

The Lived Experiences of Teachers at Mahayahay Integrated School: A Case Study

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Abstract: This study explored the lived experiences of teachers at Mahayahay Integrated School, a remote area in Conception, Valencia City, Bukidnon. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with five purposely selected grade school teachers. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data and identify emerging themes. Findings revealed that teachers face significant environmental and instructional challenges, including difficult terrain, long travel distances, limited resources, and the complexity of managing multigrade classrooms. Despite these constraints, teachers maintain structured daily routines and demonstrate strong adaptability in their teaching practices. The study further found that these experiences do not diminish motivation; instead, they strengthen teachers' commitment to the profession. Teachers develop resilience, flexibility, and patience while employing coping strategies such as time management, advance planning, and collaboration. Moreover, teachers attach meaningful interpretations to their experiences, viewing teaching as a fulfilling and purposeful vocation. Their experiences contribute to continuous professional growth, enhanced teaching competence, and a deeper sense of responsibility toward learners. The findings highlight that while teaching in remote contexts is physically and cognitively demanding, it also fosters resilience and strengthens professional identity. The study concludes that teachers' lived experiences are shaped by the interaction of environmental challenges and instructional demands, which ultimately promote both personal and professional development. These insights underscore the need for strengthened institutional support, targeted training, and improved resources to sustain teacher well-being and effectiveness in remote educational area.

Keywords: *Lived Experiences, Teachers in Remote Areas, Motivation to Teach, Professional Demands.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a critical role in the learning system and are key players in providing quality learning. In many parts of the world, including the Philippines, however, those assigned to remote or geographically isolated areas have conditions that are much different from those of the urban school environment. UNESCO (2024) is aware that teachers in remote areas face limited access to instruction materials, to professional development and to teachers support networks, impacting instructional quality and teacher well-being. The challenge of educational inequality is an ongoing issue that is a priority in the world, particularly in remote areas. According to Albina et al. (2025) teachers in remote public schools in general are forced to travel long distances, travel unsafe roads and experienced learning materials shortage. Many also are required to teach multigrade classes, which brings about more workload and stress (Department of Education, 2019). Educators still have complex professional

needs, even with the assistance of government support programmes. The personal experiences and coping responses of teachers with these challenges have received little attention, and there is a great deal of research that remains to be done.

In the Philippine educational system, remote schools are usually referred to as Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA). Mosquera and Sayo (2024) stated that the teachers in these regions are confronted with greater professional requirements such as multi-grade teaching, transportation challenges, weak communication infrastructure and the multiple needs of students having to be met with limited resources. While the Department of Education (DepEd) has taken steps to provide support for teachers in these communities, including the Last Mile Schools Program, the challenges faced by teachers on a day-to-day basis are multifaceted and little documented. The challenge is not only logistical, but also emotional, cognitive

and occupational, as they impact on teachers' experiences (Belonio et al., 2025). Therefore, the problem is not only the nature of the difficulties in remote teaching and learning locations, but also the way teachers interpret, experience and deal with these professional challenges. The results of the study can inform policy and administrative decision makers of the need for responsive support systems. The study is able to contribute towards less teacher burnout and improve the educational resilience by recognizing adaptive strategies.

The problems mentioned in the previous literature include physical isolation, lack of learning resources and lack of infrastructure (Randwick, 2025). The majority of studies did not address the internal experiences of the teachers (Galut, 2025). Only few studies focused on the relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' coping skills to meet the demands of their profession (Taga, 2024). Past research found that most of the literature on learning from a distance is dedicated to practical issues like workload, space shortages, and the lack of learning materials (Mosquera, 2024). Other research focused on coping and stress management in general among teachers (Cimagala et al., 2024; Omar & Perez, 2023). These contributions were useful but did not adequately examine the lived experiences, experiences of learning, and experiences of meaning-making for teachers faced with high levels of professional stress in remote contexts (Galut, 2025).

This gap created an opportunity to investigate the perceptions of teachers with regard to the demands of the profession, and how those experiences shaped their identity, motivation and purpose as teachers. Given this gap, a qualitative case study approach was adopted to closely examine the lived experiences of teachers at a specific remote school and to capture the depth and context of their narratives. This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences, adaptation strategies and how these lived experiences influenced the teacher's professional identity and sense of purpose within their professional demands. The study sought to explore the human aspect of teaching in a remote area and provided valuable knowledge for teacher development and support issues and educational resilience. The study was carried out in Mahayahay Integrated School, located in Barangay Concepcion, Valencia City, Bukidnon. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focused observations. The setting allowed for the natural environment of understanding teachers' real-life professional experiences in a bounded and context-rich case.

➤ Objectives

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers in Mahayahay Integrated School, a remote area and to gain understanding of the impact of these experiences on the teachers' motivation to teach and their meanings of the profession. In particular, the purpose of this study was to:

- Describe the lived experiences of teachers in a remote area.
- Examine how these experiences impact their motivation to teach.

- Explore how teachers make sense of their lived experiences.

➤ Statement of the Problem

This study was carried out to gain insight into the experiences of the teachers, as well as the motivation and perceptions of teaching in a remote area. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What are the lived experiences of teachers in a remote area?
- How do these experiences impact their motivation to teach?
- What meanings do teachers attach to their experiences?

➤ Scope and Delimitation

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers at Mahayahay Integrated School located in Barangay Concepcion, Valencia City, Bukidnon during the Academic Year 2025-2026. The study examined the experiences of the teachers, the impact of these experiences on their commitment to teaching, and the significance they attached to their roles as teachers.

