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TEACHER'S WORKLOAD INTENSIFICATION: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TEACHING QUALITY

Research Article

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TEACHER'S WORKLOAD INTENSIFICATION: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TEACHING QUALITY

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Abstract

Educative process relies on the active interrelation of teacher, student, and learning environment. But it is the teacher who has the control over the two elements and professionally exposed to different challenges including workload intensification. Such educational problem has become one of the major foci of educational researchers since the last half of the 20th century due to the evolution of teaching-learning and education in general. This paper was approached using Apple's original thesis of workload intensification and the three refinements formulated by Ballet & Kelchtermans, namely: there are multiple sources of intensification, the intensification impact is mediated, and the intensification impact is differentiated. The study aims to better understand the nature of intensification and its underlying impact on the teaching quality of a teacher in qualitative terms.

Keywords: workload intensification; Apple; teaching quality; Ballet & Kelchtermans

1. Introduction

Professional education requisitely describes teachers to be flexible and acquiescent since their duties are not only constricted within the classroom or school premises, but they are also expected to perform some outside classroom duties in the community. These responsibilities conform to their oath or solemn promise before the state which assigns them to undertake any form of onuses. These assume that, as a teacher, you must do your best to carry the tasks assigned and given to you by the higher authorities and other sources. Teaching the learners with the necessary knowledge and competencies for life's survival and understanding of the world is one of the common views of the general public concerning the duties of teachers in society. Despite the lack of a clear definition of what teaching quality is, Henard & Leprince-Ringuet (2008) argued that quality teaching is necessarily a student-centered. Attention should be given to the 'teacher's pedagogical skills' and the 'learning environment that addresses students' needs'.

Moreover, apart from this shared understanding, teachers also face some evident and hidden tasks and activities that must be finished within a given time. Teachers are overworked and stressed due to this hidden work that exists and a real fact experience (Dibbon, 2004), indeed, teachers are preoccupied and overloaded with duties and responsibilities whether it is teaching and non-teaching related tasks. Some of these are taxing and demanding which compel several teachers to bring and finish it at home (Tancinco, 2016). From a global perspective, Sugden (2010) affirmed that most of the teachers' workloads are increasing in numbers, non-teaching assignments are now extensive in amount, and sometimes designated with a particular work in which they are not well-honed. Such examples are the numerous meetings, seminars, conferences, administrative or school paper works, community extension services, and sports events that require the participation and presence of educators.

However, a problem arises when the intensified teacher's workloads affect the core principle of the teaching profession, namely providing quality teaching and education and attending to

the needs of learners. Apple (1986), a professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, previously advanced an antithesis of workload intensification, the idea that teachers are now in the period of becoming deskilled and losing autonomy over their job. In basic terms, the teacher's job description is reconceptualized and shaped into a "simpler and atomistic components, the separation of conception from execution" (p. 157) as a result of economic pressures from policymakers interpreted as a mark of an efficient and effective job. Hirsch (1988) clearly described this development when:

Management slowly takes over control of how a task is performed and over the judgment concerning what acceptable performance of that task happens to be. The result is usually loss of control by the worker, as well as lower pay and routinization of the job as it becomes boring and alienating since the worker/teacher no longer has control over conceptualization and execution but is reduced to doing what they are told by the state or administrators. As this process accelerates, teachers lose their incentive and their jobs are redefined by outside forces. (p. 276).

Teachers' intensified workloads pose two possible corollaries: 1.) new duty will replace the old task compromising the latter and 2.) new task gets added on the list of teacher's works that need to be accomplished. According to Hargreaves (1992), intensification reduces the quality of services including teacher's duty to provide quality of education. In his study, Chirimi (2016) found out that teaching-learning effectiveness experiences a direct impact from teacher's workloads. This happens when too many duties and activities are designated to a teacher that cannot be complied anymore which mostly results in attenuation in time in which the former could use instead to teach her learners.

The Philippine educational system is not far from this reality. The country is composed of more than 800,000 public professional teachers (Rey, 2018). Though it is mandated under Magna Carta for Public School Teachers that educators should only have a maximum of six hours of actual classroom instruction per day, several administrative duties are assigned to every teacher – "a situation that while hidden from view of the normal metrics can erode teaching quality" (David et.al., 2019, p. 1). Training and community services, as examples of teachers' workloads, are indubitably significant and a great help for the personal and professional improvement of the teachers, however, "it is essential for educational policymakers to create strategies to better support and compensate teachers who are faced with this workload intensification triggers to help create an appropriate balance between work input and what they receive from work to prevent teachers leaving the profession as well as to maintain the best education possible for students" (Warren, 2018, p. 103).

