

Exploring the Roles of Master Teachers in Balancing Teaching and Leadership in Pudtol District

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complexities faced by master teachers in balancing their roles in teaching, mentoring, and leadership within the Schools Division of Apayao, Philippines. Master teachers are critical in enhancing educational outcomes, yet they often struggle with challenges related to workload management, lack of administrative support, and limited professional development opportunities. Utilizing a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 7 master teachers. Key findings reveal significant barriers that hinder their effectiveness, such as heavy teaching loads and insufficient time allocated for mentoring and leadership responsibilities. Participants expressed that despite these challenges, they perceive their effectiveness positively influences student outcomes. The study highlights the pressing need for targeted interventions and comprehensive professional development programs tailored to the specific needs of master teachers, enhancing their capacity to fulfill their dual responsibilities. Insights gained from this research aim to inform educational policies and practices, advocating for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between teaching, mentoring, and leadership in the Philippine educational landscape.

Key Words: Master Teachers, Teaching, Mentoring, Leadership, Professional Development, Workload Management, Educational Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine educational system, master teachers play a crucial role in shaping the quality of instruction and enhancing student learning outcomes. Defined as experienced and highly qualified educators, master teachers are entrusted with not only delivering effective classroom instruction but also mentoring novice teachers and participating in school leadership initiatives. However, the multifaceted responsibilities they shoulder often lead to significant challenges that can hinder their effectiveness in fulfilling these roles.

Research has indicated that the success of educational reform and improvement heavily relies on the involvement of master teachers in leadership and mentoring capacities (1, 2). These educators are pivotal in influencing peer practices, fostering professional development, and guiding instructional strategies (3). Despite their critical position, numerous studies underscore that master teachers are frequently overwhelmed by heavy teaching loads, administrative demands, and the burden of competing responsibilities, which detract from their capacity to engage fully in mentoring and leadership activities (4, 5).

In the context of the Schools Division of Apayao, the challenges faced by master teachers are exacerbated by resource inequities, particularly in regions like the Cordillera Administrative Region, where disparities in administrative support and professional development opportunities are pronounced (6, 7). This situation calls for a thorough understanding of the complexities involved in balancing the roles of teaching, mentoring, and leadership, as the effectiveness of master teachers directly influences instructional quality and student achievement, yet remains critically understudied.

Despite existing literature highlighting the pressures on master teachers, there is a significant gap in research focusing specifically on how these professionals navigate their dual responsibilities in various educational contexts, particularly in rural or resource-limited areas of the Philippines. Studies primarily isolate instructional practices from leadership dynamics, thus failing to capture the overlapping nature of these roles within a

master teacher's experience (8). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the challenges, perceptions, and strategies of master teachers in the Schools Division of Apayao.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform better-targeted interventions and professional development initiatives that are sensitive to the unique context of master teachers. By understanding how these educators balance their multifaceted roles, educational leaders can implement systematic changes that enhance their capacity to contribute meaningfully to student learning and professional growth. Ultimately, this research aims to advocate for a more nuanced recognition and support of master teachers within educational policy and practice, contributing to the overall improvement of the Philippine education system.

Statement of the Problem

The general objective of this study is to explore the complexities faced by master teachers in balancing their roles in teaching, mentoring, and leadership within the Schools Division of Apayao, Pudtol District.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the primary challenges faced by Master Teachers in balancing the roles of teaching, mentoring, and leadership.
2. To examine the perceptions of Master Teachers regarding their effectiveness in each of these roles.
3. To explore the strategies employed by Master Teachers to overcome the challenges they encounter.
4. To determine the support needed to enhance the effectiveness of Master Teachers in the Schools Division of Apayao, District of Pudtol.

Research Hypotheses

This study will be guided by the following hypotheses:

1. Master teachers in the Schools Division of Apayao, District of Pudtol experience significant challenges in balancing their roles of teaching, mentoring, and leadership, particularly due to heavy teaching loads and overlapping responsibilities.
2. Master teachers perceive their effectiveness in mentoring and leadership to be influenced by the level of administrative support and available resources.
3. Strategies employed by master teachers, such as time management and prioritization, are positively correlated with their perceived effectiveness in mentoring and leadership.
4. Enhanced professional development opportunities are significantly associated with improving the effectiveness of master teachers in fulfilling their roles of teaching, mentoring, and leadership.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this research study is grounded in the interplay between the roles of master teachers in education and the various factors influencing their effectiveness in teaching, mentoring, and leadership. This framework integrates several theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of how master teachers navigate their multifaceted roles and the challenges they face within the Schools Division of Apayao in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

5. Constructivist Theory

At the core of this framework is Constructivist Theory, which posits that learning is an active, constructive process where learners build new ideas based on their current knowledge (Bruner, 1996). This theory emphasizes the importance of interaction between master teachers and their colleagues, as well as with students. Master teachers are not only responsible for imparting knowledge but also for facilitating an environment where teachers can explore and construct their understanding of effective teaching practices. This aligns with the role of master teachers as mentors who guide less experienced teachers in developing their instructional skills (Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

Constructivist Theory posits that learners construct knowledge through experiences and interactions. Master teachers, by facilitating collaborative learning environments and mentoring, embody this theory in practice (Brusilovsky & Millán, 2007). Including a discussion on how this theory informs their teaching and mentoring strategies would strengthen the framework.

