

# Coordinating the Coordinators: A Case Study of Multiple Ancillary Functions in DepEd

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**Abstract**—This case study focuses on observing and investigating the concept of multiple ancillary functions of Department of Education public school teachers as described on its locality and situation. The researcher used a qualitative method using case study to describe the characteristics and experiences of the participants. Moreover, this in-depth exploration generated relevant themes that responded the objectives set for the study. The challenges encountered by the teachers include inability to perform teaching duties and undefined role expectations. In addition, insights were articulated to include a well-defined job description and ability to be flexible and resilient.

**Keywords**— Coordinatorship: Educational Management: Multiple Ancillary Functions: Philippines.

## I. INTRODUCTION

We start this discussion on the story of different individuals with multiple ancillary functions in the educational setting of the biggest bureaucracy in the Philippines, the Department of Education. Ranging from 2 to 3 ancillary functions has been duly listed by the researcher to comply with the evidence for further discussion to make room for elaboration and in-depth analysis of this phenomenon. The first teacher bearing the pseudonym Ms. Maria, devotedly teaches her Grade 3 pupils at an elementary school in La Filipina Elementary School. Part of her daily routines are typical and ordinary for a floating subject teacher, in fact she is a floating teacher having normal 6 teaching loads equivalent to almost 6 hours of teaching, while fulfilling the role as the *school-based feeding program coordinator*. On a different case, the second teacher in the screen name of Mr. John works as the same as the former, having 6 teaching loads with an additional special assignment as *disaster risk reduction management coordinator* and the liaison of the same school. Situation is also comparable to Ms. Jen, a classroom adviser with 5 teaching loads and multiple assignments such as *reading coordinator*, *Araling Panlipunan coordinator*, *English coordinator*, and *Journalism coordinator*. With the specified facts gathered, this paper will discuss in detail the scenario that revolves the emerging common problems shared by the individuals involved on this paper.

The changes brought about by the expanding globalization delivered the restructuring of the education system of the Philippines birthing to K to 12 curricula. Despite the advantages that this new system has introduced to education system, additional work burden has been experienced by teachers, most particularly to those teachers with multiple ancillary functions. As discovered on the study of Tolibas and Lydia [18], teachers with multiple ancillary functions often find challenges in time management, work stress, and productivity. The same is evident also on the discussion of Embang et.al [8] which says that additional workloads affect the wellbeing, the quality of teaching, and social connection. This holds true as heavy workload significantly deteriorates the performance of teachers of which a concern that DepEd should focus on. Wellbeing describes the complex

combination of the totality of an individual from physical, emotional, psychological, and social health [7]. It generally comprises the body, mind, and spirit. The pressing issue in the education arena of DepEd yields more on the additional workload of teachers apart from being the facilitator of learning in the classroom. Teachers who are burned out from their roles as a teacher and a manager leads to numerous possibilities of either stress or getting out in the profession. This recurring issue has also been associated on the withdrawal of teachers in the profession, leaving the teaching job and finding other opportunities even in the first few years of teaching [9]. As reported by Manila Bulletin [10], several teachers have resigned their teaching posts in DepEd seeking greener pastures abroad due to brain drain and to the compensation that teachers in the Philippines are also receiving. Personal-environmental concerns which includes the environment revolving the teacher that leads to stress, burn out, personal safety and compensation spreads because of workload of teachers [3]. Personal safety discusses the inclusion of not just physical stability but also mental and psychological stability. With these problems relevant to workloads, digging the hole of the problem is highlighted to come up with prescribed solutions and recommendations.

In the intention of collecting viable data for recommendations, this case study will further utilize the following questions. Questions provided are flexible to what is applicable to the participant and on how they respond accordingly.

1. What are the challenges encountered as a teacher with multiple special assignments or coordinatorship?
2. How do these challenges affect your performance as a teacher with multiple assignments or coordinatorship?
3. What are the insights that you have gained from the experiences as a teacher with multiple assignments or coordinatorship?

Questions that are provided above were developed accordingly to match the focus of this case study. Prior investigation before interview has been established which includes listing relevant information to coordinatorship and workload such as number of teaching loads and special assignment. In this case, special assignments can either be

ancillary positions appointed by the school head to teachers such as coordinator positions and other school functions.