Though this might be the case, however, Ballet & Kelchtermans (2006) did not completely take such approach; instead, they proposed three major refinements for Apple's 'workload intensification thesis: 1.) the experience of intensification comes from different sources not only from the macro-level; 2.) the impact of intensification is mediated, and 3.) the impact of intensification varies among teachers. Hence, contrary to the original theory, workload intensification is not a single, all-inclusive, deterministic development (Woods, 1999), but a multifaceted practice that inspires for a more comprehensive examination.

Given the aforesaid empirical and theoretical data, it confronted the researcher to look for an in-depth analysis of the problem. The study was approached under the original and modified description of Apple's thesis for a systematic and thorough understanding of the case on how the quality of teaching is shaped by workload intensification or excessive tasks from the professional viewpoint and experiences of an elementary public school teacher. The researcher

chose the said participant to be the subject of the study since there are inadequate support and administrative staff in public schools than in private schools related to intensified workloads of teachers that affect their teaching performance (David et.al., 2019). Moreover, even though prior studies discussed the certain outcome of intensified workloads of teachers, the researcher focused more on the specific and detailed results instead of a broad generalization. Henceforward, this paper is an imperative product of research both for teachers and higher education bodies to ensure the symmetry or balance of providing excellence and effective instruction to students and developing the skills and competencies of our teachers in a form of teaching and non-teaching duties.

2. Literature Review

The beginning of the 21st century was characterized by an ongoing educational search and inquiry for a total understanding of the intensification of teachers' workloads and their connection to the teaching quality and performance of teachers. Within the educational range, workload intensification is not a new concept. It is generally described wherein teachers have *too much to do* and *not enough space* to practice teaching as considered by teachers to be a valuable activity (Wiebe & MacDonald, 2014 as cited in Beck, 2017; emphasis original). In a more detailed description, for Penrice (2011), intensification of teacher's work exists in three areas: a.) increase in the number of tasks an employee must perform; b.) an increase in accountability demands within the classroom and c.) increase in demands on teacher's responsibilities outside of the classroom.

Many scholars and educators believe that this kind of practice posits some direct and precise implications towards the core objective of education – “to provide and promote effective and efficient instruction to students which lie at the hand of educators.” A classical theoretical framework example was Apple's (1986) *workload intensification thesis*. He argued that teachers are becoming preoccupied with different works and duties from policymakers and societal expectations. Regulation and control are part of resolving the problem of incompetence and inefficiency among teachers. Accordingly, such reforms are enacted to set out precisely what teachers should do and for how long (Maguire, 2002). While Ballet & Kelchtermans (2009) recapitulated Apple's thesis as:

‘Intensification’ of the teaching profession...coincides with growing external pressure, due to the fact that teachers must perform an increasing number of (imposed) tasks for which they have insufficient time and resources. This restricts the teachers' opportunities for creativity in the classroom and for the development of collegial relationships, and affects their private lives. The shift is emotionally taxing for teachers and can lead to a chronic sense of work overload, both during school hours and beyond. In addition, it may result in “de-skilling”: the loss of certain professional skills due to their decreased importance on the one hand, and the increase of routine, often administrative, work-related tasks on the other hand. (p. 1151).

Nevertheless, Ballet & Kelchtermans (2006) sought to make some modifications and alternatives of the theory for thoughtful consideration of the case. Based on their revised version, intensification was seen as a multisource concept, namely, other factors aside from a bureaucratic ladder and assumptions could cause intensification on teachers. Teachers themselves could be a source of intensification: they imposed high pedagogical and personal standards and strive for perfection in teaching. Either the impact of intensification is automatic or otherwise, they suggest that it must be mediated by the teacher. Dilemmas from diverse views on the best interest of the learners and effective form of teaching compelled teachers to “mediate between conflicting private and public interests, including those about personal,

professional, organizational, and societal values” (Tirri & Husu, 2002, p. 78). Ballet & Kelchtermans (2009) coined the term “experience of intensification” to show that the call for change for the identified excessive or intensified workload is connected or it reflects from the professional self or identity of a teacher if her relationship and duty to her students (doing justice to the children’s educational needs) is at stake, doing otherwise would imply that teacher’s professionalism might be put on trial and the feeling that they are letting their students down.

Several researchers underline the importance of moral and personal reflection not only for teachers but also for other stakeholders of education. Kelchtermans & Hamilton (2004), for instance, point out:

A deeper understanding of the moral dilemmas, of the tension between individual normative beliefs about good teaching and the possibly different views from others (parents, colleagues), as well as the development of a “moral language” constitutes a crucial agenda for self-study that aims at contributing to teachers’ development and a pedagogy of teaching. (pp. 795-796).

Likewise, the impact of intensification is different among teachers contrary to the conventional belief that it is entirely negative. Teachers are not passive recipients of these changes; they could, however, cope with it proactively through interpretation and negotiation (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2006).

