A Race Against Time: Understanding and Exploration of Teacher Time and Workload

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Abstract— This research study employed a Phenomenological Research Design to identify and explore the duties encompassed in the workday of a college teacher. This study was anchored on the following theories: Wickens' Multiple Resources Theory, Juran's 80/20 Theory and Parkinson's Law. From the data analyses and upon utilization of a semi-structured interview and subsequent implementation of the Colaizzi Process, three major themes emerged: (1) Chrono-Juggling; (2) Impact and Sacrifices; and (3) Finding Inspiration and Inducement. The result showed that these teachers experienced a difficult time balancing roles inside and outside the school. They commonly end up spending most of their time at schools and related activities sacrificing personal moments. It is recommended that the institution should provide support and development program for the college teachers especially in areas that provides options that balance personal and professional time.

Keywords— Teacher Time Study, Work-Life Balance, Time Management, Personal Time, Professional Duty

I.   INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic change in conditions of work, time is a commodity one cannot afford to waste. It has been subjected to countless researches and scientific analyses. Deficiency in time, specially its elements namely, rapidity, irreversibility and compression are in the center of most studies. In real life, once cannot make up for lost time nor history having no subjunctive mood [1]. An effective time-management can be developed to use it efficiently and operate it accordingly.

Teachers are known to have a vibrant work pattern compared to other professions. They assign and give grades to assignments, create lesson plans, and other tasks that require practicality and flexibility [2]. Teachers are also tied to traditional academic year, that starts from June and ends in March, with expected extension till summer.

Time management is a skill that requires efficient usage of time for task performance [3][4]. It is man's conscious control over the amount of time spent on particular tasks which then produces an increase in efficiency and product quality. Teachers need to learn how to properly use time in relation to prioritization [5][6]. Do they start with a simple task and works in progression or is it the other way around?

Controlling time not only means working around it but also incorporating methods, tools, techniques and processes involve in its utilization. Planning for time, or life in general means consideration for both personal and group needs and wants [7]. Considerations necessary not only to fully grapple the time, but is rooted to a more complex network of intra- and interpersonal relationships.

Employees raised the concerns of not being able to submit grades on time, having lesser time for personal engagements in turn affecting the scholarships of other students and the overall workflow of all departments. Teachers are expected to productively utilize time and prioritize work to improve quality of service. But with the question remains, what constitute a teacher's day? Does a teacher prioritize teaching-related duties or gives more emphasis to nonteaching-related activities? Is there a prioritization happening with basis to their tasks? These queries made me delve on the topic of time utilization of college teachers and how are they managing with the demands of their personal and professional endeavours.
Finally, there is a need to look closely into the duties, both teaching and non-teaching duties, and determine the percentage of the day dedicated for each duties among public school teacher. The present study is, in the sense, a means by which the researchers responded to the intention to look closely into the work time distribution and workload prioritization by exploring the experiences of public school teachers for School Year 2019 – 2020, hence the conduct of the study.

II.   OBJECTIVES

With its main objective of exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of public-school teachers in the context of proper time management and handling

workload, this study would like to answer the following questions;
1. What are experiences of the participants;
2. What is their perception about the quality of time spent inside and outside the school; and
3. What are their aspirations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This qualitative study, was anchored on Wickens' Multiple Resources Theory, Juran's 80/20 Theory and Parkinson's Law, utilized phenomenological approach that aimed to investigate the experience of public school teachers - how their professional time as well as personal engagements intertwine and coexist with each other. A qualitative research study aimed to examine a phenomenon that impact on the lived reality of individuals or groups in a particular cultural or social context [8][9][10]. A qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem [11]. The researcher builds a complicated and holistic picture, analyse words, report comprehensive takes of participants, and does it in situ. Phenomenology aimed to accurately describe the phenomenon without a pre-existing knowledge to a framework, but remaining truth to the facts [12][13][14][15]. More so, using a qualitative research, the researcher would able to connect with their participants and to see the world from their viewpoints [16]. The researcher found this method most suitable to the inquiry in order to provide a comprehensive analysis on the school teachers' life experiences.

Participants and Sampling. Purposive sampling was used to identify the study's participants. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select people who are appropriate for the study [17]. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience [18]. Ten (10) individuals took part in the study. Participants met the description of a career changer: 1) a public school teacher; 2) currently employed; 3) a resident of Calbayog city; and 4) willing to participate in the study.

Data Collection. In gathering the appropriate data for the study, semi structured interview was used. Semi-structured interview is a type of interview that has become the most familiar strategy in collecting qualitative data [19][20][21]. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research approach that combines a prepared set of open questions with the opportunity for researchers to dig deeper into specific responses; it's used to figure out how interventions work and how they might be improved. It also enables for clarification by asking follow-up questions. Two experts in the field of psychology validated the content of the interview guide. The researcher also offered an agreement that covered gaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, making time and location commitments, granting authorization to record, and outlining research

ethical principles. The researcher employed note taking and dialogic form as data storage strategies. To each deeper response of the respondents.

Data Analysis. The Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis is illustrated in the following steps. (1) Each transcript should be read and reread several times to get a general idea of the material. (2) Significant statements on the topic under investigation should be taken from each transcript. These assertions must be written down on a separate sheet with page and line numbers. (3) From these crucial statements, meaning should be derived. (4) Sort the formulated meanings into categories, clusters of themes, and subthemes. (5) The study's findings should be incorporated into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation. (6) The phenomenon's essential structure should be described. (7) Finally, study participants should be asked to validate the findings by comparing the researcher's descriptive results to their own experiences.