The number of samples for the study was five (5) Grade School Teachers who are currently working at Mahayahay Integrated School. The design used was a qualitative case study and the data were gathered using semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The study was conducted with the experiences of the selected participants and was not intended to draw general conclusions to all teachers in remote schools. The conclusions were drawn from the experiences, opinions and perceptions of the participants only in the context of the school.

➤ Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are beneficial to the following:

The results will be presented in a way that will allow teachers' voices to be heard rather than statistics or assumptions. This study can also assist them to understand some of the common problems and success strategies experienced by their peers, thereby enhancing their sense of profession, motivation and resiliency.

The results may inform the development of targeted programs, mentoring, training, and resource allocation, among other support structures, to be more responsive to the needs of teachers. Understanding specific challenges faced by teachers enables policy makers to create interventions more attuned to the realities of teaching in remote areas.

This study might be used as a guide to future qualitative or case studies of teachers in isolated and under-served areas. It can also serve as a reference for comparisons and for future research on teacher welfare, motivation, and teacher demands.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers' experiences in global placements often include the experiences of isolation and lack of support in remote areas. UNESCO (2020) reports that teachers in remote areas of developing countries face a working environment which is frequently ignored by national policies. Foreign studies show that teachers are often forced to work independently because immediate support is limited, that requires them to make their own choices in the classroom without the immediate supervision and administrative guidance from others. In an international rural setting, teaching involves adjusting to difficult social and economic conditions while continuing to provide instruction to learners, to translate urban-based models of professional practice into socially and culturally different and economically constrained rural environments (Wang and Zhao 2023). The work of these foreign studies indicates the importance of the emotional challenges that teachers face when teaching remotely, teachers also experience psychological pressure as outsiders while trying to provide quality education comparable to urban schools. Teachers continue to innovate and adjust their teaching despite limited technology and infrastructure in remote schools.

An examination of the international literature shows that the experiences of rural teachers show that they perform many responsibilities beyond teaching. In studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa and rural Australia, teachers were found to perform multiple roles beyond teaching, such as community leader, social worker, and health mediator (Yarrow et al., 1999). This expansion of responsibilities creates a new professional demand that extends into teachers' personal lives, causing overlap between teachers' professional and personal lives. Smith and Johnson (2020) further noted that the education and professional growth of rural teachers are often hindered by geographical isolation, limiting teachers' opportunities for professional growth, which they overcome through informal self-study and peer collaboration. These foreign studies highlight the complexity of the professional demands placed on distance and rural teachers, regardless of systemic conditions, and emphasize that teaching in remote contexts is inherently challenging.

In the Philippines, teachers in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) often experience sacrifices as part of their profession. The "physicality" of the professional demand has already been highlighted in the local literature as an integral part of the teacher's lifeworld. In his phenomenological study "Surviving in the Trails" (2025), Galut (2025) describes this experience as a "daily physical and mental struggle with the environment". Filipino teachers start by navigating the mountains, rivers and rough terrain to reach their professional destinations. This physical struggle is not a factor from outside but a factor from within—the exhaustion, the danger, the isolation is in fact a condition of professional identity; the condition of working with the marginalized. This allows for distinctive teaching practices shaped by difficult geographical conditions that legitimizes the teacher's authority and commitment in sharing the tough terrain of the mountain with his/her students and community.

Furthermore, local research by Algonos et al. (2024) and Santos and Reyes (2025) are concerned with the teaching "navigation" in the classroom, specifically on the challenges of multigrade teaching in Mindanao. Here, the reality is one of constant cognitive and emotional shifts as teachers are responsible for a number of grade levels in a single room without the benefit of modern learning technology or appropriate learning modules. In this sense, the teacher's profession is characterized by a "resource scarcity" that is overcome by "indigenization," or the creative use of local resources like stones, leaves or artifacts from the community as teaching materials. This local literature reveals a major research gap, concerning the significant existential meaning which teachers find in such challenges, which can be explored but is not yet studied. Teachers gradually become part of the community while fulfilling their responsibilities as educators. The study aims to show how the Filipino teacher transforms difficult experiences into opportunities for professional and personal growth.

Moreover, the experiences in the classroom are complex and challenging for teachers due to the multiple demands of the work, such as large classes, multiple student needs and limited instructional resources. Such contextual realities shape teachers' understanding and construction of meaning in their profession. The OECD's 2019 report on international teaching and learning showed that this situation can often lead teachers to constantly adapt their approach while sustaining quality teaching, impacting on their overall experience and engagement (OECD, 2019). Teachers also learn different strategies to deal with teaching problems and classroom management requirements in difficult schools. The strategies are not only effective solutions to on-going problems, but they also help teachers gradually build their ability to do their job well and to be resilient. The study highlighted in the last few years also underscores the importance of teachers' capacity to continue to be committed and effective, even in the face of ongoing stressors in the classroom.