2. Instructional Leadership Framework

The Instructional Leadership Framework provides a lens through which to examine the leadership responsibilities of master teachers. This framework highlights the importance of master teachers in fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement within schools. By engaging in activities such as conducting professional development workshops, providing feedback through classroom observations, and leading curriculum development initiatives, master teachers play a crucial role in enhancing instructional quality (Moore, 2019). Their leadership is essential for creating an environment conducive to both teacher and student success.

3. Role Theory

Role Theory is another critical component of this framework, as it helps to elucidate the expectations and responsibilities associated with the master teacher position. This theory suggests that individuals occupy multiple roles that come with specific expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). In this context, master teachers must balance their roles as educators, mentors, and leaders while managing the expectations of school administration, colleagues, and students. Understanding these dynamics is vital for identifying the challenges they face in fulfilling their responsibilities effectively.

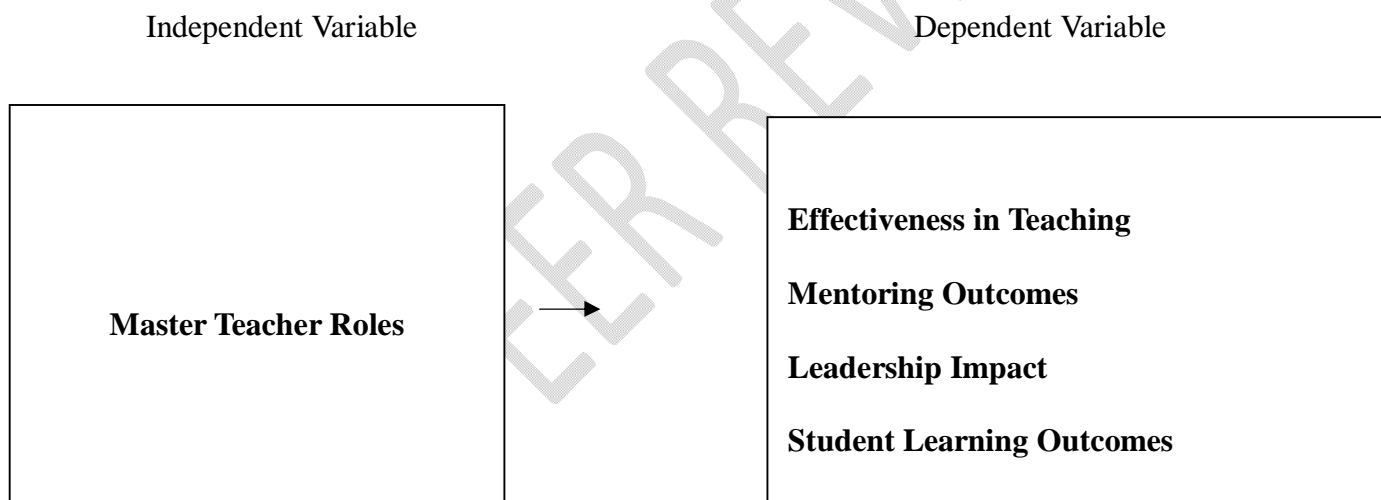
6. Professional Development Models

The framework also incorporates elements from various Professional Development Models, which emphasize ongoing learning and support for educators. Effective professional development is characterized by collaboration, relevance to classroom practice, and sustained engagement (Guskey, 2000). Master teachers are pivotal in facilitating such professional development opportunities for their peers, thereby enhancing collective efficacy within schools. However, without adequate support systems and resources, their ability to lead these initiatives may be compromised.

7. Impact on Student Outcomes

Finally, this conceptual framework recognizes the ultimate goal of enhancing student outcomes through effective teaching practices. The relationship between master teachers' instructional competence and student achievement is critical; thus, understanding how master teachers navigate their roles can provide insights into improving educational quality (Abdullah et al., 2021). The effectiveness of master teachers directly influences not only their colleagues but also the learning experiences of students.

Fig 1 : Research Paradigm



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore the complexities faced by master teachers in balancing their roles in teaching, mentoring, and leadership within the Schools Division of Apayao, Pudtol District. This

approach was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of master teachers and the meanings they attribute to their roles.

Locale of the Study

The research will be conducted in the District of Pudtol, Schools Division of Apayao in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines. This locale is characterized by a diverse educational landscape, comprising the elementary schools that serve the local population. The study will specifically target Master Teachers from these schools to gain insights into their unique experiences and challenges.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study targets 8 Master Teachers from various elementary schools within the Pudtol District, Schools Division of Apayao. The study employed a total enumeration sampling procedure to ensure that the insights and experiences of all eligible master teachers in the specified group were captured comprehensively, providing a complete representation of the perspectives relevant to the study.

