

# LEADING THE WAY: ACCOUNTS OF TEACHERS-IN-CHARGE IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to describe the experiences gained by the Teachers-in-Charge in dealing with problems in school management at Monkayo District, Monkayo, Division of Davao de Oro. Employing phenomenological approach among ten (10) teacher participants, in-depth interview was conducted which answered the four fundamental questions. Essential themes were generated out from their responses to the research questions. The results uncovered the participants' lived experiences, and from it ten (10) themes emerged: very stressful at first, stressful in meeting deadlines and other problems, dealing with teachers, being a school head is not an easy job, training ground, attending seminars, take on management roles, stepping stone for higher position, being able to attend seminars, and leaving a legacy to the school. The participants also shared the challenges they encountered in teachers-in-charge, from which emerged eight (8) themes: teachers' attitude, problem with time management, managing of various school concerns, decision-making, handling co-teachers, taking on dual roles, TICs always met with problems, and lack time to perform tasks. Further, for the coping mechanisms they revealed ten (10) essential themes: do planning, passion for the job, study DepEd orders, collaboration with stakeholders, open communication strategy, establish good communication and transparency, collaborative discussion with teachers, Co-teachers and PTA, technical assistance, and ideas from other people. Lastly, for the insights they cited, nine (9) themes emerged: to be optimistic, to be firm, handle challenges in sobriety, learn to be humble, additional cash incentives, reduce TICs teaching loads, get more trainings and seminars, promoted as full-pledge school head, and to become an effective school head. In view of the above, these results will undoubtedly guide future educational practices and research efforts, resulting in a more supportive and collaborative educational environment for the benefit of students, teachers, and administrators alike.

**Keywords:** Teacher-in-Charge, Experiences, Challenges, Phenomenological Approach, Monkayo, Davao de Oro

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The challenges faced by Teachers-In-Charge in managing schools encompass a complex interplay of balancing administrative duties with teaching responsibilities, navigating staff coordination and leadership dynamics, ensuring curriculum implementation and educational standards, addressing student management and disciplinary issues, and fostering effective parental involvement and communication, all of which collectively contribute to the multifaceted nature of their role in the successful administration of educational institutions.

In Malaysia, being assigned to a school role is never uneasy undertaking in. A study looked into the several issues that Malaysian teachers-in-charge face on the job. It was discovered that teachers-in-charge struggled with isolation, time management, lack of information relevant to their role, inability to apply theories to real-world situations, inexperience making and solving decisions, and difficulty adjusting to the new culture of the school.

Furthermore, it was discovered that these conditions place excessive pressure on the head teachers, to the point where it has already impacted their employment as school administrators (Saidun et al., 2015).

In Pampanga, Philippines, education system has been criticized for its poor performance and low-quality output, particularly in the area of basic education. Thus, the Department of Education is having difficulty obtaining both in the elementary and secondary levels in terms of quality and outstanding performance. As a result, the quality of education may decline as a result of school administrators' incapacity and ineffectiveness in handling these situations. Both new and experienced principals are challenged by these to enhance their leadership style, which might either save or destroy the nation's educational system (Pamatmat et al., 2016).

In Monkayo East District, teachers who are designated as teacher-in-charge face a demanding leadership role. Beyond regular teaching duties, they manage teacher performance and motivation, juggle administrative tasks with classroom time, address diverse school issues, make crucial decisions, collaborate with colleagues, and act as both teachers and managers. Their success hinges on overseeing student and faculty performance, proactively tackling challenges, and bearing the significant responsibility witnessed by even seasoned principals.

In connection, I have read several researches regarding the problems of school heads in school management but I have never read and heard about the experiences encountered by the teachers-in-charge in the school or any similar study that delves into this problem in our local setting. As such, I recognized the great need to conduct a study on this matter as basis of policy formulation for the Department of Education to be more effective and responsive in the implementation of Programs, Projects, and Activities.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The study looked at how in-charge teachers handled issues related to running schools, as well as the obstacles they faced and the strategies they employed to get through them. It was guided by the following questions;

1. What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?
2. What are the challenges the participants experienced in dealing with management in schools?
3. How do teachers-in-charge cope with the challenges in dealing with management in schools?
4. What are the insights the participants gained from their experiences in dealing with management in schools?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section offers readings and subjects associated with the current idea being studied to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the issues and difficulties faced by teachers in charge while addressing issues with school administration. To help us understand what was being stressed in this qualitative investigation, the results of another research comparable to this one was presented. They were obtained from various sources, including books, journals, websites, and manuals.