Furthermore, teachers' everyday experiences are deeply related to their emotional health. Good relationships with learners, effective learning outcomes and supportive schools are likely to contribute to job satisfaction and motivation. However, prolonged exposure to stress like work stress and class difficulties can cause emotional burnout. Despite the challenges, there are many teachers who see value in their teaching, especially in the observation of their learner's progress and development, enhancing their sense of professional fulfilment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Moreover, recent research shows that the teacher's professional identity is dynamic and is continually negotiated by the teacher's experience in the classroom. Teachers acquire beliefs of this kind over time in the course of their daily teaching experiences. They affect the way they perceive themselves as teachers and their readiness to face future challenges in teaching (Kim & Cho, 2020). Reflection is also a very important process in assisting teachers to make sense of their lived experiences. Reflective practice provides teachers with the ability to reflect on events in the classroom, to assess instructional choices, and to make meaning of their

successes or challenges. This process enables continuous professional learning, and enables teachers to turn problems into opportunities for teachers to grow and improve (Hong & Lin, 2021). Similarly, a teacher's experiences in the profession are influenced by the community and collegial support. Positive working relationships with leaders and colleagues, parents and the community help to create a more positive atmosphere. To alleviate professional stress and improve teachers' motivation, commitment and belonging in school communities, these support systems can play a positive role (OECD, 2019).

Motivation and commitment of the teachers is one of the factors that affects the effectiveness of teaching. When faced with problems and challenging situations, a teacher's level of professional motivation determines whether he or she will remain in the teaching profession, as Helen M. Watt & Paul W. Richardson (2017) explained. Through their studies, they found that inner motivation, such as love for teaching and love to teach their students helps teachers stay in teaching even when there are difficulties. This implies that motivation is an important factor in maintaining teachers' commitment and perseverance. Another important component to understanding teachers' lived experiences is teacher resilience. Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley and Weatherby-Fell (2016) explain how this assists teachers in carrying out their work effectively in the presence of professional issues. Resilient teachers can regulate their stress, respond to challenging circumstances and keep a positive attitude in teaching. Similarly, Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2016) explained how experiences and supportive environments are associated with the development of resilience, which helps teachers to be more emotionally resilient and adaptable. They also highlighted that teachers who demonstrate resilience have a better ability to manage workload and challenges in the classroom.

Teachers' work experiences also influence professional and personal development. Teachers' professional identity is constantly negotiated through experiences, interactions and responsibilities in school, as Flores and Day (2016) have described. Teachers develop their understanding of their role and responsibilities, through challenges and experiences in teaching. Flexibility, patience and a commitment to the profession are all characteristics of teachers adjusting to various situations. That is, difficulties in teaching could also be a good thing for teachers' growth and development. Furthermore, Klassen and Chiu (2017) noted the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy, and that their motivation and commitment to their teaching practice work are related. A teacher who feels competent and effective in his job is happier as a teacher and more dedicated to his job. Teachers become more committed to teaching when they build positive relationships with students and feel effective in their work, which can reduce the risk of dropouts.

Additionally, teachers in multi-grade and diverse classrooms are likely to experience complexity in teaching because of the differences in the abilities, needs and paces of the learners in these classes. Teachers need to be flexible and

creative to design and deliver instruction in this situation. These experiences strengthen their problem-solving skills, adaptability, and innovation in teaching, which are all crucial for effective learning and teaching in diverse settings (UNESCO, 2021). Administrative tasks and duties are comparatively important factors which influence teachers' participation in the classroom in relation. Completing paperwork, reporting and other administrative needs can eat up valuable time that is supposed to be used for lesson planning or improving instruction. These pressures can also lead to stress and thus affect teachers' energy levels and classroom performance (OECD, 2019). Also, even though they have a difficult job, many teachers still see teaching as a profession that has value and is rewarding. A sense of purpose in contributing to the learning and personal growth of learners, can be a powerful motivator. This process of finding purpose in teaching is one that is able to maintain teachers' commitment and motivation to their profession despite the challenges (Li, 2023). Last but not least, having a meaningful understanding of lived experiences enables teachers to shift an impediment to a purposeful learning opportunity. Reflecting and adapting allows teachers to view challenges in a different way and as a step in professional development. This process builds their resilience, and by doing so, will help them to be engaged and committed on the long term in teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

➤ *Synthesis and Uncovered Gaps*

The analysis of foreign and local literature reveals that in geographically isolated and disadvantaged places, teachers face challenges in the environment, complexity of instruction and lack of institutional support. The issues in foreign studies are focused on structural problems like professional isolation and lack of resources while local literature focuses on the problems faced daily by Filipino teachers: difficult travel, multigrade teaching, and scarcity of resources. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of this study in terms of access and location, daily routines and complexity of instruction.

But there's a big gap in the literature. Most studies have been predominantly on external conditions and coping strategies, and little account taken of how teachers make sense of their experiences. Specifically, little consideration has been given as to the impact of these experiences on teachers' motivation, professional identity and sense of purpose. In addition, previous studies typically focus on lived experiences, motivations, or processes of meaning making in isolation, rather than through an integrated lens. This restricts a holistic assessment of the nature and processes of the experience and transformation of challenges into resilience, sustained commitment, and fulfillment in teachers.

In order to fill these gaps, the present research takes a phenomenological perspective that intertwines lived experience, motivation to teach, and meaning making. This gives a more comprehensive picture of how teachers engage in their work in a remote teaching context and emphasizes the internal and transformative aspects of their teaching practices.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

The study is based on Bandura's Self-efficacy theory (1977), which outlines the relationship between people's beliefs about their own capabilities and how they behave, why they act, and how resilient they are. In the context of rural teachers, self-efficacy is a key psychological process that impacts the way teachers view challenges, cope with demands of the classroom, and stay engaged with teaching. Teachers who feel they are able to achieve in these situations with learners are more likely to persevere, be motivated, and show competence as professionals. Teachers who feel they can achieve with these learners, despite limited resources, and meet community expectations, are more likely to persevere, be motivated, and demonstrate competence as professionals.