With these in mind, understanding workload intensification veered immediately into a teacher-dependent notion. Teachers’ workload intensification is not the same everywhere, as a result, one should look to a wider spectrum to understand more fully this educational phenomenon (Fitzgerald et.al., 2018). Others might have administrative loads with a negative implication; duties and pressures from society and school in which teacher could reflect on and, thus, decline some of it resulting to a more positive teaching activity; and/or a multisource scenario wherein its impact is subject on how someone responds to it. In other words, different researches could offer different results and findings.

Kyung-Nyun (2019) stressed that public school teachers who are susceptible to bureaucratic control may be more concerned about administrative work which could affect teaching activities than those in private schools. His study proves the assertion that with administrative works obstructs the time for instructional activity and reducing these imposed duties is a prerequisite for a teacher to be fully committed in teaching. Interestingly, “only teachers in public schools are likely to consider their administrative workload to be equivalent to class instruction preparation” (p. 16). The interference of management from the bureaucratic ladder makes someone deskilled (or loses control over their job) and the skills that they have practiced throughout his career atrophy (Apple & Jungck, 1990). Teachers may feel pressured to attend to these demands that may construe as inappropriate (Maguire, 2010).

However, workload intensification in education which broadened and deepened the duties of teachers (OECD, 2006) is, by a contemporary understanding, a product of the educational reforms of developed and developing countries (Stevenson, 2007). Given the effective implementation of these policies, or assessment policies, in particular, it may result to a plethora of workload and could unknowingly affect teachers’ performance since they would situate most of their time in evaluating and implementing these policies. What is more, Lingam et.al. (2017) argued that if teachers are flooded with work while their human capital development is disregarded, it is more likely to experience a negative implication on the quality of school work.

Effective teaching is unquestionably necessary and vital in education since it assists student learning and achievement (Chirimi, 2016). The academic performance of students throughout the educative process reflects those of the teaching instruction of teachers inside the classroom environment. Further, the modern educational principle holds that teachers should be a facilitator of learning that sustains education as an avenue for total or partial comprehension of human and world's complexities; however, because of workload allocation, it impedes teacher's time management and related activities. In their separate studies, Tancinco (2016) and Wakoli (2016) declared that workload intensification decreases teacher's overall efficiency. Their research findings revealed that the relationship between intensified duties and job performance happens to be positively high. Most of the respondents claimed that overloading or intensification of work made them inefficient inside the classroom and affects the time to supervise and advise their students as well as to prepare the teaching materials of the day. The Alberta Teachers' Association (2012) drew a similar conclusion:

The work of teachers is highly complex and involves a wide range of tasks. As a result, teachers often multitask during the workday, a situation that sometimes prevents them from focusing on such higher-order activities as planning, engaging in professional development, and reflecting on their practice, activities that would almost certainly improve their effectiveness as teachers over the long term. (p. 11).

Likewise, intensified workloads add some pressure on teacher's effectiveness and leave minute time on how to meet up the major teaching duties such as designing class discussion or giving feedback to students (Lopez, 2017). An increase of workloads from policymakers often resulted in teachers' burnout. For Ozdemir (2007), it is the feelings of powerlessness and lack of enthusiasm in teaching and making the school a pleasant environment. Thus, the quality of classroom teaching is unfavorably influenced by huge workloads and becomes, in some degree, the focus of *parental complaints* on account that educator does not have anymore the time and freedom to teach the students (PPTA, 2016). The worst case of this is when the parents pressure and give up the whole burden of educating the learner to teachers and if their children failed they would protest and even criticize the performance of teachers. Yet Sugden (2010) made a piece of cautionary advice:

...accountability is *not* only a responsibility of the teacher; there must be accountability on the part of all the stakeholders in education... All of the stakeholders in this education community have a role to play; any imbalance or failure on the part of any member of this community to act responsibly has ramifications for the future of society. (p. 144; emphasis added).

Nonetheless, Ilyassova (2018) procured different results from her case study. Workload intensification *does not* primarily originate within the *bureaucratic ladder* or *top-down model*, rather it comes from different factors or sources (e.g. requirements of the profession, a state program, from parents, and teachers themselves), and though it leads to some negative outcome like high emotional stress and feeling of tiredness that hamper the teachers' capability to teach, it also offers an expedient experience for teachers particularly on one's professional growth and development. Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) seem to agree with the second claim but not with the first one when they averred that the *top-down reform* such as newly implemented curricular principles and pedagogic principles and strategies encourage teachers to be creative and make some progressive practices. Researchers like Hargreaves (1994) contended and negated the categorization of several authors about the intensification of teacher's workload as *de-professionalization* and *deskilling*, such idea is a theoretically presumptuous' position (that tends to provide a broad generalization). Whereas for Gewirtz (1997), the labor process of

teaching has always been intense and the new educational changes in this age happens to assign a large number of tasks to teachers than in the past (as cited in Fitzgerald et.al., 2018). Visiting and questioning the uses and impact of institutionalized standards (or educational reforms) will help unmask the *unintended effects* on the quality of education and performance of teachers (Tuinamuana, 2011). Beck (2017) was even clear about this:

If we are to fully understand and effectively support teachers in their work, we *first* need to understand their experiences from their *perspective*. We need spaces in which cover stories can be shed, and that ever-evolving space between the ideal teacher in mind and the lived and often contradictory experiences of teaching might be explored and deeply attended. (p. 633; emphasis added).