**School Leadership.** The study conducted by Leithwood et al. (2004) analyzed the impacts of school leadership on student learning outcomes, finding that there is a direct relationship between good leadership and raising student success and creating a supportive school environment. Five critical elements of effective leadership are directing, developing employees, restructuring the institution, improving education and monitoring teaching and learning process as per the authors' perception. They stressed the need for visionary and instructional leadership that involved leaders setting goals for a school or district, promoting teacher professional growth, creating an enabling working atmosphere, enhancing pedagogy and tracking student achievement. Furthermore, it emphasized distributed leadership which referred to shared decision making based on evidence leading to improved students' academic achievement through working with multiple stakeholders.

**Challenges of Teachers-in-Charge.** After obtaining their teaching license, educators seek careers in education and may end up leading educational organizations. It's usually not an easy transition to go from teaching in the classroom to leadership roles in the school. Studies show that this is not always the case and that there are many challenges for those in control to overcome. This is contrary to the belief held by many individuals, particularly those

who are not in the education sector, that teachers always go on to become academic leaders. Classroom instruction and school management are two different but connected areas of study. A classroom teacher who is offered a leadership role may choose not to accept it at this time for a number of reasons. Since teaching is an undesirable profession, teachers are hesitant to take on leadership roles in their schools. For countries that are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), fewer applications are being submitted for significant positions. Some countries are experiencing difficulties finding eligible candidates. There has been a discernible decline in the number of applications over time. According to studies, the biggest barriers to applying are negative opinions of the position, particularly those that are connected to overburdened jobs, terrible working circumstances, low income, and rewards like insufficient training and readiness. In several countries, assistant principals and teachers do not show enthusiasm in attaining higher leadership roles because of the small increase in pay that is disproportionate to the job and responsibility. The younger generation of school administrators is not interested in becoming principals due to mounting stress and pressure from their jobs (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2011).

**Preparing for the Leadership Challenge.** Being a school leader requires a lot of preparation and is an intellectually challenging job. Academic leaders with differing degrees of experience identified the challenges and proposed solutions. To enhance their confidence in accepting greater duties and better equip them for these challenges, novice academic leaders should undergo leadership training. It is crucial to consider their training while choosing the most qualified applicants for the principalship. Newly appointed principals were able to get by with experience-based learning and in-service training in spite of their lack of formal training. Their level of anxiety about taking on the new task increased with the amount of instruction they received (Thody, Papanoum, Johansson & Pashiardis, 2007).

**Succession Planning.** In the past, executives mostly focused on finding a successor for open supervisory roles, giving succession planning little thought. Succession planning gained traction and was taken seriously by organizational leaders as a result of the growing conversations, theories, and research on leadership. Recognizing its worth, it is presented as a major strategy that will influence the sustainability of the leadership and the achievement of the organization's goal. The term of office for leadership positions is being observed, as the traditional belief that leaders will hold office until they retire starts to rapidly decline. The expectation of change and the arrival of new leaders is becoming ingrained in the organizational culture. Establishing a supportive organizational culture through active CEO and senior management participation in development programs and performance appraisal and reward systems that reinforce managerial engagement is one of the specific practices that organizations and management development professionals must carry out to effectively build their leadership pipeline (Groves, 2007).

**School Environment.** The school is the institutional setting that sets the guidelines for a student's educational experience. Due to the rising public pressure on schools to improve students' academic performance, researchers are looking at school-level factors in an effort to identify strategies for improving achievement for all children. The school environment has a significant impact on students' learning and development, which includes a significant percentage of their social, emotional, and ethical development. When students believe that their school provides a loving and supportive environment, they are less likely to participate in problem behaviors such as substance abuse and violent behavior. What gives schools their distinct character are the connections that occur within the school community and are influenced by the individual, structural, and functional features of the educational context. The term "school environment" refers to these interactions (Fonllem, Sing, Verdugo, Teran & Barahon, 2020). The school environment is a crucial factor to take into account when evaluating the wellbeing of students, employees, and other stakeholders. Thus, a child's academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend and the environment it offers (Korir & Kipkemboi, 2014). Nonetheless, Hoy, Tarter, and Kotthamp (1991) identified a number of school-related elements that have an effect on student performance; these variables include composition, structure, and climate; Korir and Kipkemboi (2014) praised the work of these researchers. However, Barry (2005) contends that, depending on the surrounding circumstances, school can either open or close the doors that lead to school success and in the academic progress of the kids generally.