Bandura mentions a few main sources of self-efficacy that are applicable to rural teaching experiences: Mastery Experiences, Vicarious Experiences, Social Persuasion, and Physiological States. Mastery experiences are those in which teachers have a successful experience in dealing with multiple grade levels or in overcoming the instructional constraints they may face on a daily basis in the classroom, which bolsters their confidence. Vicarious experiences occur when a teacher is exposed to someone else who has faced similar challenges, and the teacher is able to learn from him/her, which helps to strengthen the idea that teachers can be effective despite the challenges. Social persuasion involves encouragement from school leaders, parents and peers, and this is helpful for teachers to keep their confidence in their ability during stressful times. Beliefs about ability to cope in one's responsibilities are also influenced by physiological and emotional states, including fatigue, stress or satisfaction.

Teachers' lived experiences in rural settings can be interpreted as a response to external demands; however they could also be seen as a reflection of the teachers' internal belief systems by using Bandura's theory. They impact their problem understanding, coping strategies, and professional identity through their sense of efficacy. Self-efficacy is therefore a significant factor when examining rural teachers' resilience and professional development as it is linked to problems they encounter as either an instructional, environment, or relational issue and how they believe they can address the problems.

III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods of research employed by the researcher in conducting the study which included the research design, sample of the study, research instrument, data collection procedure, and appropriate plan for data analysis.

➤ *Research Design*

In this study, the method used was qualitative research, specifically case study. This design is suitable because the main focus of the research is to explore and understand the lived experiences of teachers in a remote area of Mahayahay Integrated School which affect the teachers' motivation to teach and the meaning the teachers give to their teaching profession. The case study approach enables in-depth examination of a bounded system in its real-life context, with the aim of understanding complex social phenomena in detail (Yin, 2018). The researcher used this to get a full picture of the teachers' experiences in their natural environment. Moreover, by using this approach, a detailed analysis of the participants' perceptions was enabled and their experiences were placed within the context of the school.