Prior studies addressed the same focus of the current research using different designs and methods such as case study and survey or interview, respectively. Yet, they differ in conclusions on the three distinct and interconnected features of workload intensification based on the theoretical framework used: a.) the source of workload intensification whether it comes from interactive factors or top-down model; b.) the extent of implications of intensification on teacher's quality of teaching, and c.) the antiphon of teachers towards the excessive duties and works. While some of these related researches utilized the same approach- case study, most of them were conducted outside the country that is why the researcher sought after the issue within the Philippine condition through a systematic analysis. The study presented a new way of understanding the problem and attempted to unite the conflicting ideas of erstwhile studies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The central point of the researcher in studying the problem was to get a deeper insight into the implications and repercussions of workload intensification on the teaching quality and performance of a public elementary teacher from its natural setting rather than a contrived situation. Hence, the entire paper was approached out of a qualitative instrumental case study. For Skate (2005), who defined the term more explicitly, an instrumental case study is used when a particular case “is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is looked at in-depth, contexts scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps to pursue the external interest.” (p. 445). Under this type of case study, its methods draw the researcher towards exemplifying how researchers and theorists' (or the utilized theoretical framework) concerns is observed in the case.

3.2 Research Instruments

For a qualitative and in-depth interpretation, the researcher utilized a questionnaire, open-ended semi-structured interview (face-to-face), and informal discussion. A research questionnaire was given wherein the teacher was asked about her professional background, teaching experience, designations at school for the objective application of purposeful sampling, and followed by a semi-structured interview in which the interviewer and participant engage in formal dialogue (RWJF, 2008). Under this type of interview, the researcher prepared an ‘interview guide’ consists of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation. Providentially, employing such a research method offers reliable and comparable qualitative data via recording and transcription of participant's answers. Few days after the interview, an informal discussion was held to freely express the view of the teacher, without any format or guideline, in performing different duties both teaching and non-teaching related tasks, and regardless of the informality, the researcher wrote down the main points from the discussion for the enrichment of case analysis.

3.3 Participant

Professionals from the public sector are more vulnerable to work-life imbalance and stress. In particular, women are more negatively impacted by high work intensity (Le Fevere et. al., 2015). Thus, a female public elementary master teacher of the Samar Division served as the participant and main source of data for the entire case. She has been in the service for almost three years and since then she was assigned to several workloads including ESP coordinator, feeding coordinator, EBEIS coordinator, assistant ICT coordinator, early registration coordinator, chief of communication cluster, school table tennis coach, GPTA secretary, a previous multi-grade teacher from Grade 1 to 6 but still teaching AP classes (now she is teaching a Kindergarten class), and attended nearly thirty meetings and seminars. Being the younger faculty of the school, she is sometimes asked to undertake some paper works of the school and even the assignments of her colleagues.

3.4 Sampling Technique

In identifying the participant of the study, the researcher used purposive sampling wherein the informant was intentionally selected based on her ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), the following guidelines are useful in selecting a participant/s purposively: 1) knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied; 2) willing to talk, and 3) can cover a range of points of view. Indeed, based on the participant's background, it is clear that the subject of the study met the criteria that can provide ample thoughts on the case.

3.5 Method of Analysis

After gathering the data using a questionnaire, interview, and informal discussion with the participant, a thematic analysis was employed by the researcher for data interpretation. Thematic analysis, as defined by Neuendorf (2019), is a qualitative study in drawing out themes through an inductive approach derived from the interview and helps developed a new interpretation of the problem. A systematic and six phases of thematic analysis was well-observed: familiarization with collected data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing the themes; defining and naming themes; and presenting and discussing results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Repeated readings were done in discerning the most significant categories and features that helped the researcher in breaking into specific domains the general statements and responses of the participant.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Findings

Teacher's responses from the questionnaire, interview, and informal discussion present a notable and remarkable insight concerning workload intensification in education. It was revealed that most of the loads or duties designated to her were *teaching-related*. Before assigning to a particular load, according to the participant, their superior informed them first. In her case, there is an intensification of teacher's work but not the maximum and most extreme examples wherein the teacher is handling too many assignments like fifteen works and so. Some of these [responsibilities] were not aligned with the level (Kindergarten) that she has been teaching and in other cases, there are duplications of tasks within an academic year (for instance, meetings that have the same theme or emphasis). Apparently, as a faculty of the institution, she always accepts the loads given by the Teacher-in-Charge of the school because, as she pointed out:

“Kumu usa nga maestra, usa hit aton katungdanan ug obligasyon an sundun an mga patakaran han mas nakalalabaw para makab-ut naton an kaupayan ha

aton propesyon” [As a professional teacher, it is one of our duties and responsibilities to follow or do the tasks assigned to us by our superiors to fulfill and achieve success in our field.]