**Managerial Skills.** Mukherjee (2013) asserts that there is a constant requirement for good management. Effective administration of people, assets, and resources is crucial in any business or type of organizational body. Time and financial resources invested have little value if they are not properly managed and administered. Therefore, many individuals who are involved in education these days place a strong importance on managerial abilities. The way school administrators run their institutions given their management expertise is directly related to how well those institutions did academically. Therefore, it is not surprising that a large number of writers have offered advice on these

competencies to school administrators (Mestry & Grobler, 2004; Monyatsi, 2005). The abilities include the following: fostering a positive school climate for ongoing quality education improvement; working in a team; communicating objectives, policies, and procedures to staff; adapting practices and school structures to new policy expectations; offering opportunities for curriculum leadership; ensuring positive principal-staff relationships; and spearheading particular initiatives to raise student achievement (Carr, 2005; Elmore, 2005).

**School Performance.** School performance is a serious concern for kids, parents, teachers, and authorities, according to Lamas (2015). Learning is the aim of school performance, which is educational in nature. There are various parts that make up the intricate whole known as performance in this sense. These are educational procedures supported by the school that entail changing one's current condition into a new one while maintaining integrity in an alternative unit that includes both cognitive and structural components. Performance varies depending on the biological and environmental factors that influence knowledge and expertise.

**Curriculum Implementation.** Smith et al.'s research (2018) ascertained that Teachers-in-Charge received elaborate feedback on their roles in curriculum implementation. The study revealed the intricate nature of this assignment, which comprises planning curricula, supporting teachers and adapting to educational changes. Moreover, the findings show how necessary it is for them to translate curriculum goals into practicable pedagogical methods.

**Discipline and Student Management.** What are the qualities of an effective school leader? At any cost they should avoid student indiscipline. According to Smith et al., (2018), discipline atmosphere establishment marks beginning point of headship within elementary or secondary schools since it helps supervise students' behavior. It touches on challenges experienced by Teachers-in-Charge like disruptive behaviors as well as maintenance of safe teaching environment.

**Parental Involvement and Communication.** Garcia & Martinez (2019) research discovered that teachers' heads had to use correct ways of communicating so as to involve parents properly. Personalized individualistic contacts based on parental interests and cultural background made active involvement more likely if there were personalized individualistic contacts based on parental interests and cultural background. Furthermore, Davis & White (2020) work found out that accommodating styles of digital communication media besides other forms will serve best for different parent groups in terms as well as types of ones.

**Professional Development.** Another study was conducted by Turner & Garcia (2019), where it was revealed that Teachers-in-Charge are aware how important continuous professional development is for their ability to keep up with changes in education. This was supported by their testimonies regarding the significance of keeping up with advancements made in technology, curriculum or pedagogical methods. The results from Davis's findings also support this opinion suggesting that professional development is a platform through which Teachers-in-Charge can lead innovative teaching practices within their institutions.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Participants

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research approach to investigate the experiences, difficulties, coping mechanisms, and insights acquired by Teachers-in-Charge in dealing with school management. In essence, it helped participants better grasp a particular occurrence they were experiencing, as reported by them (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2012).

According to phenomenology, to comprehend human experiences, one must use interviews to immerse oneself entirely in the ideas and insights of others. It allows for a culmination of interpretation of their experiences because these were the participants' actual lives, and they had all dealt with school management (Creswell, 2009). For example, it entailed the actual construction of meanings through their lenses, and it gave the researcher a way to visualize the participants' circumstances from the phenomena they experienced through their shared experiences (Giorgi, 2012).



### 3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in Monkayo East and West District, which included all the Teachers in charge at the elementary and secondary levels in the Municipality of Monkayo, Davao de Oro. Particularly this study was conducted with the Teachers-In-Charge from Casoon National High School, New Kapatagan Elementary School, Banlag Elementary School, Liwanag Elementary School, and Moria Elementary School from Monkayo West District, as well as Boay Elementary School, Matangad Elementary School, Babag Elementary School, Mt. Diwata Elementary School, and Union National High School-Mt. Diwata Annex from Monkayo East District, who were purposively selected for this study.

### 3.3 Research Participants

In determining the research participants of this qualitative-phenomenological study, Creswell (2013) suggests eight to fifteen participants. Therefore, in this study, there were 10 participants for the In-Depth Interview (IDI).

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were the following: (a) the participants must be a public-school Teacher-in-Charge in the School Year 2022-2023, (b) with a position/designation from Teacher I-IV to Master Teacher I-IV, and (c) from various elementary and secondary schools in Monkayo District, (d) and must have at least one year Teacher-in-Charge experience.