Research Instruments

The research study will utilize a Semi-Structured Interview Guide, A set of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed information about the participants' experiences, challenges, strategies, and perceptions related to the Master Teacher role.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter request will be forwarded to the Schools Division Superintendent asking for permission to conduct the study. After favorable approval will be taken, a similar letter will be forwarded to the Schools District Supervisor after which the principal of the school will also be given letters asking for permission.

Data Collection

Data were collected exclusively through semi-structured interviews.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted at a time and location convenient for participants, creating a comfortable atmosphere conducive to open dialogue. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized, containing open-ended questions designed to explore the primary challenges master teachers encounter in balancing their roles,

their perceptions of effectiveness in teaching, mentoring, and leadership, strategies employed to navigate these challenges.

Interviews were audio-recorded, with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. The recordings allowed for a faithful representation of participants' expressions and insights.

Analysis of Data

The data analysis process for this study was carefully structured to facilitate an accurate interpretation of the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The following steps outline the analytical procedure in detail:

1. Familiarization:

The researcher began by thoroughly reviewing the audio recordings and verbatim transcripts of the interviews. This process involved reading through the transcripts multiple times to understand the overall context and identify recurring themes as well as initial impressions.

2. Open Coding:

During the open coding phase, the researcher systematically went through the transcripts to identify and categorize significant phrases and sentences that reflected the participants' experiences. Each segment of text was labeled with a code encapsulating its meaning. For example:

- A phrase such as "I try to manage my tasks by prioritizing the most urgent ones" might be labeled as "time management strategies."

3. Category Formation:

After completing the open coding, the researcher grouped similar codes into broader categories. For instance, codes related to workload (e.g., "heavy teaching load," "overwhelmed," "time constraints") were combined under the category "Workload Issues." Here are some other potential categories:

- Mentoring Effectiveness: Codes such as "successful mentorship experiences," "positive student impact," and "challenges in mentoring" could fall under this category.

- Administrative Support: Codes like "need for more resources," "lack of training opportunities," and "help from administration" could be grouped here.

4. Theme Development:

The researcher then analyzed categories to identify overarching themes that captured the essence of the participants' experiences. For example:

- A theme titled "Balancing Responsibilities" might emerge from categories related to workload issues and time management strategies.

5. Interpretation:

Once the themes were established, the researcher interpreted the findings by linking them back to the study's objectives and research questions. This involved examining how each theme reflected the participants' challenges and perceptions of their roles. Direct quotes from participants were used to illustrate key points and provide authenticity to the analysis.

For instance, under the theme of "Balancing Responsibilities," the researcher might highlight a quotation from a participant: "It's difficult to give my all to mentoring when I have so many classes to prepare for. I often find myself wishing I had more time." This quote not only supports the theme but also provides insight into the impact of heavy teaching loads on effective mentoring.

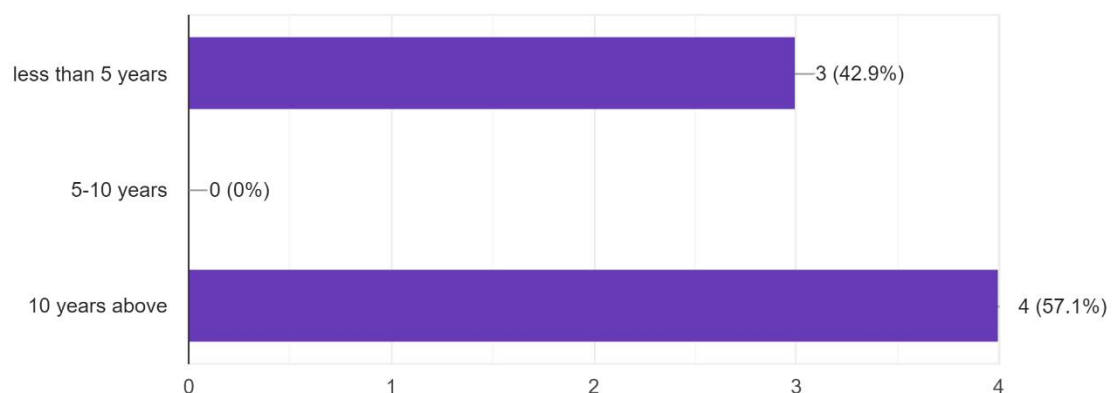
6. Validation:

To enhance the credibility of the findings, member checking was implemented. Participants were provided with a summary of the themes and findings, allowing them to confirm or clarify their expressed views, which ensured the analysis accurately represented their experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Fig 2 :Background Information of Master Teachers

Length of Service



The length of service of the master teachers interviewed varied significantly, according to the study. Three of the eight participants were relatively new to the position, having been master teachers for little more than five years. Four participants, two of whom were close to retirement, had more than ten years of experience. This distribution offers insightful information about how tenure affects master teachers' experiences and difficulties juggling leadership, mentoring, and teaching responsibilities.