In relevance to the highlight of this study, the Department of Education strictly adheres to DepEd Memorandum 291, series of 2018 which contains the overview and guidelines of implementation of working hours for public school teachers. This document contains the discussion on the compliance of the eight-hour duty of teachers which is divided into two: 6 hours of teaching load and 2 hours of other tasks and assignments. Part of the 2-hour separate workload is the management of tasks, specifically on different ancillary or administrative assignments distributed equally by the school head to teachers. Particularly, on this memorandum it also specifies the recommended workloads that should be given to a teacher depending on the teaching workload they get and categorize the special assignment accordingly by light, medium, and heavy loads. In addition, the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers RA 4670 reiterates the functions of a teacher in classroom management of which the tasks include preparation of lesson plans, consultation and conference with the parent, attend professional development programs, and other teacher related activities. To note, the additional 2 hours working time, which contains the privilege of the teacher to prepare the classes and fulfill special assignments or administrative tasks is clearly discussed in the law as agreed by the school principals and the teachers, the parents, the students, and the community through the School Governing Council. All special assignments which is part of the 2-hour extra working time is also communicated as one load. This definition of memorandum aims to rationalize and empower more the ability of the teachers to effectively manage their workload and comply with the requirements as suggested.

Teaching known as a noble profession, compromises the professional well-being which is evidently observed through sacrificing personal needs to extend working hours to get the work done. Although discussions to workload of teachers directs to the negative side, most teachers see the brighter side of this dilemma by strategizing, finding more inspiration, and maintaining professional commitment [12]. Moreover, the coping mechanisms of the teachers leads to further development of mitigating strategies such as collaborating with other teachers, being optimistic in the workplace, and formulate a working schedule that fits the priorities of the day. The intensification of workloads of teachers, though negatively perceived as such, solely depends on how the teacher handles the administrative loads given throughout the working practices. With the imperative of increasing the productivity of teachers in terms of classroom performance, teachers are dependent to the professional perspectives inculcated with the duty to be at par with the professional oath and commitment to teaching the learners [15]. Therefore, the situation of multiple ancillary function and discussion of workload can be depending on the perspective of the teacher and on how it is perceived as a challenge to the profession and to the self. Moreover, ancillary functions are essential for the teacher for professional growth and development. Aside from extending the function of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, it also widens the horizon of the role of being a

leader that manages tasks that are helpful for the students and for the community. Workload of teachers originates from the bureaucratic system of DepEd which means prioritizing the collection pertinent evaluation and reports is part of the quality assurance that service is delivered efficiently, both for the purpose of attaining the goals and missions of the department.

However, workload when not appropriately evaluated can also lead to several disadvantageous conditions to the teacher. Cooper and Marshall (1976) shared their views on human resource management and how occupational stress emerge as an outcome of work overload, role conflict and ambiguity, and poor working conditions. This means that when teachers are not certain with their work condition it challenges their commitment and accountability resulting also to poor work performance [16]. The transactional theory of Lazarus and Folkman [12] discusses the perceptive assessment of a possible threat when positively observed generates a favorable action but when compromise, results a strain to the self, hence directs to coping mechanisms. In this connection, when teachers feel that they have too many responsibilities to comply considering the amount of time and resources they have workload stress happens [13]. Although there are job strains as to elaborate the phenomena, several results of literatures argue different kinds of coping strategies depending on the gravity of the scenario.

## II. METHOD

In this study, the researcher will use a qualitative style of collecting data through a case study analysis. A case study is used for investigating the characteristic of experiences of an individual, a group, and a situation. It is a research methodology that investigates the phenomenon with an intention to explore the context to generate multiple facets of situations [17]. As defined by Creswell [4], case study is an in-depth exploration of an activity or situation based on an extensive data collection. In this connection, the study employed a multiple case study that aims to compare and analyze data based on similarities and differences that would build a probable theory. The participants involved on this study were interviewed accordingly using the questions prepared by the researcher to seek the needed data for analysis. Furthermore, in this research method, data generated as interpreted will be utilized to discuss the specific situation accordingly to the phenomena experienced by the participants, thus, it limits the idea that it reflects the whole population.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the collected data from the participants through interviews, several common themes emerged and has been identified as basis for further studies and recommendations. Through the interview all participants disclosed their personal details including the workloads they have in their respective schools. The three participants declared that all of them are involved on the operations of the school apart from their basic assignment as a teacher. Discussing further their responses begins with noting their daily routines in relevance to their workload with no discrimination but professional perceptions.

### A. The challenges and its effect to the teacher

The first challenge was the *inability to perform teaching duties* which roots to the problem of time management as a result of a demanding ancillary workload particularly when coordinatorships were not weight significantly according to the tasks it requires. In this case, Ms. Jen revealed that apart from the 5 teaching loads as a class adviser categorized as heavy, she also handles 4 special assignments of which categorized as 2 medium and 2 light tasks. Consequently, this situation contradicts the provisions and guidelines for distributing workload and ancillary functions for teachers as stipulated in the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers RA 4670. With this burden of several reports demanded by the special assignment, her classes are often left hanging and negatively affected by her compliance with such designation. The same is true as well with the testimonies of the other participants revealing their sentiments about fulfilling their main roles in the classroom as educators which is affected by miscalculation of ancillary function workload distribution.