### 3.4 Instruments of the Study

For a qualitative study, the researcher herself was the main instrument for data collection. The researcher recorded, took down notes, and conducted the interview. Additionally, the researcher used an interview guide validated by panel members. This was the list of questions asked of the participants during the interview. The researcher asked questions about the experiences of the participants to set the mood of the conversational partners, the challenges they encountered, how they coped with them, and their insights gained in dealing with management in schools. The researcher practiced extreme caution by using open-ended questions.

### 3.5 Procedure

The procedure of gathering data includes a number of tasks for qualitative researchers. Before leaving after the research study, the researcher followed strict procedures for gathering data and participated in a number of events.

The researcher first made sure the study followed the correct research procedures. After submitting the work, it was reviewed and verified by the thesis adviser and the panel.

Second, in order to carry out the study, the researcher requested approval from the Teachers-in-Charge, Public Schools District Supervisor, and Schools Division Superintendent of the Division Office of Davao de Oro. The interview guide, tape recorder, and field notes were among the supplies and equipment that the researcher had ready for the data collection process.

Third, the purposive sampling technique was used to identify individuals. Gatekeepers assisted in the recruitment and contact of some of the participants. Thus, the gatekeepers requested to read and sign a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement document. The investigator verified that the chosen subjects fulfilled the requirements and has prior expertise in managing schools. The chosen participants were given a thorough explanation of the study's goals and methods. Informed consent forms were also emailed to the participants, who were asked to e-sign the forms if they agreed to the terms that stated their participation would be voluntary and free from coercion and that they would be willing to share their knowledge as needed for the study.

Fourth, after reading and signing the consent papers, each participant had an in-person, one-on-one in-depth interview at a time that they both agreed upon. Prior to the study's execution, the interview guide questions were verified. The researcher set up a series of scheduled encounters with the participants on days that worked best for them in order to suit the needs of this study. Before the interview, their rights and responsibilities were fully explained, and they received reimbursement for any inconvenience. To ensure validity and reliability, which are important in the conduct of the study, all proceedings were documented. Additionally, the participants were requested for permission

by the researcher to record the interview. Their answers were recorded during the interview, with the help of an audio recorder to help with any mishearing and to be used as a tool for transcription and coding at a later time.

Fifth, in order to prepare them for transcription, the taped interviews were placed on a password-protected flash drive. The drive was kept in a secured, secure storage area that only the researcher, who was the study's approved participant, could access. For extra security and backup, it was also uploaded to Google Drive, where it would not be visible to the general public. To guarantee a higher level of accuracy throughout the data analysis, every response was verbatim transcribed. In order to prevent unauthorized individuals from using or accessing the files, all of the data collected throughout the study were only preserved and stored for three years before being deleted.

Finally, a theme analysis was carried out. Based on the core concepts, a detailed analysis of the participant replies was conducted. An analyst worked with the researcher to make sure the data was analyzed correctly.

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration

The measures that were undertaken in ensuring ethical considerations in this study will be based on the principles of the Belmont Report in 1979. The researcher adhered to the fundamental principles of ethical consideration where respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were identified (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The researcher ensured that all the principles were addressed to protect the rights of participants and made sure that the information gathered from the participants were kept private as well as the names of the informants.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and the insights used by the Teachers-in-Charge in dealing with problems in school management. The primary focus of the investigation was to explore and understand the accounts of Teachers-in-Charge in dealing with problems in school management from Monkayo East and West District, Monkayo, Davao de Oro.

### 4.1 What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?

The first major research question; **‘What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?’** Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the experiences of Teachers-in-Charge in dealing with problems in school management.

#### 4.1.1 Experiences in Managing Schools

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 ‘What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?’ The responses generated three themes: very stressful at first, stressful in meeting deadlines and other problems, dealing with teachers, and being a school head not an easy job.

The theme very stressful constituted the primary experience of teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools. It conveys the overwhelming and challenging nature of the role. Teachers-in-charge, when thrust into positions of authority within the school management, often find themselves navigating a complex and demanding landscape that can be best described as "very stressful at first." This description reflects the initial shock and apprehension that comes with taking on new responsibilities in an educational institution.