Grade Levels Taught

Six of the eight master teachers in this study are instructors of Grade 1, where they are in charge of all subject instruction. Given the basic nature of Grade 1 education, teaching young students across several topics involves a tremendous investment of time and effort. According to these master instructors, feeling overburdened was a common result of juggling the many topic areas, attending to the many needs of the young students, and carrying out their responsibilities as mentors and school leaders.

One participant is assigned to Grade 5, also teaching all subjects in that grade. While this teacher's responsibilities are similar to those of the Grade 1 teachers in terms of subject coverage, they noted that teaching older students comes with different challenges. The Grade 5 teacher emphasized the need for more specialized teaching strategies and pointed out that juggling this with their leadership and mentoring responsibilities made their job more difficult.

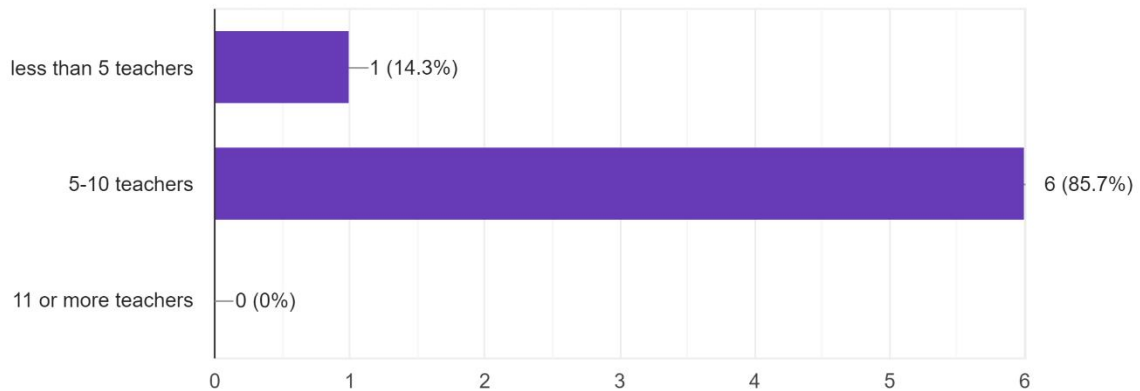
Hours Spent on Teaching and Advisership Duties

The master teachers in this study reported working 8 or more hours daily, including teaching, advisership, and mentoring responsibilities. A significant portion of their time is spent on preparing, delivering, and assessing lessons, particularly for Grade 1 and Grade 5 students. Additionally, they handle class advisory duties, which involve managing students' social and emotional development. Many master teachers also work beyond school hours to complete lesson planning and grading, raising concerns about work-life balance and burnout.

These findings suggest the need for a review of workload distribution and possible delegation of responsibilities. Providing additional support, such as teaching assistants or

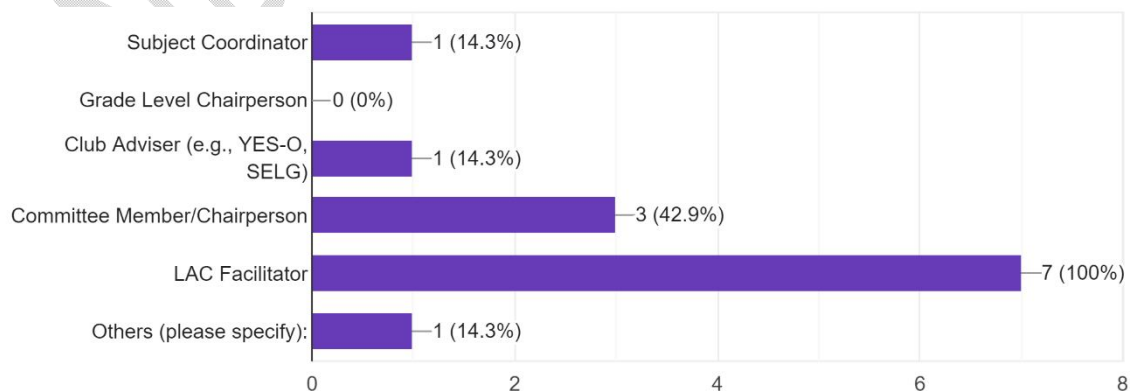
administrative help, could alleviate some of their burdens, allowing them to focus on both teaching and mentoring more effectively.