➤ *Locale of the Study*

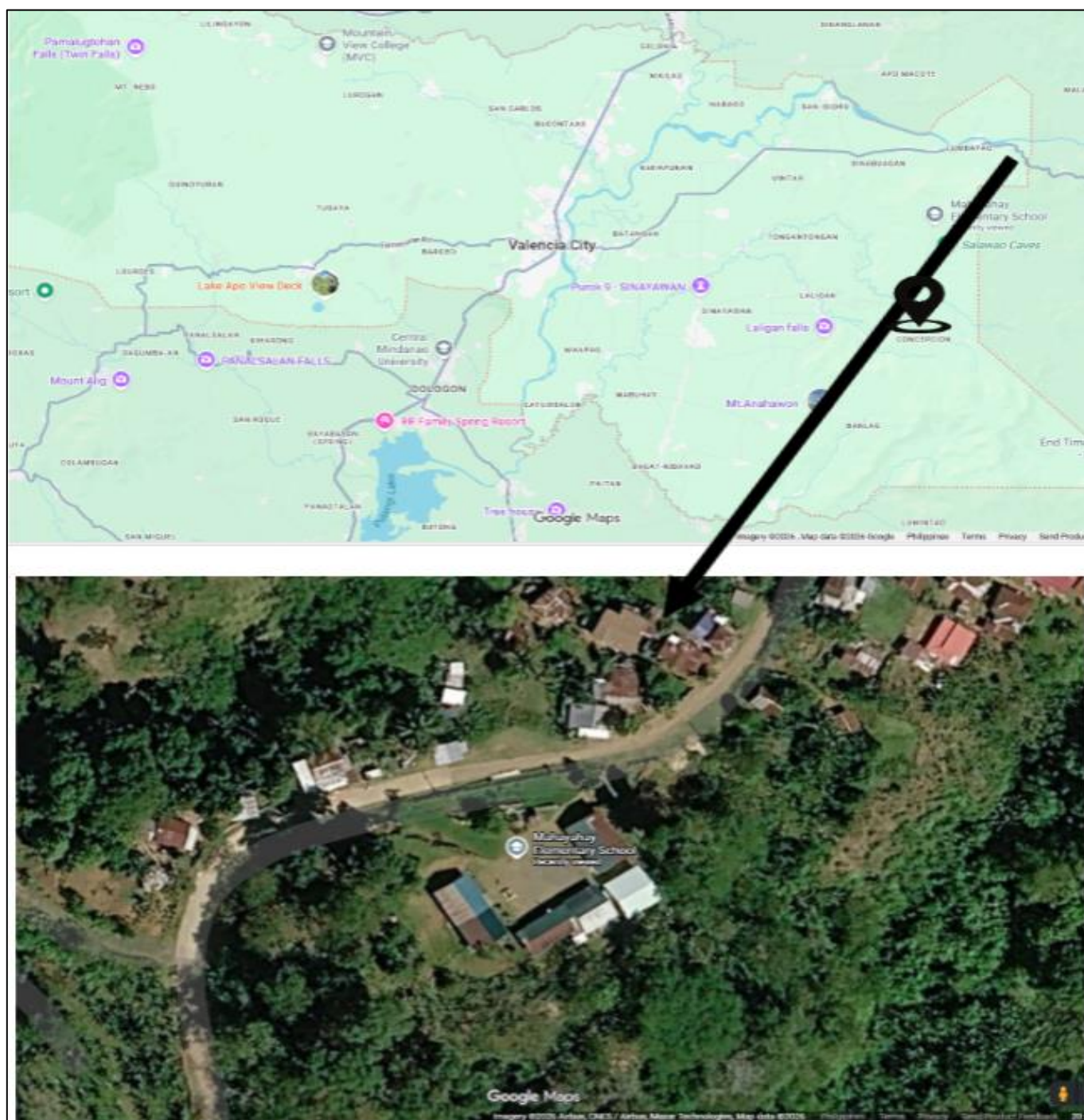


Fig 1 The Map of Valencia City Bukidnon and Mahayahay Integrated School

The study was conducted in Mahayahay Integrated School in Mahayahay, Concepcion, Valencia City, Bukidnon. This school is chosen because it is a school in the remote area that is appropriate for examining lived experiences of teachers in this school and how this impacts their motivation to teach and meanings they attribute to their daily work. The study was done in this area and allowed the researchers to obtain views based on actual working conditions and interactions. The locale is the real setting where events in participants' lives take place, and thus the study can incorporate their true perspectives directly from the context.

➤ *Target Population*

In this study, the participants are the selected teachers in the grade school level from Mahayahay Integrated School in Mahayahay, Concepcion, Valencia City, who were working and actively teaching in the school. This was a setting that was far removed from other schools, and it was an appropriate setting for the study of teachers, and the impact of their experiences on their motivation to teach.

Five (5) Grade School teachers participated in this study. The number of participants selected was in line with

qualitative case study, where emphasis was laid on rich, detailed and in-depth information and not on the numerical representation. A small sample permitted the researchers to have in-depth interviews with the participants and better understand the lived experiences, views, and connections they made with teaching within a remote setting.

➤ *Profile of the Participants*

This study involved five (5) grade school teachers who were actively teaching at Mahayahay Integrated School in Mahayahay, Concepcion, Valencia City. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for this study so that they can give rich and relevant data for the study.

➤ *Sampling Method*

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. This approach was suitable as it could be used when the participants needed to be selected on the basis of certain criterion needed to fulfil the focus of the research, such as:

- Active Grade School Teacher with adequate teaching experience (at least (3) years) in a public school environment, in a full-time capacity, in Mahayahay Integrated School.
- Availability for an in-depth interview about their experiences and difficulties.

By using purposive sampling, the researcher was able to capture rich, relevant and comprehensive information about the central phenomenon under investigation.

➤ *Research Instrument*

The research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide as a major research instrument to obtain rich and meaningful data. This was a tool that enabled the researcher to immerse himself and gain a deep understanding of the lived experience of teachers in remote areas. The semi-structured format allowed for some flexibility in the questions asked and ensured that all the topics relating to the research objectives were discussed.

The researcher had created the semi-structured interview guide to fit with the research goals of the study. It consisted of open-ended questions divided into three sections reflecting the three aims of the study:

- Describe the lived experiences of teachers in remote area
- Examine how teachers' professional and personal experiences influenced their motivation to teach, and
- Understand the meanings of how they managed professional demands.

➤ *Data Collection Procedure*

The data collection was done systematically and in a step by step method:

- The researchers initially sent a formal letter to the School Principal of Mahayahay Integrated School for permission to be allowed to study the school and interview the teachers.

- With permission, researchers used purposive sampling to identify and contact potential participants who met the criteria. An Informed Consent Form describing the purpose of the study, the role of each participant, voluntary nature of participation and rights of participants was given to each participant.
- The interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for participants, in order to ensure a comfortable and confidential setting for the interviews, Individual In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were scheduled. The interviews were audio-recorded (with the participants' consent) and the duration of the interview was about 45-60 minutes each.
- The audio tape recordings were transcribed word for word. The transcripts were then returned to the respective participants for member checking to ensure that the accuracy of the transcripts were correct and that the experiences they described were captured accurately and thus the credibility of the data was ensured.

➤ *Data Analysis*

Data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analysed in line with the approach of Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) which is referred to as Thematic Analysis. This method was suitable for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns or themes in qualitative data. It enabled the researcher to explore the experiences of school teachers in remote schools and the effects that these experiences had on their motivation to teach and the meaning of their teaching. Thematic analysis was found to be flexible and systematic in organizing and interpreting participants' narratives while at the same time not losing the richness of their perspectives.

• *Step 1: Familiarization*

The first step is a familiarity with the data. The first step is to get acquainted with the data.

Interviews were conducted in the presence of the interviewees and audio recorded with their permission then transcribed verbatim. The researcher read and reread the transcripts thoroughly, to get to know the data in the transcripts. In the process first thoughts, observations and reflections on the participants' experiences were recorded.

• *Step 2: Generating Initial Codes*

The second step is to generate initial codes. In Step 2, initial codes are generated.

The researcher used a systematic method in examining the transcripts and marking meaningful pieces of data relevant to the research objectives. Significant statements, phrases, or comments were coded to depict teachers' experiences, challenges, motivations, coping mechanisms and support systems in remote teaching situations.

• *Step 3: Themes (Searching)*

The researcher coded the data and then grouped similar codes into wider categories in order to identify potential themes. Themes were repeated patterns of meaning that

illustrated a significant part of the participants' lived experiences.

• *Step 4: Reviewing Themes*

The researcher read the themes and edited them to be as faithful to the coded data and the full set of data as possible. Themes were assessed for consistency, coherence and relevance to the research goals. A few themes were merged, modified or deleted at this stage.

• *Step 5: Naming and Defining Themes.*

After the themes were decided upon, the researcher was able to identify and name each theme as it represented the central meaning. Detailed descriptions were created to describe how each theme represented teachers' experiences and perspectives in remote areas.