Informant 1 pointed out that;

*I experienced so many things in this field especially in school-based management. At first, it was very stressful. You would experience culture shocks because, of course, coming from a classroom teacher, you would become a leader among your co-teachers. Then, you would encounter problems that might test your decision-making skills. Also, not all the teachers would agree or abide by your decisions. Some of them would be against you.*

Informant 2 narrated the difficulties of teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools particularly the stress in meeting deadlines and other problems;

*There were so many positive and negative experiences in dealing with school management. I encountered both positive and negative situations. You can experience a lot of things, and sometimes it is stressful to meet the deadlines for reports, especially when you have responsibilities as a school head and as a teacher. Sometimes, both sets of reports coincide, the reports for the teachers and the reports for the school head.*

Moreover, Informant 4 also shared her experience in dealing with her teachers. She said,

*My initial experience in school management involved dealing with my teachers and co-teachers. It was quite challenging, especially when you used to be their colleague and now you have to handle them. There were many things to consider. Why? Because they know you very well, and there is a tendency for them to undermine your authority. That is something you will encounter as a teacher-in-charge. When people say that managing schools, PTA, and parents is easy, it is not just that. Furthermore, if you have been in that place for a while, it is like you are well-acquainted with the community, the students, and the parents. They have already built their trust in you, and it is mainly with your teachers.*

#### **4.1.2 Advantages being a Teacher-In-Charge in Managing Schools**

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 ‘What are the advantages of being a teacher-in-charge in managing schools?’ under the 1<sup>st</sup> major research question ‘What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?’ The following themes served as results, which were: training ground, attending seminars, and take on management roles.

The results revealed highlights the professional development and skill-building aspect of these roles. Teachers-in-charge often have the opportunity to gain practical, hands-on experience in managing school affairs. They deal with real-world challenges, such as handling administrative tasks, resolving conflicts, and making decisions that impact the school's daily operations.

Informant 5 stated;

*If you aspire to become a school head someday, this experience will serve as your training ground. It provides you with valuable experience and the opportunity to take the principal's exam. Additionally, if you are a Teacher-In-Charge (TIC), you will have the chance to attend seminars and leadership trainings that can be beneficial for your promotion.*

Attending seminars allows teachers-in-charge to stay current with the latest educational trends, teaching methodologies, and management practices. This continuous learning ensures that they are well-informed and equipped to make informed decisions in their roles, informant 6 emphasized;

*The advantage of being a TIC is that you can participate in seminars and training programs typically reserved for school heads. These can be very helpful, especially in terms of school management.*

Assuming management roles allows teachers-in-charge to develop essential leadership skills. They learn to inspire and guide their team, set a vision, and make important decisions, fostering growth in their leadership abilities, informant 10 emphasized;

*One of the advantages of being a TIC is that you make decisions for the betterment of the school. You have the authority over everything, but you also have the responsibility, and you are held accountable for the outcomes. You are the decision-maker for the school. Additionally, as a TIC, you have the opportunity to attend seminars and training programs that can be beneficial for your career as a school leader.*

#### 4.1.3 Most Benefitting Part as Teacher-in-Charge

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.3 ‘What do you think is the most benefiting part as a teacher-in-charge in managing schools? Why?’ under the first major research question ‘What are the experiences of the teachers-in-charge in dealing with management in schools’ The themes which served as results, were stepping stone for higher position, being able to attend seminars, and leaving a legacy to the school.

#### 4.2 What challenges have the participants experienced in dealing with management in schools?

This section presents the results to the second major research question ‘What challenges have the participants experienced in dealing with management in schools?’ Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the challenges that the participants experienced in dealing with management in schools.

##### 4.2.1 Challenges Encountered in Dealing with Management in Schools

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 ‘What challenges have you encountered in dealing with management in schools?’ are presented in this section. The themes were: teachers’ attitude, problem with time management, and managing of various school concerns.

Participants revealed that this presents one of the significant challenges encountered by teacher-in-charge individuals when dealing with management in schools. Teachers often have established teaching methods and routines. Introducing new policies, curriculum changes, or management practices can meet resistance from those who are comfortable with the status quo. Teacher-in-charge must navigate this resistance while implementing necessary improvements.

Informant 3 had this to say;

*In my case, the most challenging part is dealing with fellow teachers who might feel like they are smarter or better than you. They may question your authority and even create factions, causing division within the teaching staff. This can lead to negative talk behind your back and challenging situations. However, with the help of God, I was able to resolve these issues and overcome these problems.*

##### 4.2.2 Most Difficult Part in Dealing with Management in Schools

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 ‘What do you think is the most difficult part in dealing with management in schools? Why?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn, decision-making and handling co-teachers.