Fig 3 :Number of Teachers Mentored



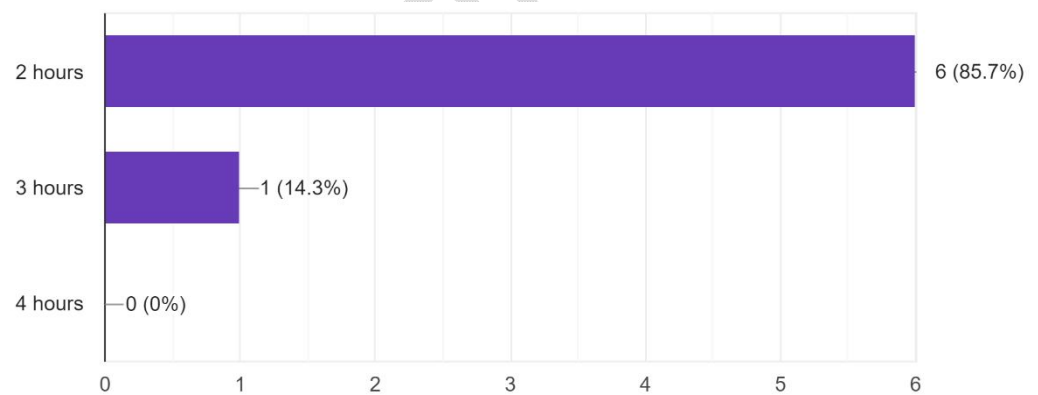
The data reveals a variation in the number of teachers mentored by the master teachers, with only one participant mentoring fewer than five teachers, while the remaining six master teachers are mentoring between five and ten teachers. This indicates a significant mentorship load for the majority of the participants. The master teachers with larger numbers of mentees face the challenge of providing individualized support to each teacher, which can be time-consuming and demanding, especially when balancing other teaching and leadership responsibilities. Those mentoring fewer teachers may find it easier to dedicate more time to each mentee, but still face the challenge of managing multiple roles. The findings highlight the need for support systems or resources to assist master teachers in effectively mentoring large groups, potentially improving the quality of mentoring while alleviating the strain on the teachers' time and energy.

fig 4 :Leadership Roles Held



The master teachers in this study hold a variety of leadership roles within their schools and district. Among them, one serves as a subject coordinator, one is a YES-O club adviser, and three hold positions as committee chairpersons or members. Additionally, all participants are actively involved as LAC facilitators, with one teacher handling other leadership roles as well. These findings suggest that master teachers are not only responsible for classroom instruction and mentoring but also play key roles in shaping the overall direction of their schools. Their involvement in diverse leadership tasks adds to their workload and responsibilities, which can further contribute to feelings of overload. It also highlights the important role that master teachers play in school governance and development. However, the breadth of these roles may require more strategic support, such as clear role delineation or administrative assistance, to help master teachers manage their leadership responsibilities more effectively.

Fig 5 :Hours Spent on Teaching-Related, Mentoring, and Leadership Duties



The data shows that six master teachers spend 2 hours daily on various teaching-related, mentoring, and leadership duties, while one teacher dedicates 3 hours. These tasks include lesson planning, checking of activities, printing materials, remediation, providing teaching assistance, and overseeing reading programs, YES-O, and SELG duties. This significant time commitment further emphasizes the heavy workload of master teachers, especially considering that these activities are in addition to their regular teaching hours. The fact that most of the participants spend 2 hours daily on such tasks suggests that these responsibilities are essential yet time-consuming, highlighting the need for greater efficiency tools, support staff, or collaborative efforts to help master teachers manage their extensive duties more effectively and reduce potential burnout.

2. Challenges in Balancing Roles

One of the primary challenges identified by participants was the struggle to balance their teaching, mentoring, and leadership roles. Many master teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by their heavy workloads due to teaching responsibilities, which limited their time for mentoring. One participant expressed, "I wish I could dedicate more time to mentoring, but my teaching load just doesn't allow it." This sentiment was echoed by numerous others, indicating a systemic issue prevalent among the cohort.

While most participants acknowledged their commitment to fulfilling their roles effectively, some noted significant friction between their responsibilities. Additionally, data from several interviews were missing, which could provide a more comprehensive picture of this challenge. The absence of these insights emphasizes the need for more thorough and systematic data collection methods in future research.

Workload Management

Many of the participants emphasized the need for scheduling and prioritization to manage their workload. They reported using strategies such as creating daily schedules, planning tasks ahead of time, and focusing on high-priority tasks first. While these strategies are effective in helping them organize their responsibilities, several participants acknowledged that the process is challenging and requires constant effort. The need for proper planning was emphasized, with responses reflecting the saying "Plan your work and work your plan." These findings suggest that although time management is a key strategy, the overwhelming nature of their roles makes it difficult to achieve a perfect balance, pointing to the need for additional support to ease their workload.

Challenges in Managing Workload

The master teachers in this study identified time constraints as their biggest challenge in managing their workload. Several participants reported that despite spending long hours teaching, there was not enough time for other critical tasks such as mentoring and administrative duties. Many resorted to overtime or working at home to meet deadlines, especially when urgent reports or overlapping activities arose. One significant challenge was the need to supervise co-

teachers and provide teaching assistance (TA) while managing their own classroom responsibilities. Additionally, the unexpected demand for reports or administrative tasks, particularly during monitoring, often led to disruptions in their scheduled activities. For some, this meant postponing planned tasks like TA sessions due to urgent assessments or activities that had to be completed immediately. These findings highlight the difficulty in balancing multiple roles and emphasize the need for better time management strategies or additional support to ease the burden on master teachers.