• *Step 6: Producing the Report*

The sixth step is the most crucial, as it is in the actual production of the report.

The researcher organized the themes into a narrative discussion and presented and interpreted the findings. Relevant participant quotes were used to support the findings and themes that have been identified. The results were also related to the aims of the study and literature reviewed.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

This study strictly followed ethical standards in conducting this study. The following measures were observed:

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.
- Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity; pseudonyms were used instead of their real names.
- Participation was voluntary, and teachers were free to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.
- The collected data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely.
- A formal approval letter was obtained from the school principal of Mahayahay Integrated School prior to conducting the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the results and discussion of the data gathered among the participants. The data were summarized and discussed comprehensively to answer the objective of the study.

Table1 The Lived Experiences of Teachers at Mahayahay Integrated School

Objectives	Statements		Code	Category	Emergent theme
	Bisaya	English			
Describe the lived experiences of teachers.	1. Libaung og lapok ang dalan -the road is muddy and rough. 2. Lisud kaayung dalan paingun skwelahan - The road going to school is very difficult 3. Dili maka-tungas among motor tungod sa dalan -motorcycle couldn't make it because of the road 4. Layu kaayu ang skwelahan saamong balay -The school is way too distance from our homes 5. Tugnaw kaayu ang weather sa school -The weather at school is extremely cold	-Poor Road Conditions -Difficult Access to School -Transportation Barriers -Long Distance to School -Cold Weather Conditions	-Poor Road and Terrain Conditions -Distance to School -Harsh Weather Conditions	-Geographic and Environmental Barriers to School Access	
	1. Ga-sugod akung adlaw sapag biyahe padulong eskwelahan -My day starts with traveling to school 2. Mag-andam ko og mga leksyon para sa akong multigrade nga klase. -Preparing lessons for my multigrade class 3. Ga-apil mig flag ceremony taga-buntag -We attend the flag ceremony every morning 4. Mag-hinlu mi sa eskwehan taga buntag -We clean the classroom every morning	-ActivityDaily Travel to School -Lesson Preparation -Morning Flag Ceremony -School Cleaning Routine -Pre-Class Learning	-Preparation for Teaching -School Morning Routines	-Structured Morning Routines in Daily Teaching Practice	

	5. Gapa spelling activity ko ayha mag-sugod ang klasi - We have spelling activity before we start the class		-Instructional Readiness Activities	
	1. “Naglisod ko sa classroom management ug lesson planning kay kinahanglan duha ka lesson akong i-prepare sa isa ka class.” -“I struggle with classroom management and lesson planning because I need to prepare two lessons for my multi-grade class .” 2.”“Maglisod kog himo og lesson sa kindergarten or junior high at the same time.” -“I struggle in preparing lessons for my kindergarten and junior class at the same time.” 3.”lisod kaayo mag adjust kay bata ang tudloan sa buntag og mga teenager sa udto.” - I struggle to adjust teaching children in the morning and teenagers in the afternoon.” 4.“Pag-handle og multigrade class mao gyud ang pinakalisod kay lain-lain ang lebel sa mga bata.” -“Handling a multigrade class is the most difficult because students have different levels.” 5.“Ga tudlo kog multigrade class mao nga ga lisod gyud kos classroom management.” -“I teach a multigrade class which makes classroom management really difficult.”	-Dual Lesson Preparation -Simultaneous Lesson Planning -Adjustment to Diverse Age Groups -Managing Varied Student Levels -Classroom Management Challenges	-Lesson Planning Demands -Student Diversity Adjustment -Classroom Management Difficulties	-Challenges in Multigrade Teaching and Instruction

Table 1 shows the lived experiences of teachers at Mahayahay Integrated School that are grouped into three main categories: access and location challenges, teachers' daily life in the school, and the complexity of instruction in the multigrade school. Access and location difficulties included muddy and rough roads, difficult routes to school, transportation difficulties, long distance from home and very cold weather, as reported by teachers. These codes were organized into the emerging theme of Geographic and Environmental Barriers to School Access: poor road and terrain conditions, distance to school, and harsh weather conditions. Each day teachers reported they would travel to school, prepare lesson plans for the multigrade classes, attend the flag ceremony, clean the classroom and engage in spelling activities prior to instruction. These were classified as Preparing to Teach, School Morning Routines and Instructional Readiness Activities and led to the emergent theme: Structured Morning Routines in Daily Teaching Practice. Lastly, teachers discussed problems in preparing two lessons in one, in teaching kindergarten and junior high students at the same time, in adapting to the age-group differences, in coping with differences in students' ability level, and in maintaining discipline in the classroom. These codes were clustered into lesson planning needs, adjusting for student diversity, and problems with classroom management, and the emergent theme that emerged was Instructional and Classroom Management Challenges in Multigrade Teaching.

Results indicate that the experience of teachers is a result of the cumulative impact of environmental hardship, daily teacher demands and the double burden of multigrade

teaching. Physical (poor road conditions, distance, cold weather) geographic barriers cause logistical or physical challenges which can impact teachers' energy and preparedness for work. Despite all these difficulties, teachers have kept a pattern to their daily activities, which shows good organisation, discipline and dedication to creating a productive learning environment. In parallel, multigrade teaching has serious teaching problems, such as preparing several lessons, teaching the students of various ages and developmental stages, and controlling classes with various academic demands. These demands impose greater workload and make teachers constantly adapt their teaching and management.