Moreover, the intensification of teacher’s working loads also comes from other sources. Parents pressure and put *solely* the burden of educating the students to the teacher considering that they have also a parental teaching duty to their children. In accordance with the reality of her professional experiences, the participant candidly recognizes the underlying consequences of workload intensification in teaching primarily in the delivery of excellent and quality instruction to the students. Similarly, these workloads principally the outside classroom duties require the immediate action of the participant to the extent that she experiences a lack of time in preparing the necessary instructional materials of the day and spends most of her schedule working on each of the task instead of being a teacher inside the classroom. Sometimes, she even brings the works at home and finishes it until midnight for compliance despite that her health is at risk.

Contrariwise, some teaching aspects do not seem to be receptive to the negative effects of workload intensification. Teaching conditions including lesson planning, classroom renovation, mastery of the subject matter, and a good personality are not affected by the undertakings of the participant. She further claimed that it is possible and typical that other facets of one’s profession are compromised, but she also needs to ensure that other parts and the main core of her career will not be impaired. For the participant, an efficient and effective educator must be personally and professionally prepared and multi-tasker at the same time since the improvement and development of students are in her hands.

4.2 Analysis

Teaching and learning do not only consist of a teacher rather with the involvement also of students. These two elements of the educative process complement each other for a successful and quality education: the teacher serves as the facilitator whereas students actively engage in activities. In other words, interaction is one of the main indicators of ideal instruction. From the interview and informal discussion, the participant firmly states that any teacher should and must pursue quality education despite the numerous challenges in the field. The following were the themes and the sub-themes emerged from the findings by a methodical application of thematic analysis: Teacher on the Subject Matter and Classroom Environment ((a.1) Mastery of the Subject Matter; (a.2) Lesson Planning and Developing Teaching Methodologies, Approaches, Techniques, and Strategies; (a.3) Instructional Materials or Visual Aids’ Preparation; and (a.4) Renovation of Classroom Environment) and Teacher on Students ((b.1) Reviewing and Checking of Students’ Works; (b.2) Supervising and Advising; and (b.3) Treatment and Personality Toward the Students). On the face of it, the two may appear to be independent of one another, yet by looking closely it suggests another thing- it is not enough that you have the full grasp of what teaching profession is but there is also the need for teacher-students interaction for the attainment of quality instruction and teaching. The researcher examined how workload intensification directly or indirectly affect the identified categories (as essential elements of teaching quality in the classroom tantamount to the article statement of Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2008) under the data derived from the questionnaire, interview, and informal discussion with the participant.

4.2.1. Teacher on the Subject Matter and Classroom Environment

In this section, the impacts of workload intensification on the teaching quality of teachers were assessed on the account of the “attributes or duties that a teacher should have towards the subjects and making the classroom conducive for learning.”

4.2.1.1. Mastery of the Subject Matter

In the 21st century education, the teacher's role is a "facilitator of learning" as opposed to the traditional viewpoint wherein educators were seen to be a "dispenser of knowledge." Regardless of this favourable shift, the mastery of the lesson is still a necessary and preordained requirement for any person who wishes to become a teacher. The intensification of loads, on the one hand, does not have any influence on the way the teacher review and study her lesson. On the word of the participant, "*an kada usa nga maestra kinahanglan gud nga pirmi andam ngan maaram han lesson ug topic biskan ha tinikangan pala han klase tungod nga diri ka makakahatag kun ano an waray ka*" [every single educator should always be prepared and master the lesson even at the beginning of the school year as you cannot give what you do not have to your students]. Hence, ensuring that everybody will learn something from you is a matter of valuing the time and efforts of students in coming to school.

4.2.1.2. Lesson Planning and Developing Teaching Methodologies, Approaches, Techniques and Strategies

Lesson plan (also known as the 'blueprint' of teaching) and the incorporation of teaching methodologies, approaches, techniques, and strategies lay the foundation of the entire educative process. In times of a plethora of teaching and non-teaching loads, it should not be a reason and excuse for all the teachers who cannot make a lesson plan due to several designated duties authorize to them by the higher authorities, society, and other sources. In particular, the participant explains it by saying, "*it usa nga maestra kinahanglan nga may ada hiya pirmi mga pamaagi para makahatag hin maupay nga panutduan biskan pa man damo nga trabahuon it iya ginkakatapos ha iya pagtutudo*" [a teacher should constantly have her own ways to achieve or fulfill quality education despite the challenges that she has been facing during the process]. The flow of teaching and learning depends on the readiness of the teacher of her lesson plan that must be secured from the working loads she has.