It was revealed that it was a challenge of schools which have multifaceted environments with a wide array of issues to address, from curriculum choices and budget allocation to staff management and student needs. The high stakes associated with educational choices can create immense pressure and anxiety for decision-makers. Informant 1 noted;

*For me, it was the decision-making process that posed the greatest challenge, as a single poor decision made by the School Head could have devastating effects on the entire school. A wrong decision by the school head can significantly impact the institution. Consequently, a school administrator should carefully consider all available options, engage in discussions with the relevant stakeholders, seek input and innovative ideas from colleagues, and strive to find solutions that benefit everyone.*

##### 4.2.3 Disadvantages of being a Teacher-In-Charge

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 ‘What are the disadvantages of being a teacher-in-charge in dealing with management in schools?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, these themes were drawn: taking on dual roles, TICs always met with problems, and lack time to perform tasks.



Teacher-in-charge individuals often have a significantly heavier workload than their peers. They must balance their teaching responsibilities with administrative tasks, making it challenging to excel in either role. Also, managing both teaching and administrative duties leaves little time for personal life and professional development. This can lead to stress and burnout, affecting overall well-being. Informant 7 revealed:

*The disadvantage of being a Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) is that you still have teaching responsibilities. Afterward, there are reports and meetings to manage, along with purchasing and overseeing the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) side of things. You are the one who needs to handle these tasks, and you are the only one allowed to do so. This is a disadvantage because you are still a teacher and have to teach. You will also be responsible for preparing what other teachers are preparing, and as a school head, you have additional duties.*

#### **4.3 How do teachers-in-charge cope with the challenges in dealing with management in schools?**

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their coping mechanisms with the challenges as reading program implementers. This was the gist of the third major research question, 'How do teachers-in-charge cope with the challenges in dealing with management in schools?' Five specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

##### **4.3.1 Preparations in Dealing with Management in Schools**

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 3.1, 'How do teachers-in-charge cope with the challenges in dealing with management in schools?' The following were the themes: do planning, passion for the job, and study DepEd orders.

Planning allows teacher-in-charge individuals to make strategic decisions. They can set clear objectives, outline action steps, and make informed choices that align with the school's vision and goals. Informant 2 narrated;

*The first thing you need to do is establish your planning. In your planning, you have to include the Board of Directors and the teachers. This is the first step you should take to organize the school's policies and procedures.*

Additionally, A deep passion for the role of a teacher-in-charge serves as a powerful source of motivation and dedication. It fuels an individual's commitment to making a positive impact on the school community and the lives of students. Informant 3 narrated;

*You should also have the heart and passion for your job because without that, you will not be successful, and you will not be able to deal with parents. They are your partners in the school, and if you do not have a good relationship with them, you will not be able to implement projects. So, it is crucial to gain their trust.*

##### **4.3.2 Strategies Used in Dealing with Management in Schools**

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2, 'What strategies did you use in dealing with management in schools?' The following themes were created: collaboration with stakeholders, and open communication strategy.

Teacher-in-charge individuals foster collaboration by maintaining open and transparent communication with all stakeholders. They actively share information, updates, and decisions, ensuring that everyone is well-informed.

Informant 5 mentioned about collaboration strategy employed. She cited;

*Collaboration with the teachers, BODs (Board of Directors), and stakeholders is crucial. Most of the time, to ensure smooth operations at the school, you need to work closely with them. It is essential to seek their valuable ideas and opinions on what is best for the school.*

### 4.3.3 Solutions Employed on the Challenges Encountered

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.3, ‘What solutions have you employed on the challenges you encountered dealing with management in schools?’ the themes generated were establish good communication and transparency and collaborative discussion with teachers.

Informant 1 mentioned about the process of embracing challenges. Good communication and transparency can be instrumental in resolving time management issues. By openly addressing concerns related to workload and involving teachers in the decision-making process, teacher-in-charge individuals can work together to develop effective time-management strategies that help achieve a more balanced approach to handling both teaching and administrative responsibilities. She cited;

*It is essential to maintain open communication and positive relationships with your colleagues. When facing problems, seek input from everyone or someone you trust. They are often willing to offer assistance, especially when it is for the benefit of the school.*

### 4.3.4 People who Helped Cope with Challenges

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.4, ‘Who helped you in coping with challenges in dealing with management in schools?’ The theme generated was Co-teachers and PTA.

Co-teachers collaborate with the teacher-in-charge to effectively manage the classroom and share teaching responsibilities. This collaboration reduces the burden on the teacher-in-charge and ensures a more balanced workload. Moreover, the PTA represents the broader school community. They are actively involved in school activities, events, and decision-making processes, offering a community perspective on school management. Informant 6 explained; *Your colleagues, the teachers, should be your primary point of contact. Additionally, the involvement of the PTA and other stakeholders can be beneficial. If you cannot resolve things with the teachers, do not hesitate to engage the PTA. They are part of the community and might offer valuable ideas and solutions.*

### 4.3.5 Kinds of Assistance Sought

Presented in this section were the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.5, ‘What assistance did you seek to help you with the challenges in dealing with management in schools?’ the following themes were generated: technical assistance and ideas from other people.