Research Reflexivity. In the study, the researches' approach is different in terms of other researchers' perspectives. As persons who know the life of a public school teacher and their aspiration, the researcher understands his stand that might lead to a different development and an equally valid understanding of the particular situation under study. The study has a preconception with a tone of positivity of eventually creating meaning during the entire process. The position and the background of the researcher will affect the choices made in the investigation, from an angle, with the methods that best judged the sole purpose of the study, framing, coming up with themes and the overall conclusion of it. With the intent of sharing the results to the participants of the study. Furthermore, preconception is not equated in any form of bias unless the researcher fails to mention them [23].

Ethical Consideration. The study focused on public school teachers' life experiences, their self-regard and aspirations. Therefore, the ethical considerations centered around the situations depicted solely from participants' experiences, interactions and actions observed. The issues of theoretical, theological, situational, critical and covenantal situational approach to research ethics were irrelevant to the overall study [24][25][26]. If literal transcriptions and summary were used in the narratives.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Significant information on the current experience of public school teachers were generated on the premise of work-life balance – how the two clashes or compliment with each other. Current knowledge on public school scenarios, potential of exploring other means of coping and finding inspiration were noted. The generated information can help in establishing not only springboard for subsequent research but also a platform for the public school teachers feeling the demand for proper time-management.

From the data analyses with implementation of the Colaizzi Process, three major themes emerged: (1) Chrono-Juggling; (2) Impact and Sacrifices; and (3) Finding Inspiration and Inducement.

Chrono-Juggling
Almost all of the participants had encountered episodes of balancing time and workload with their personal lives. Often times, they end up working late into the night just to complete a task required from them or prepare an activity due the following day with little to no grace period given. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

❖ "Since I started to work as a teacher, I always late with no overtime pay."
❖ "I am often given last minute instructions for an activity due the following day, sometimes I wish I have magic powers to instantly give them what they want."
❖ "Lesson planning is one thing, but with other activities and requirements given, I only hope that I can split myself into two."
❖ "To be honest, I spend more time attending seminars and trainings that I rarely get to meet my students."
❖ "We are bombarded with so much tasks already, but still they insist requiring us to attend more trainings, are we teachers or just trainees?"
❖ "I will be lucky if I can go out 5 PM, but it is hard for me complete everything within 8 hours as they like to add more tasks into our routine."
❖ "They keep saying to manage our time wisely, but they keep adding more tasks and requirements."

4.2. Impact and Sacrifices
Most of the participants admitted that the experience of managing time and workload had resulted to undersirable consequences to their personal engagements. The impact was so great that sometimes certain sacrifices had to be made. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

❖ "I was working all day long that I forgot the importance of making time for your wife in the process, now I am living alone since she left me for another man."
❖ "I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer, my oncologist told me that it was from stress and lack of sleep since I have no family history of the disease and was into detrimental diets."
❖ "I remember that I asked to report on a weekend, despite my plee of staying with my sick mother, still they insist that I should report, let us just say I lost an important family member at that time."
❖ "I missed important events of my family, even missing the wedding of my daughter which really hurts me the most."
❖ "For a considerable amount of days, I was asked to work late with overtime pay, I get to keep my work after but no overtime pay, free labor."
❖ "I was rushed to the hospital due to exhaustion and dehydration, I was required to participate in the dance presentation despite my protest since I worked late nights prior."
❖ "Even though I am feeling under the weather, I was required to report on the weekend and sad to say I went straight to the emergency room after."

4.3. Finding Inspiration and Inducement
Most of the participants were optimistic of the situation they in, that they feel that they are being prepared for something greater. They find it as a form of a training for them to be more efficient in their craft and how they organize activities. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

❖ "I am feeling positive that such hardships in managing my time is just an opportunity for me to improve."
❖ "I believe that these challenges are happening to make me efficient, since time management is important in our line of work."
❖ "I just see it as a form of training, we learn best through experience."
❖ "I am blessed to have this work and managing my time and workload is all part of my responsibility."
❖ "I admit that it is tough to be a teacher, but if you only focus on the problems on time and workload then you are truly limited."
❖ "The rewards from gained from the experience of being a teacher outweighs whatever problem we have in terms of workload and proper time allocation."
❖ "It will all be incorporated to our normal routine after getting used to it that time will not be an issue anymore."

Teacher time management and workload allocation is a topic that had seen various researches application over the past few years. To get into a personal level, exploration of experiences and aspirations of public school teachers in terms time and workload management.

As it was revealed in the study, public school teachers have a hard time balancing their time inside and outside of the school [27]. Challenges often spring from the difficulty of focusing on one task as they are bombarded with responsibilities and requirements. Abrupt task delegation also prove to be a problem for them as they lack time to make preparations and gather necessary documents for the same [28]. Furthermore, they are feel that they are not compensated properly for the amount of work they make. Proper compensation contributes to the motivation of the teacher, making them work on a faster pace and manage time wisely [29][30].

Sacrifices are bound to be made if time management is the main concern. Various experiences and testimonies made by the respondents illustrated just how hard the life of a public school teacher is [31]. With the need to get things done and address their requirements, they often forego their personal time or their personal experience with their family, sometimes missing out important milestones in the process. [32] If that task are too great that it eat outs most of

their time, they often surrender their precious moments reserved for themselves or spend it with some close to them to create meaningful memories.

Despite having such negative experience, they strive to make a living and make ends meet. They see it as an opportunity to learn, to be motivated, to be inspired and to improve themselves [33]. Eventually, they psyche themselves to make the situation as part of their norms (Bubb & Earley, 2004; Philipp & Kunter, 2013; Timperley & Robinson, 2000). When one is eager enough to strive more in life, they see situations of time and workload balance as their way of helping themselves never give up and slowly incorporating the activity as part of their daily routine.

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