4.2.1.3. Instructional Materials or Visual Aids' Preparation

Insufficient time for visual aids' preparation is usually experienced into to some degree by the participant; notwithstanding how used she is from all the responsibilities and duties in the school. Though she has the mastery of the subject matter and always equipped with a lesson plan, a limited time is allocated in making an instructional material for the students because other workloads are demanding that meant to be submitted or complied within a day. Consequently, the teacher does not have a choice but to finish immediately the task while teaching the class at the same time despite lack of materials (or in some other cases, she relies on ready-made teaching aids which are out-dated and can only cater one type of learning style). This also happens since constructing different types of materials require a much longer time than the two aforesaid sub-themes.

4.2.1.4. Renovation of Classroom Environment

The learning environment plays a vital role in producing a quality type of teaching and education for the benefit of the learners. Even if workloads are inescapable that always occupies her time and schedule, the participant permanently guarantees that her classroom is conducive for teaching and learning. When she needs some support, her closed acquaintances are likely to extend their hands to help her for a total renovation or improvement of the classroom setting remarkably that she is a Kindergarten teacher, thus, it must be a wonderful and engaging environment for her students. "*Usa ha pinakaimportante nga factor ha edukasyon han bata an classroom. Nakakabulig ini ha pag-aram han akon kabataan ug nakakag-aghat ha akon nga upayon ko it akon pagtutudo*" [One of the most important factors in child's education is the classroom. It helps my students in learning the lesson and even

motivates me to be good in teaching]. Classroom, as the second home of the students, should be creatively constructed given that it conditioned the behaviour of students which can determine the quality and outcome of teaching, as added by the participant.

4.2.2. Teacher on Students

In this subsequent theme of the study, it focuses on the “duties that any teacher should have on his or her students” and how the intensified loads affect the teaching condition of the participant.

4.2.2.1. Reviewing and Checking of Students’ Works

Teaching quality and students’ works are two complementary terms in education. If students’ outputs (i.e. projects, essays, journals) are not that good it denotes something on the teaching instruction of the teacher. In her commentary on the importance of reviewing and checking the works of students, the participant clearly avowed that by evaluating and assessing students’ works it performs as a self-assessment both for the teacher and the students on how effective one’s teaching styles are and monitor individual’s progress, respectively. *“Ginhihimo ko gud an akon makakaya nga ma-check an mga papel han akon mga estudyante basi makita ko kun nahibabaru hira ha akon. Sugad man ginbabalik ko liwat ini ha mga bata ha akon AP nga klase para nira mahibaruan kun ano it kamutangan ha pan-aradman. Importante gud ini kay tungod nga it iba nga kag-anak natapod nga mahibabaru it ira mga anak ha kada adlaw”* [I always ensure to check the papers of my students for me to know whether they are learning from me. Afterward, I return the papers to the students of my AP class so that they could know their learning progress. This is very much important since some parents are hoping that their children are learning from us every day]. Providentially, working loads do not diminish her time (whether within the teaching or non-teaching hours) to check the output of the students that are manifestly significant in instituting effectiveness and quality.

4.2.2.2. Supervising and Advising

One of the generally accepted roles of a teacher at school is being a surrogate parent to the children. Rationality, therefore, should be combined with parental care and guidance for the total and holistic development of learners. The emotional and behavioral domain must take into account from the moment the learners enter the classroom setting as part of generating productive citizens who are morally honed. The importance of this aspect within the framework of teaching quality is something that the participant misses partly in her profession. When the participant teaches her class, she cannot completely attend to the emotional demand from the students given that other tasks and duties are waiting for her. Generally, a persistence of excessive loads, the participant says, could erode the teaching-learning process that encompasses cognitive and affective purviews.

4.2.2.3. Treatment and Personality toward the Students

No teacher must bring her distress about working loads when dealing with her students inside and outside the classroom. In the word of the participant, a teacher “must at all times be a role model in showing good behavior on her learners” especially that how they behave is a reflection of your teaching. Thus, a division between personal-professional undertakings and treatment of students must be established since the subject of the latter was considered to be the “heart of the teaching process”. Furthermore, it is an ethical duty of a teacher to demonstrate acceptable attitudes and actions because students are theoretically and socially used to imitate any comportment. Though good personality is based on the assumption that students must be treated well, for the participant, *“amo liwat ini an kinahanglan hirutan han magturutdo tungod nga biskan gutiay la nga sayop sugad hin pag-inisog ha mga bata it iba mga kag-anak in diritso la nagrireklamo ngan ginkekwestyon it imo kapas kumo usa nga maestra”* [teachers

must also be careful about this since other parents tend to complain about some minor misdeeds such as being ireful to students and even question your capability as an educator].

