with ancillary tasks. This balance varies among individuals, reflecting a diversity of approaches and adaptations to the demands of their roles. Understanding these patterns can help in developing support systems and policies that better accommodate the dual responsibilities of teachers, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness and well-being.

In addition, from the interview regarding the experiences, challenges and lesson learned of teachers from their extra work, TIME is the acronym of the themes formed from the cool and warm analysis of the data. TIME stands for time slots for tasks, impact of work, make a plan and efficiency. and The following are the discussions for the different themes. The discussion elaborates on how these strategies contribute to improved task management, reduced stress, and enhanced overall productivity, providing a roadmap for educators striving to achieve a balanced and fulfilling professional life.

Time Slots for Tasks

The interpretation of the responses reveals that handling multiple ancillary duties as a teacher requires significant time management skills and often necessitates working beyond regular hours. This reflects the first theme, "time slots for tasks," as part of the challenges faced by teachers. Balancing teaching-related tasks with ancillary responsibilities frequently leads to a sacrifice of personal time and increased stress. This is evident in one respondent's answer, which stated: "Handling these ancillary duties really need time management. There should be a balance between doing teaching-related tasks and ancillary tasks but most of the time, lesser time is put into focusing on the most important task which makes it difficult to achieve. It means to say that, time is sacrificed for ancillary tasks." (personal communication from Teacher A).

The handling of multiple ancillary duties by teachers underscores a significant challenge in effective time management. Ancillary tasks, which include administrative responsibilities, student support roles, and coordination of extracurricular activities, often compete with core teaching duties for limited time. This competition leads to a situation where teachers must constantly juggle priorities, often sacrificing time dedicated to direct teaching. As one respondent noted, balancing teaching-related tasks with ancillary duties requires meticulous time management, yet frequently results in less time being allocated to the most important teaching tasks, thereby impeding their achievement. Another teacher shared: "I have to adjust and manage my time properly to do my duties. Despite the problems encountered, I have developed organizational and time management skills." (personal communication from Teacher 2).

These responses highlight that while teachers strive to manage their time effectively, the demand for ancillary duties often compromises focusing on essential teaching tasks, affecting their ability to achieve educational goals. Ancillary duties, which include administrative tasks, student counselling, and extracurricular coordination, can detract from the primary mission of teaching by encroaching on the time needed for lesson planning, grading, and individualized student attention. This strain can lead to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates, as teachers feel overwhelmed by the pressure to meet

administrative demands while maintaining high teaching standards. The need for meticulous time management skills underscores an underappreciated aspect of the teaching profession, yet with sufficient support and resources, even skilled teachers may be able to balance their duties. To mitigate these challenges, educational institutions should implement comprehensive support systems, such as hiring additional staff for administrative tasks, providing clear guidelines for ancillary duties, and offering professional development opportunities. Recognizing and valuing teachers' multifaceted contributions can enhance their morale and retention, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes. The study underscores the need for systemic changes to support educators, ensuring they are effective in their primary instruction role and the ancillary duties that contribute to a holistic educational experience.

Impact of work to make a plan for efficient teaching and learning

The dual demands of teaching and handling multiple ancillary duties necessitate that teachers continuously adapt their schedules and improve their organizational skills. This necessity gives rise to the second prominent theme in teachers' experiences: the "Impact of work to make a plan for efficient teaching and learning." The pressure to manage several responsibilities simultaneously has led many teachers to develop robust organizational abilities. Respondents highlighted the importance of modifying their time management strategies to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. Teachers have found that their adaptability is crucial for addressing the challenges of their dual roles. Teachers can better manage their workloads by adjusting their schedules and honing their organizational skills. This adaptability helps them cope with immediate challenges. It enhances their overall performance, allowing them to systematically plan their workloads and ensure that teaching and ancillary activities are completed on time.

Moreover, this improved organizational capability reflects broader professional development that benefits teachers beyond their current roles. Managing multiple tasks is a valuable skill that can enhance a teacher's effectiveness in various educational contexts. Teachers who have mastered these skills can provide better support to their students, collaborate more effectively with colleagues, and contribute more significantly to the school's overall functioning. Handling ancillary duties has also fostered the development of communication skills among teachers. Regular interaction with students, colleagues, and parents across various capacities requires clear and effective communication. As one teacher noted, performing ancillary duties has improved their communication skills, facilitating better stakeholder collaboration and understanding. This holistic improvement underscores the positive impact of developing strong organizational and communication abilities in response to the dual demands of teaching and ancillary duties.