The second challenge was the *undefined role expectations* which roots to the unclear definition of the special assignment given to the participants. Participants find it difficult to sustain their roles as leaders because they were not educated of what are the expectations and responsibilities of such assignment. Clear and defined job descriptions were not communicated property to the teachers. Additionally, delegation of special assignments was not properly documented as proof for conformity of the receiving person. Orientations and trainings relative to the assignment is lacking and untimely which creates the increased anxiety and role confusion of the teacher. The impact of undefined tasks and responsibilities in the workplace results to job dissatisfaction and less productivity [6]. Miscommunicated role expectations compromise the ability of an individual to perform its optimum level and work engagement. Most commonly, workers complain the communication of this minimum requirement since managers overlooked the basic delivery of task delegation. Thus recommended, that school heads should put an effort into improving communication through a clear expectation to lessen ambiguity.

Furthermore, when asked how these challenges affects their role as a teacher, participants discussed both positive and negative responses. Improved problem-solving skills, teamwork, and time management were the emerging common articulation of the participants. While negatively, it affects their teaching motivation, work stress, and poor work-life balance. As mentioned by Mr. John, he often finds it hard to make time for his self and family due to his special assignment as a liaison and as a DRMM coordinator. In times of urgency inside the school even beyond working hours he is still needed. Sudden work demands have taken toll of the conditions contributing emotional fatigue, as workers balance life and work [19]. In addition, the definition of his role position is questionable, as he is not literate with his accountabilities and responsibilities to the assignment thereby creating role confusions and pointing fingers. A job description contains the comprehensive and necessary details relevant to the assignment. To note, Dessler [5] describes job

description as a list of job duties and responsibilities, including reporting relationships. However, this supposed communicated and shared knowledge by the school head and teacher is often overlooked and under considered, despite of its importance [1].

Being optimistic, when confusions regarding job emerge, connecting with colleagues is best avenue to discuss matters at hand. Ms. Maria also expressed her ideas on how it changed her abilities in keeping with her time. Creating a time schedule helped her manage her tasks and deliverables although at some point she struggles in beating with the untimely deadlines. Ms. Jen, a teacher who belonged to an integrated school, struggled to crawl her responsibilities. Juggling multiple assignments is heavy for a teacher like her, but because of the limited number of teachers they have at school she was forced to find new ways of rethinking solutions to her own dilemma. Despite the difficulties encountered, teachers still believe that formulating solutions and strategizing paves the way for more potentials of professional growth. Balancing time while doing multiple ancillary functions can be best overcome by various strategies [14].

### B. Insights of the experiences

Considering the experiences of the participants, insights were also gathered. Participants have a common response to the importance of a *well-defined job description* which contains the detailed responsibilities and accountabilities that participants need to perform for a specific designation. Although special assignments have its own articulation as to what is the function, the emphasis of proper communication is demanded to avoid role confusion and submission to the role. Moreover, participants meet the idea of *equal and proper delegation of tasks* as specified in RA 4670. This insight generates the demand of the participants to equal distribution of ancillary tasks accordingly. Lastly, the *ability to be flexible and resilient* in complying to the professional duties as a teacher and as a leader. As shared by Ms. Jen, the multiple responsibilities she has at hand, gained meaningful experiences applicable in real-life situations. Being resilient and flexible enough to juggle teaching and leading puts a strong hold of her belief that teaching requires commitment and professional duties. In relation to the mentioned study of Into and Gempes [11], coping mechanisms such as producing various strategies and putting faith to the abilities, adhere to the call of the duty of a teacher and potentials of professional development.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gathered from the date provided by the participants of this study, the researcher has collected conclusions helpful enough to summarize the phenomenon being investigated. Multiple ancillary positions are necessary for building the school management. Delegation of these assignments are basically listed on the guidelines as specified by the Government. With the case studies discussed, teachers see this situation not only negatively but also in a positive manner which generated responses that would be helpful as basis for school improvement. The challenges experienced by the teachers are

enough for the researchers to investigate to narrow provisions and revisit guidelines. Therefore, multiple ancillary functions cannot be excluded in the workload of teachers since teaching is not only the focus of this profession but also building the potentials of becoming leaders and managers.

In addition, the researcher would like to recommend the following items below which is a result of the in-depth analysis of the case studies investigated:

1. Department of Education encourages public schools to submit themselves for quality assurance through school-based management program. Thus, to better sustain quality process, school heads should make sure to communicate properly the job descriptions for each special assignments delegated to teachers and must be conformed through formal documentation for better understanding and accountability.
2. Assess the professional well-being of teachers with multiple ancillary positions through revisiting the guidelines of RA 4670 and properly delegate special assignments equally and accordingly.
3. As much as possible hire more teachers, if needed, to maintain balance of assignments and avoid heavy workloads, not sacrificing the main role which is teaching.
4. Researchers may dig further the same situation of this case study for future analysis and other factors.

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