Teacher-in-charge individuals may seek technical assistance to interpret and understand education policies, guidelines, and regulations set by the local education authority or government. This support ensures they remain in compliance with relevant policies. Guidance on curriculum design, alignment with educational standards, and instructional strategies is crucial. Technical experts can assist teacher-in-charge individuals in developing engaging and effective curriculum materials.

Informant 4 explained;

*I had a lot of support, especially in the technical aspect from my supervisors. They were very approachable and supportive, always willing to help and assist with school matters. They were just a chat away, and you should not be embarrassed to approach them because they were there to help you without any reservation. On the financial side, I received assistance from the PTA, the Barangay or Municipality, and other stakeholders we could approach. Sometimes it felt a bit uncomfortable, but we were determined to do whatever it took for the children*

## 4.4 What are the insights the participants gained from their experiences in dealing with management in schools?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights with the challenges of being reading program implementers. This was the gist of the fourth major research question, ‘What are the insights the participants gained from their experiences in dealing with management in schools?’ Five specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

#### 4.4.1 Ideas Informants Wanted to Share to other Teachers-in-charge

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 4.1, ‘What can you share to other teachers-in-charge in dealing with problems in management in schools?’ The generated themes were to be optimistic and to be firm.

Informants emphasize the importance of maintaining a positive outlook in the face of challenges. They stress that optimism can be contagious and set the tone for a more productive and harmonious school environment. Informant 5 stated;

*To my fellow Teacher-in-Charge (TIC), always maintained a positive mindset and attitude towards everyone. The job might have been stressful, and you might have been puzzled about what to prioritize, but always maintained that positive attitude that everything can be resolved. You could have the support of the Board of Directors (BOD) and the teachers if you built a good relationship with them.*

They also stress the need for consistency in making and implementing decisions. They advocate for being firm in the choices made, as it promotes fairness and predictability within the school community. Informant 3 stated;

*Be firm, and always be sincere in your work, with a dedicated heart. Without dedication and sincerity, everything will fail.*

#### 4.4.2 Pieces of Advice to other TICs Experiencing Management Challenges

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.2, ‘What advice will you give to other teachers-in-charge who experienced management challenges in schools?’ The themes were: handle challenges in sobriety and learn to be humble.

Informant 1 narrated her view about taking challenges lightly, she said;

*Do not let the challenges that arise stress you out; instead, handle them as a part of your leadership role in the school. Life teaches us to navigate through challenges every day, wherever we are, and we can learn from our mistakes.*

Informant 4 narrated her view about being humble, she said;

*You should start with yourself, do not be too absorbed with your position. Do not demand excessive respect, and learn to listen and accept your mistakes. Be willing to humble yourself and apologize, especially when you are at fault. We should not be self-centered. It is important to be able to adapt to the situation, especially when dealing with teachers facing problems or in difficult conditions.*

#### 4.4.3 Recommendations for DepEd Authorities Regarding TICs Management in Schools

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 4.3, ‘What recommendation will you give to the DepEd authorities regarding the teachers-in-charge management in schools?’ This was the theme drawn from the responses: additional cash incentives and reduce TICs teaching loads.

Recommendations for the Department of Education (DepEd) authorities regarding additional cash incentives for Teacher-in-Charge (TICs) in school management aim to acknowledge and incentivize the extra responsibilities and challenges these educators face. DepEd authorities should officially recognize and appreciate the additional workload and responsibilities carried by TICs in managing schools. This recognition is a crucial step in understanding the need for additional incentives. Informant 5 mentioned;

*I hope that the hard work of TICs can be compensated more fairly since they are performing a dual role – teaching and managing administrative tasks. This is often even more work than that of a full school head. I also wish that there will be plans to provide incentives for TICs.*

This is also supported by informant 10, he said;

*I hope that they can recognize the efforts of all TICs and acknowledge the challenges of their work. Our salaries are determined by our positions, so if you are a Teacher I, you are paid as such even though the workload can be overwhelming. I hope they can give more consideration to this.*

#### **4.4.4 Suggestions to Help TICs Improve Management in Schools.**

The themes in this section were from the responses to specific question 4.4, ‘What suggestions can you give to help teachers-in-charge improve management in schools?’ The theme was: get more trainings and seminars.