The results of this type of study indicate that the teaching in Mahayahay Integrated School is not only limited to teaching lessons. Physical access to school is a challenge for teachers, while they have a lot of planning and classroom management tasks. They are resilient, flexible and show a strong commitment to pupils' learning in their ability to maintain organised routines and to respond to the demands of multigrade teaching. The findings also suggest, however, that institutions need to make an effort to support teachers in multigrade teaching, such as providing better infrastructure, materials, and teacher training for the multigrade approach.

The research findings are substantiated by the latest research on rural and multigrade education. UNESCO (2021) reported that teachers in distant and geographically isolated schools suffer transportation problems, environmental hardships and poor access to learning resources, all of which

have a negative impact on teachers' effectiveness. Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) noted that clear routines, systematic lesson planning are crucial to providing effective instruction and positive learning environments. Moreover, Wang and Zhao (2023) reported that the demands of lesson planning and differentiated lessons in multigrade teaching are

high, and its classroom management is challenging. Algonés et al. (2024) noted that teachers in remote schools in the Philippines use coping strategies and other structures to cope with environmental and instructional challenges, but there is a need for ongoing support and targeted training to maintain the well-being of teachers and teaching quality.

Table 2 Experiences That Impact their Motivation to Teach.

OBJECTIVES	STATEMENTS		CODE	CATEGORY	EMERGENT THEME
	BISAYA	ENGLISH			
examine how these experiences impact their motivation to teach.	1.Mas ganahan ko magpadayun sa pagtudlo. - I have become more determined to continue teaching. 2.Mas na encourage ko nga magpabilin sa ani nga trabaho. -encourage me to stay in the profession. 3. Padayun sa pagtudlo bisan sa kalisud. - continue teaching even when the situation becomes difficult. 4.Ang kining mga challenges dili siya maka pugong sa akoang trabaho. -The hardships I encounter do not stop me from fulfilling my role. 5.Nag strengthen sa akong decision nga magpabilin as teacher. -strengthen my decision to remain as a teacher.	-continuing in teaching -remaining in the profession -continuing despite hardships -overcoming challenges - strengthening commitment	-Commitment to the Profession -Persistence in Teaching Despite Challenges -Professional Dedication	Sustained Teaching Commitment	
	1.nakatabang sa akona na mas mahimong adaptive ko sa akong pagtudlo. - help me become more adaptable in my teaching. 2. naka learn ko mag adjust sa akong mga pamaagi tungod ani nga mga experiences. -I learn how to adjust my strategies because of these experiences. 3.mas nahimo kong flexible sa pag manage sa mga classroom situation. -I become more flexible in managing different classroom situations. 4. mas taas akong pasensya sa paghandle sa mga bata -make me more patient in handling students. 5. nakatabang nga ma develop ang akong strengths sa pag deal sa mga challenges. - help me develop strength in dealing with challenges.	-adapting teaching methods -adjusting strategies -classroom flexibility -developing patience -Enhancing Coping Strength	-Instructional adaptation in teaching Practice -Increased Tolerance and Understanding -Resilience Development	-Professional and Personal Growth	
	1.Nakatabang sa akona nga marealize unsa ka importante akong role as a teacher sa mga bata, maong mas ganahan ko magpadayon sa pagtudlo.	-recognizing teaching	-Role Awareness	Sense of Purpose in Teaching	

	<p>-Helps me realize my importance, which motivates me to continue teaching.</p> <p>2.Nakita nako ang epekto sa akong role sa pagkat-on sa mga bata, maong mas maningkamot ko sa pagtudlo. - I recognize my impact, so I strive more in teaching.</p> <p>3. Nahatagan ko og mas lawom nga pagsabot sa akong papel isip magtutudlo, maong mas nadasig ko sa akong trabaho. -I gain deeper understanding of my role, which motivates me more</p> <p>4.Mas ni-aware ko sa akong responsibilidad sa akong mga studyante, maong mas committed ko sa akong trabaho. -I become more aware, so I become more committed.</p> <p>5.Nakita nako unsa ka dako ang pagsalig sa mga studyante sa akong, maong dili ko gusto muhunong sa pagtudlo. -I see their dependence, so I want to continue teaching.</p>	<p>- understanding teacher responsibility</p> <p>-Awareness of responsibility</p> <p>-feeling responsible for students</p>	<p>-Professional Awareness</p> <p>-Commitment to Learners</p>	
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Table 2 presents the findings on how teachers’ lived experiences influence their motivation to teach. The responses indicate that although the teachers faced difficulties in their teaching profession, they are motivated and committed to their teaching profession. The experiences made them more keen to do the job and more willing to stay in the profession and to complete their responsibilities as educators. Results also indicate that teachers’ adaptability, patience and resilience are learned from the varying demands and challenges faced in teaching. Furthermore, their experiences gave them an awareness of their role in the lives of learners which enriched their sense of purpose and commitment in teaching.

Teachers showed their resolve to keep on teaching even in the face of adversity and difficulties. Participants shared that the challenges in the profession did not deter their motivation; but rather reinforced them to stay in the teaching profession. The results of the analysis of the responses indicate that teachers are very committed and persistent in carrying out their duties even in the face of difficulties. They are willing to keep on going despite the difficulties, because this shows that experience and persistence are strengthening their motivation. This implies that when the teachers successfully manage the difficulties of their profession, they will develop their resilience and sense of commitment.