Impact of Workload on Fulfilling Roles

The responses indicate that teaching responsibilities often take precedence over mentoring and leadership duties, with several master teachers noting that they only focus on mentoring and leadership tasks after teaching hours. This highlights a struggle to balance the multiple roles within the limited time available. Some participants suggested that de-loading master teachers could allow more time for mentoring and leadership, enabling them to more effectively supervise colleagues and provide teaching assistance. While a few mentioned managing their time by strictly following the allotted time for each subject, others acknowledged that their workload significantly impacts their effectiveness, particularly in fulfilling leadership and mentoring roles. In certain situations, teaching responsibilities had to be prioritized, leading to sacrifices in mentoring and leadership duties. These challenges underscore the need for better workload distribution and support systems to help master teachers balance their roles more effectively and maintain their effectiveness across all responsibilities.

Administrative Support

The responses reveal mixed experiences regarding the adequacy of administrative support for the mentoring and leadership roles of master teachers. Most participants acknowledged receiving support, particularly in the form of approval for proposed initiatives, technical assistance training, and guidance from their school heads on mentoring duties. Specific examples include assistance in developing and implementing LAC plans and approval of program proposals. However, one participant expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that not all master teachers feel adequately supported. These findings highlight the importance of consistent and proactive administrative support to empower master teachers in their roles. Additional forms of

support, such as regular consultations, resource allocation, and capacity-building activities, could further enhance their ability to fulfill their mentoring and leadership responsibilities effectively.

Impact of Lack of Administrative Support

Participants reported challenges such as difficulty performing technical assistance (TA) functions, limited ability to support co-teachers, and reduced effectiveness as mentors. Some noted that insufficient administrative support affects their ability to plan and implement programs, while others emphasized its critical role in enhancing skills, boosting morale, and ensuring the success of initiatives. One participant pointed out that when the school head does not support the TA program, the overall performance of teachers is adversely affected. These findings underscore the importance of administrative support in empowering master teachers to carry out their roles effectively and in fostering a supportive environment that promotes both individual and collective growth within the school.

Resource Availability

The responses indicate varying levels of access to resources needed for master teachers to effectively fulfill their roles. While some participants acknowledged having access to professional development opportunities and basic materials like school supplies, others highlighted significant gaps, particularly in technology resources. Participants mentioned the need for laptops, smart TVs, and internet connectivity to enhance their performance in mentoring and leadership tasks. A few master teachers noted that they often had to initiate their own professional development efforts and seek additional resources independently. The lack of financial support for implementing school programs was also emphasized as a barrier. These findings suggest that while some resources are available, improving access to technology and financial assistance could better support master teachers in performing their multifaceted roles effectively.

Impact of Lack of Resources

Many participants reported that insufficient resources lead to delays in implementing technical assistance (TA) plans and other programs related to mentoring and leadership. They noted that the lack of resources, such as materials and funding, limits the effectiveness of the

mentoring process and hampers their efficiency in performing their duties. Some expressed frustration when innovations, research, and projects are not properly planned or funded, resulting in unmet goals and a sense of dissatisfaction. Overall, the lack of resources not only affects the timely and effective delivery of their roles but also impacts their morale, underscoring the need for better support in terms of funding, materials, and access to tools necessary for their tasks.

3. Perceptions of Effectiveness

Participants largely rated themselves as effective, but this self-assessment varied based on external factors, such as administrative support and resource availability. Comments like, “I feel supported by my administrators, but there are days when I question whether I am doing enough for my mentees,” highlight the nuanced perceptions of effectiveness. The inconsistency in self-assessment suggests that effectiveness may be context-dependent, influenced by external support systems.

Furthermore, participants pointed out that insufficient access to modern teaching materials and technology hampered their ability to mentor effectively. As one teacher noted, “Without proper resources, it’s hard to lead initiatives and support my colleagues.” This finding aligns with existing literature, indicating that resource constraints significantly impact the performance of master teachers in their multifaceted roles.

The participants identified key resources that could enhance their effectiveness as teachers and mentors. These include technological tools such as laptops, TVs, and internet connectivity, as well as training on mentoring approaches and time management. A more functional Professional Learning Community (PLC) was also mentioned as essential for collaboration and support among master teachers. Furthermore, some participants expressed a need for leadership support and clarified roles to better navigate their responsibilities.

Perception of Administrative Support

Most participants described their school administrators as supportive, citing the provision of resources and assistance in fulfilling their roles. However, some felt the need for clearer role delineation between master teachers and administrators, particularly in the area of instructional supervision. One participant expressed concern about not being allowed to submit their own Instructional Supervisory (IS) plan, which hindered their ability to fully exercise their

responsibilities. Others highlighted the need for additional support through training programs, particularly on time management, to avoid burnout. While administrative support is generally appreciated, these insights suggest areas for improvement in ensuring a more defined and supportive framework for master teachers.

7. Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

Despite the challenges, master teachers employed various strategies to manage their overlapping roles. Time management was frequently mentioned as a crucial tool. Participants indicated they prioritized tasks based on urgency and importance, stating, “I’ve learned to set priorities and sometimes say no to additional responsibilities.” This proactive approach not only assists them in juggling their duties but also reflects an awareness of their limits.

When faced with competing demands across teaching, mentoring, and leadership, the participants prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. For most, teaching responsibilities are given top priority, with mentoring and leadership duties addressed during overtime or weekends. While prioritization is effective in ensuring that critical tasks are completed, some participants admitted that teaching responsibilities are occasionally neglected when deadlines for other duties arise, necessitating efforts to make up for lost instructional time. These findings underscore the need for support systems to prevent task overload and ensure that teaching, mentoring, and leadership roles are equally fulfilled.

Professional development opportunities have played a significant role in helping some master teachers balance their roles. Participants cited attending seminars on mentoring, supervision, and leadership as particularly beneficial, with topics such as accountability and instructional supervision enhancing their skills. Others mentioned learning through online resources or programs like the School Head Development Program. However, not all participants recalled accessing relevant professional development opportunities, suggesting a gap in consistent training. Expanding access to targeted programs could further strengthen the capacity of master teachers to manage their roles effectively.

However, the missing data from a subset of participants limits the breadth of this finding and suggests a need for further exploration into the strategies employed across different contexts. Various strategies, including developing collaborative networks and seeking administrative support, were identified as critical mechanisms for navigating their responsibilities successfully.

Impact on Student Outcomes

The responses indicate that master teachers generally perceive their roles as having a positive impact on student learning outcomes, primarily through their support of teachers. By providing technical assistance (TA) and mentoring, master teachers help improve instructional quality, which translates into better student learning experiences. Some participants shared examples of how the application of techniques learned through mentoring has enhanced learning outcomes. However, a few participants expressed reservations, noting that the impact on student outcomes may not be significant due to either limited innovations or their ongoing transition into the master teacher role. These insights suggest that while the influence of master teachers on student learning is largely positive, there is room for further development through innovations and more defined contributions to instructional improvements.

Contribution of Mentoring and Leadership to Teaching and Learning Environment

Mentoring and leadership roles are seen as critical to fostering a supportive and collaborative teaching environment. Participants highlighted the application of gained knowledge, enhanced teacher confidence and motivation, and the creation of a feedback loop as significant outcomes of effective mentoring and leadership. These contributions help improve instructional quality and promote a culture of continuous growth and shared learning among teachers. However, some participants noted limited impact, citing either insufficient mentoring opportunities or minimal improvements observed. Overall, the findings emphasize the potential of mentoring and leadership to significantly enhance the teaching and learning environment when master teachers are actively engaged and adequately supported.

Need for Enhanced Support

A consistent theme throughout the discussions was the call for enhanced administrative support and professional development opportunities. Participants emphasized, “More training on mentoring techniques would make a significant difference in how we support new teachers.” This feedback indicates a desire for increased investment in their professional growth, which could help them to enhance their mentoring capabilities and instructional leadership.

The master teachers emphasized the need for enhanced support from their school administration, district office, and professional organizations to balance their roles effectively. Key recommendations included the approval of TA plans, provision of professional development opportunities on topics like time management and technical assistance (TA), and access to resources such as laptops, TVs, and internet connectivity. Many highlighted the importance of a more functional Professional Learning Community (PLC), where master teachers could collaboratively develop lesson exemplars, assessment tools, and other instructional materials. Other suggestions included the creation of a district calendar of activities, better dissemination of information, and tools like trackers to avoid duplication of tasks.

Participants proposed specific changes to the current system to enhance the effectiveness of master teachers. Suggestions included reducing teaching hours to allow more time for mentoring and leadership duties, removing class advisorship to lessen their workload, and focusing on their primary responsibilities of mentoring and leadership. Some proposed that master teachers take on the development of lesson exemplars and references for Teachers I–III to standardize instruction. Additionally, there was a call to strengthen the PLC system and foster a culture where master teachers are valued as leaders rather than being limited to administrative tasks or contest preparations.

The participants also shared critical insights into their experiences. One noted that master teachers often take on multiple roles, such as being YES-O advisers or feeding coordinators, which adds to their workload. There was also a concern about a lack of collaboration among some master teachers, with perceptions that the position is sometimes used for self-serving purposes rather than promoting mentoring and leadership. Participants emphasized the need for a positive mentoring culture led by master teachers and supported by their school heads to create a more collaborative and impactful teaching-learning environment.

Interestingly, the missing responses from certain participants regarding this key area indicate a potential gap in understanding the full scope of support needed. Future research should aim to include a broader participant pool and comprehensive data collection strategies to capture diverse perspectives on administrative support and training programs.