4.3 Interpretation

Looking at the problem on its surface could make somebody take a general statement without taking into consideration some substantial factors. Previous researchers maintain that intensification of working duties led to certain negative outcomes that impaired the fundamental purpose of teachers: teaching. One illustration is the contention that due to intensified tasks in school, teachers become incompetent and unable to attend to the educational needs of students. From such a case, learners are given a lot of worksheets or projects while devoid of adequate knowledge and learning. By contrast, we get an entirely different impression from the current study. Implications of workload intensification on the teaching quality of teachers are not the same for all, to be exact; someone does not regard the problem as a complete destructive experience whereas others perceive the issue completely as a negative idea.

Though the participant recognizes the fact that by accepting loads from external sources it could shape, in some ways, her performance inside the classroom, she is still willing to do the designated works to fulfill and bring some accomplishments and success both for her and the school. To perform and demonstrate quality instruction before the learners, one must, for that reason, be a multi-tasker and flexible in carrying various tasks to ensure that other activities or assignments do not impinge on a person's professional duty. Finding and using any available means could balance the demand from authorities and classroom education which are equally essential in having a healthy workplace and excellent teaching-learning.

4.4 Discussion

Most employees, if not all, are fairly predisposed to voluminous works in their respective fields. In education, teachers are in the frontline in executing the growing demands from the policymakers and society which are transformed into the principle of improving the quality of education of the state and increasing the literacy rate of the people. While teachers are expected to perform these tasks, their teaching and professional roles face a significant change that must be given extensive attention. An intricate study of this problem is not only to advance our shared understanding rather it also gives us the chance to delve on the corresponding consequences on the performance of the employee (or the teacher in this case) as the educative process begins in the classroom.

Based on Apple's (1986) *workload intensification thesis*, the bureaucratic system imposed responsibilities and expectations on educators but Ballet & Kelchtermans (2006) made three definite refinements of this assertion. First, multiple sources (e.g. society, state, and teacher) give rise to different tasks, and from the study, the teacher's responsibilities, though most of it were teaching-related, also composed of other factors. Parents transfer completely the liability of teaching their children and give so much pressure on teachers of the institution. For the parents, it is the primary onus of the latter and the dictate of their profession. This strengthens the demand and adds some pressure on how educators should meet the expectations given the fact that if parents' children failed at school their credibility and capacity will be questioned.

“May mga panahon talaga nga it mga kag-anak hit bata nadeponde nala ha amon ngan diri na nira gud gintututduan ha balay it ira mga anak. Naabot in takna nga kun diri napasara it estudyante ha usa nga subject kami it ira babalsulon kay tungod nga diri namon hira gintututduan hin maupay” [There are times in which parents exclusively depend on us and do not anymore teach

their children at home. If a student failed at a certain subject, they will blame us for not being good in teaching.]

An apparent contradiction seems to appear from this parental claim: “the view that teacher is wholly responsible for child’s learning defies the generally accepted principle that everyone is involved for one’s total development.” Every stakeholder including the parents has the responsibility to take part in the education community (Sugden, 2010). Everyone must be liable for superb attainment of learning for our students. The participant was clear about this:

“Diri sidngon nga nadiri kami pagtutdo hin kabataan, it amon la in tutduan liwat nira ha ira balay basi magin madali nala para hit ira anak it pag-aram. Usa pa, pira la kauras it mga bata ha iskuylahan. Kaangayan la nga ira tutduan...kay it amon usa nga obligasyon it pagdugang ngan pagklaro han mga tutdo ha balay” [It does not mean that we do not like to teach the students, what we want from them is to teach also their children at home so that it will be easy now form them to learn the lesson. Besides, there is only a little amount of time spent by students at school. Parents should necessarily teach their children...since one of our duties is to improve and furnish the knowledge they have learned from home].

Secondly, the impact of intensification does not operate automatically but is mediated. This is evident when a teacher reflects on workloads before her, rationalizing as to the degree of its impact on the core principle of the teaching profession: providing quality education to the students. Ballet & Kelchtermans (2009) further expound the idea by introducing the term “experience of intensification” which occurs when teachers cogitate, based on the teacher’s identity or professional self, whether the relationship to her learners and career, in general, are at stake. In short, one could hold over or even decline the tasks if it is conspicuously intruding into her fundamental activity, teaching. According to the participant, *“biskan nga it iba nga trabahuon in makuri ngan nag-aaro hin madagmit nga aksyun, diri ko hiya gud madiwaray ug dumiri hin pagtrabaho hini kay tungod nga may ada ini kalabutan ha performance hit iskuylahan, sugad man naigiging usa ko hiya nga training ha akon personal ngan professional nga trabaho* [despite the difficulties and taxing nature of some working loads, I could not refuse and decline since it has some relative connection to the performance of the school, at the same time, it functions as personal and professional training in my career].