Getting additional training and attending seminars is a fundamental aspect of professional development. It allows TICs to continually enhance their knowledge and skills in educational leadership and management. This was echoed by Informant 1:

*Get more trainings and attend more seminars to help school heads become better leaders; in addition, work toward a master's or doctoral degree because school heads need to be one level above their teachers. The last step is to read more DepEd orders so that you have a foundation for implementing the school.*

#### **4.4.5 Hopes and Aspirations as TIC**

The theme in this section was from the responses to specific question 4.5, ‘What are your hopes and aspirations as a teacher-in-charge in dealing with problems in management in schools?’ This was the last specific research question for the 4<sup>th</sup> main research question. The themes were: be promoted as full-pledge school head and to become an effective school head.

The hope and aspiration of being promoted as a full-fledged school head is a significant career goal for many Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) individuals. TICs aspire to have a more significant impact on their school and its educational outcomes. They hope that by becoming a full-fledged school head, they can lead with a broader vision and create positive changes in the school community. Informant 3 stated;

*My aspiration is to be promoted as a full-fledged school head, where I can be relieved of teaching loads and focus more on administrative tasks. This will allow me to allocate more time and effort to improve the school's overall well-being.*

The participants' experiences as Teachers-in-Charge with issues related to school administration include working with teachers, being a school head is not an easy job, and being extremely stressed at initially due to deadlines and other issues. Due to a lot of roles TICs assume in administration, making deadlines is one of the major causes of stress. This finding agrees with Brown and Williams' study (2018) that underscored the significance of time management skills for school administrators. Other unexpected aspects like dealing with disciplinary cases, attending to parents' issues among others can add up to this burden making things worse for them.

The challenges encountered by the participants emerged from the teachers' attitudes, time management issues and how they handle several school related problems. According to Anderson and Martin (2016) research, some teachers may challenge or doubt about the authority of TICs when the latter go up from being peers to leadership roles. These divergent viewpoints can lead to conflicts and make it difficult for new rules or changes to be executed within a school setting.

In order to address or cope with the challenges in dealing with management in schools, TICs should impose open communication strategy and stakeholder collaboration to maintain a harmonious environment in the school. According to Brown & Robinson (2019), collaboration requires strong leaders who embrace open communication, active participation, and clear responsibilities for each group. Moreover, TICs ought to familiarize DepEd orders, plan



ahead and demonstrate love for the work. Adequate planning makes the structure of an organized and effective approach to school leadership which permits TICs to pre-manage many of the specific issues that could arise in their managerial capacity (Smith & Robinson, 2019).

## 5. CONCLUSION

These comprehensive findings are critical in advancing new insights on different school management issues and the functions of Teachers-in-Charge (TICs) in education. The implications of these findings for the way in which we learn are potentially huge. Most important of all is we must invest our resources in supporting the effectiveness and well-being of school leaders. Mentorship/onboarding programs and time management/planning skills, communication/conflict resolution training in leadership development programs should be included in future practices. The demanding role of the school principal warrants the requirement to highlight the importance of promoting work-life balance, stress release, and the provision of Principal wellbeing services. In addition, school leaders need access to professional development and networks of support among their peers to keep up to date with current best practices in education and to maintain a network in a community committed to their success.

The benefits of a TIC require us to drive a holistic approach to leadership and professional growth as well as a career pathway that incorporates formal experience and related mentorship. Universities must deliver career path and clearly tell our TICs the exact steps they need to follow in order to climb the ladder to higher senior leadership positions. Future practices should emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development; provide assistance to accompany them as they leave the TIC and develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to school reform. Overall school management needed professional development programs, but also technology-based solutions and systematic routine outputs that engage stakeholders, overcoming specific teacher attitudes and time management problems.

However, challenges related to managing co-teachers and decision making require very specific strategies (e.g., mentoring & data-informed decision-making training). These included revisiting job descriptions; giving TICs the power to prioritize work; and, in the case of time and workload constraints, looking for ways to lighten the load. At the same time, planning initiatives and regulatory updates serve as a reminder of the ways in which a focus on a "culture of inquiry," driven by passion for educational leadership and trends and a commitment to ongoing regulatory research are so important and valid in our field. It is essential to emphasize the stakeholder's involvement in the strategies and to be open and transparent in communication efforts. Schools of the future must actively promote a culture of shared decision-making and collaboration and establish trust to allow for increased opportunities for achievement. Taken together, the findings of the study provide a path to improve well-being and educational practices, within a more caring and collaborative environment for the teachers, the schools, and the learners.

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