Summary of Findings

This study examined the experiences, challenges, and strategies of master teachers in balancing their teaching, mentoring, and leadership roles. The findings revealed that while master teachers rely on time management, task prioritization, and flexibility to handle their responsibilities, they often face significant challenges such as time constraints, overlapping tasks, and insufficient time for mentoring and leadership due to heavy teaching loads. Administrative support was generally acknowledged as helpful, particularly in areas like technical assistance and program approvals, but some participants noted gaps in role clarity and consistent support. Resource limitations, particularly in technology, financial support, and professional development opportunities, were identified as barriers to effectively implementing mentoring and leadership initiatives. Despite these challenges, master teachers perceived their roles as positively influencing student outcomes and improving instructional quality, though some noted a lack of significant innovations and collaboration. To address these issues, participants recommended reducing teaching loads, enhancing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), providing targeted training, and promoting distributed leadership to allow them to focus more effectively on their mentoring and leadership duties.

These findings align with previous studies that highlight the struggles of master teachers in managing their roles due to heavy workloads and limited resources (9). Similar to other research, this study underscores the importance of administrative support and professional development. However, it uniquely emphasizes the burden of additional roles, such as class advisorship and extracurricular duties, which exacerbate workload challenges. Unlike studies that uniformly report high mentoring effectiveness, this research found variability, with some participants citing limited collaboration and impact. These results highlight the need for systemic changes, including workload reduction and improved resource allocation, consistent with global recommendations for empowering master teachers in their roles.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant challenges faced by master teachers in balancing their roles of teaching, mentoring, and leadership. Time constraints, overlapping tasks, and insufficient resources hinder their ability to effectively fulfill their responsibilities. While administrative support and professional development opportunities are valuable, there remains a need for clearer role definitions, better resource allocation, and stronger collaboration. The master teachers' roles positively impact student learning outcomes and the overall teaching environment, but the lack of sufficient time and resources limits their effectiveness. To enhance their impact, systemic changes such as workload reduction, improved access to resources, and the strengthening of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are essential. Addressing these issues will empower master teachers to perform their multifaceted roles more effectively and contribute more meaningfully to the development of their schools.

The findings from this study illuminate the complexities faced by master teachers in balancing their roles while underscoring the significant impact of external factors, such as administrative support and resource availability, on their perceived effectiveness. The identified challenges and strategies provide valuable insights that can inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of master teachers.

Moreover, the presence of missing data points to the need for improved data collection methods in research efforts. By addressing these gaps, future studies can provide more comprehensive and nuanced understandings of the challenges and supports necessary for master teachers to thrive in their multifaceted roles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that in order to give master teachers more time for mentoring and leadership responsibilities, schools should lessen their teaching loads and class advisorship responsibilities. Furthermore, expanding their access to necessary resources like technology—such as laptops, smart TVs, and dependable internet connectivity—would greatly improve their capacity to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. To better prepare master instructors for their many tasks, professional development opportunities should be offered on a regular basis. These opportunities should center on time management,

technological support, and efficient mentoring techniques. To encourage cooperation among master instructors in areas like lesson planning, assessment tools, and exchanging best practices, it is also advised to strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). To prevent misunderstandings and guarantee that master teachers receive sufficient assistance in their leadership and mentoring responsibilities, it is imperative that roles be clearly defined. By putting these suggestions into reality, schools may assist master teachers in better juggling their workloads, which will enhance instruction, student performance, and school performance as a whole.

References

1. Abasolo M, Dela Cruz R, Luna L. *Master Teachers and Educational Reform: Perspectives on Leadership and Mentoring*. *Philippine Journal of Education*. 2021;4(1):23-34.
2. Belbestre J, Carreon F, Mendoza R. *The Role of Master Teachers in Curriculum Development: Insights from the Field*. *International Journal of Educators*. 2024;5(2):45-53.
3. Finocchio L, Tran L, Diaz A. *Mentoring as an Instrument for Professional Development: Examining the Role of Master Teachers*. *Educational Leadership Review*. 2021;12(3):67-78.
4. Ang N, Gonzalez J. *Balancing Act: The Responsibilities of Master Teachers and Their Impact on Professional Growth*. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. 2021;49(4):345-359.
5. Turner W. *The Overburdened Teacher: Administrative Challenges Faced by Master Educators*. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 2020;58(2):217-230.
6. Luna L, Dela Cruz R. *Resource Disparities in the Cordillera Administrative Region: Implications for Master Teachers*. *Philippine Educational Review*. 2023;22(1):15-26.

7. *National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Addressing Educational Challenges in the Philippine Context. 2020. Available from: [Link if applicable]*

8. *Finocchio L, Tran L, et al. Intersections of Leadership and Teaching: Future Research Directions. Asian Education and Development Studies. 2021;10(1):12-24.*

9. *Gonzales MG, Guimary FM, Gabunilas LM. Teacher's workload and well-being and their implication to learners' academic performance. Sci Int (Lahore). 2022;34(1):47-51.*

UNDER PEER REVIEW