The impact of intensification varies among teachers and in their teaching performances. That is to say that the effects of workloads are not the same rather different from one another; it could have negative or positive implications on one’s teaching. Under the current study, the participant experiences fractional impacts of workloads intensification on her performance as a teacher in the manner of preparing the needed teaching materials as well as on supervising her students. *“Diri talaga mahihimo nga diri ka maka-encounter hin negatibo nga epekto han kadamu han trabahuon biskan pa nga imo na ginhahatag an imo best. Danay diri ko gud napopokuson an paghimo hin mga bag-o nga teaching materials ngan panginano han sitwasyon han akon estudyante kun maupay ba hira ug may problema”* [It is impossible not to encounter any negative implications due to intensified workloads even though you have already given your best. Sometimes I cannot focus on making new teaching materials and look into the situation of my students whether they are good or not].

Similarly, Tancinco (2016) and Wakoli (2015) came up with a very the same findings in their studies and put forward that overloading of duties, as a form of educational practice, decreases teacher’s overall efficiency and efficacy inside the classroom. Nevertheless, other features of quality and effective instruction reported being immune from the impact of intensification (for instance, mastering the lesson, lesson planning, classroom improvement

and treating the students) so much so that the participant always find ways on how to balance her duty (to her learners) and attending to the long listed responsibilities given to her. Although Cribb & Gewirtz (2007) affirmed the issue to be a top-down or bureaucratic model, their conclusion that these introductions and assignments of tasks to teacher encourage creative and progressive practices seems to agree with the working practice and principle of the teacher (the participant) in looking for alternative ways and being flexible in complying the duties and teaching the students at the same time.

“Pirmi gud naton tigamnan nga waray masayon nga trabaho, kinahanglan manilingkamot kita, kumo usa nga maestra, nga makabiling hin pamaagi kun papano naton kakaptan hin maupay an mga trabahuon nga ha aton ginhahatag nga diri naruruba liwat an aton obligasyon ha mga bata, amo an maupay nga panutduan” [Let us all remember that there is no such thing as an easy profession, we should, as teachers, find ways on how to handle the working loads given to us while our obligation to provide quality education to our students is not compromised.]

Empirical studies had proven that teachers from public schools are more exposed to administrative and other imposed duties (David et. al., 2019; Kyung-Nyun, 2019) and could relatively deepen their tasks in addition to their teaching obligation inside the classroom (OECD, 2006). But it is not the case that each one should have also common ground in its implications. Workload intensifications is a wide spectrum that must be given a considerable effort to understand it completely (Fitzgerald et.al., 2018). The current study can provide a specific glimpse of the problem, however, not a broad and well-packaged explanation.

5. Conclusion

In light of the evidence, the case was driven by the desire for a deep and detailed analysis of the implications of workload intensification towards the teaching quality of a public elementary teacher. The paper’s purpose was not to create or produce a broad generalization (e.g. teachers become incompetent without any justification or basis) but to look more closely on the experience of the participant and examine how intensification of works, as a complex phenomenon, affects the core practice of teaching profession- demonstrating a quality of instructions to the students. While prior researches have studied the problem already, still, no ample inquiries have been made in the country considering the situation of teachers who are dramatically experiencing the issue. Also, the diverse positions of reviewed researches about the source, impacts, and patterns or how teachers respond to intensified loads before them are the defining features of the study.

Intensification, as revealed in the study, comes from manifold sources, contrary to the traditional claim that teacher’s working loads mainly originate from a bureaucratic system. Parents, who are a member of society, were considered to be a source of intensification in a teaching career. But duties from authorities and educational leaders remain to be the primary causes of excessive tasks of the participant. Undertaking these huge amounts of responsibilities throughout an academic year is something that the teacher could not repudiate easily since it has some bearing on the success and performance of the school and as a faculty of the institution. Moreover, unlike the negative general standpoint, workload intensification happens to be not affecting the teacher’s role in establishing a quality of teaching. Supervising the students and preparing the teaching materials were the only two elements of quality instructions appears to be susceptible to the adverse implications of intensification, other elements were highly ensured by the teacher to keep up her solemn oath before the state, quality and adequate teaching to the learners.

Reflecting on these personal and professional perspectives, we can see that the degree of implications of intensification on one's teaching is dependent on how she handles the designated loads and what working practices she upholds. Yet, further studies would help extend or modify the outcomes relative to the subject of the case.

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