The implications of teachers handling ancillary duties extend deeply into their professional and personal lives and the broader educational environment. Effective support systems, including clear guidelines, workload management, and professional development opportunities, are essential to help teachers manage these dual responsibilities without compromising their primary teaching duties. Furthermore, significant involvement in ancillary duties can foster community within the school, promoting a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere that benefits students and staff. However, without adequate recognition and support, the long-term sustainability of teachers' dual roles is at risk, potentially affecting teacher retention and the overall quality of education. Therefore, educational policymakers and administrators must acknowledge the multifaceted contributions of teachers, providing the necessary resources and support to ensure their well-being and professional growth. In addition to organizational skills, handling ancillary duties has fostered the development of communication skills among teachers. Regular interaction with students,

colleagues, and parents across various capacities requires clear and effective communication. As one teacher pointed out, performing ancillary duties has improved their communication skills, facilitated better collaboration and understanding among stakeholders. This skill is particularly vital in roles such as coordinating child protection programs, where clear and empathetic communication can significantly impact student welfare. These themes were lifted from the common answers of the respondents.

“If I have too many reports or deadlines to keep track of. I have to decide which tasks are most important and need to be done first can be difficult, especially if they all seem urgent.” (personal communication from Teacher 3)

“Plan out the tasks for reports and complete them in accordance with their due dates or priorities. To prevent multi-tasking later, do the anticipated chores in advance. Take breaks.” (personal communication from Teacher 8)

From the answers, it is seen that the the ability to efficiently manage multiple tasks is a valuable skill that can enhance a teacher's effectiveness in various educational contexts. Teachers who have mastered these skills can provide better support to their students, collaborate more effectively with colleagues, and contribute more significantly to the overall functioning of the school [Error! Reference source not found.]. This holistic improvement underscores the positive impact of developing strong organizational abilities in response to the dual demands of teaching and ancillary duties.

Moreover, teachers have found that their adaptability is crucial for addressing the various challenges that arise from their dual roles. By continuously adjusting their schedules and honing their organizational skills, teachers can better manage their workloads. This adaptability not only helps them cope with immediate challenges but also enhances their overall performance. As teachers become more adept at prioritizing tasks, they can systematically plan their workloads, ensuring that both teaching and ancillary activities are completed on time [23].

From all of these, it may imply that teachers handling ancillary duties extend deeply into both their professional and personal lives, as well as the broader educational environment. Effective support systems, including clear guidelines, workload management, and professional development opportunities, are essential to help teachers manage these dual responsibilities without compromising their primary teaching duties. Moreover, the significant involvement in ancillary duties can foster a sense of community within the school, promoting a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere that benefits both students and staff. However, without adequate recognition and support, the long-term sustainability of teachers' dual roles is at risk, potentially affecting teacher retention and the overall quality of education. Therefore, it is crucial for educational policymakers and administrators to acknowledge the multifaceted contributions of teachers, providing the necessary resources and support to ensure their well-being and professional growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, experiences of teachers results of implementing various approaches to manage these dual roles effectively. The findings highlight the importance of prioritization, time management, collaboration, efficiency, flexibility, and prioritization. Each strategy, encapsulated in simplified mnemonics, offers practical insights into how teachers can navigate their demanding workloads while maintaining high teaching standards and fostering professional growth. Maintaining balance amidst these competing priorities is a delicate endeavor which requires the strategic prioritization of tasks and the development of

effective time management skills to ensure that all aspects of a teacher's professional and personal lives are given due attention.

Moreover, the integration of ancillary duties into teachers' professional roles presents both challenges and opportunities. While these additional responsibilities often lead to increased stress and demand advanced time management and organizational skills, they also provide avenues for professional growth and the development of essential competencies such as leadership, communication, and project management. The balance between teaching and ancillary tasks is crucial for maintaining the quality of education and the well-being of teachers. Educational institutions must recognize the significant contributions of teachers in these roles and provide adequate support and resources to manage these dual responsibilities effectively. This support can enhance teacher retention, foster a collaborative school environment, and ultimately improve the overall educational experience for students.

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