The results also indicated that teachers were more flexible, adaptive, patient with learners and situations in the classroom. They have been able to adapt their teaching approaches and build resilience to a range of challenges. The responses show that challenging experiences are identified as a factor that supports professional and personal development

of teachers. They are effective in adapting to and managing classroom situations well, which demonstrates good growth in important teaching skills and emotional development. This implies that through facing challenges, teachers’ instructional competence, problem solving skills and classroom management skills are improved. In addition, the results suggest that teachers’ ability and confidence in their role are increased with the experiences of problems they encounter and resolve. A similar view is afforded by Susan Beltman, Caroline Mansfield and Anna Price (2016) who noted that challenging experiences lead to teachers becoming resilient and adaptable, which helps them to cope with stress and enhance their teaching skills.

Furthermore, Teachers were aware of the significance of their role in the development of the learners. They gained insight into the expectations of their students and their own duties, through their experiences. This realization helped them to feel committed to teaching, and to keep serving their learners. Based on the responses, it was found that the teachers’ motivation comes from the recognition of the positive impact of teachers’ work in supporting students’ learning and development. They gained a greater understanding of their duties and the emotional needs of pupils, which enhanced their sense of fulfilment and purpose as teachers. This indicates that when teachers feel that they are important to their students’ success and well-being, they will stay motivated. The results also suggest that teachers’ sense of responsibility and professional identity helps to reduce their attrition from the profession. This is supported by Maria Assunção Flores and Christopher Day (2016) who said that a strong sense of identity and responsibility among teachers is more likely to keep them committed and motivated

in their profession. Additionally, Robert M. Klassen and Ming Ming Chiu (2017) reported that when teachers feel good and connected to their students, their motivation and commitment to teaching is enhanced.

The results are consistent with the Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bandura (1997) which states that people who are confident in their abilities are more likely to persevere, adjust

and stay motivated in the face of challenge. If teachers are able to face the challenges successfully, they build their self-confidence, and the persistence and commitment to the teaching profession are enhanced. Hence, the lived experiences of teachers' positively affect their motivations to teach through the aspects of being resilient, adaptable, dedicated to the profession, and a servant of learners.

Table 3 Meanings and Realizations Attributed to Teachers' Experiences

OBJECTIVE	STATEMENTS		CODE	CATEGORY	EMERGENT THEME
	BISAYA	ENGLISH			
explore how teachers make sense of their lived experiences.	1. "fulfilling kay siya" -it feels fulfilling, 2. "inig makita nako ang growth sa akong mga students ,mapasalamaton ko og feel nako ang fulfillment sa akong work." -"Seeing my students' growth makes me feel grateful and fulfilled in my work." 3. "malipay ko kay ko nga nagatabang kos mga studyante na mugrow." -I'm grateful because I know I'm helping my students grow. 4. "mas nainspired ko na magtudlo -makes me more inspired me to teach." 5. "inig makita nimo ilang smile,mafeel nimo na worth it ra diay ang kalisod. -seeing their smile makes all the hardship worthwhile "	fulfillment Gratitude Student growth impact Inspiration Positive reinforcement	-Emotional fulfillment in teaching Sense of contribution Motivation in teaching Job satisfaction	Teaching as a source of emotional fulfilment and intrinsic motivation	
	1. "naglisod kos taas og lisod na pagbaklay pero kana na experience akong giview as a sakripisyo para sa pagtuon sa akong studyante." -I struggled with the long and difficult walk, but over time I came to view it as a sacrifice for my students' learning. 2. "na overwhelmed ko sa paghandle og multigrade class,pero kadugayan nasabtan na nako siya as a challenge nga nakatabang siya para mu-grow as a teacher. -I felt overwhelmed handling a multigrade class, but over time I began to understand it as a challenge that helps me grow as a teacher.	Reframing experience Adaptive perception	Reflective understanding	Transformative Growth through reflection	

<p>3. "makastress ang heavy workload pero kadugayan, nalearned nako ang pagdawat na part na siya sa akong responsibility as a teacher. -The heavy workload caused me stress, but over time I learned to accept it as part of my responsibility as a teacher.</p> <p>4. Lisod jud ang pag adjust sa lahi-lahi nga mga students ,pero kadugayan narecognized na nako as opportunity para mag improve akong teaching. -adjusting to different kinds of students was difficult, but over time I recognized it as an opportunity to improve my teaching.</p> <p>5. Sauna nadiscouraged ko labaw nas mga challenges pero over time, gina-view na nako as part sa akong journey para mas mahimong maayo na maestra. -before ,I felt discouraged by the challenges, but over time I have come to perceive them as part of my journey in becoming a better teacher.</p>	<p>Responsibility acceptance</p> <p>Professional learning</p> <p>Resilience development</p>	<p>Professional adaptation</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>Professional growth mindset</p>	
<p>1.kini na mga experiences kay part siya Sa challenge og giunsa nako paghandle akong profession og akong klase. -"these experiences are part of the challenge of handling my profession and my class."</p> <p>2. na -understand nako na kini na mga difficulties na akong giatubang kay challenge siya nga nagshape og giunsa nako pagmanage akong classroom -"understand the difficulties I face as challenges that shape how I manage my classroom."</p> <p>3.ang kalisod na akong naexperience kay part sa challenge og giunsa nako pagfulfill akong role as a teacher -"the struggles I experience as part of the challenges in fulfilling my role as a teacher."</p> <p>4. Kini na mga experiences kay challenge nga nag influence og giunsa nako paghandle akong responsibilities sa classroom.</p>	<p>Role integration</p> <p>Classroom management adaptation</p> <p>Role fulfilment under challenge</p> <p>Responsibility management</p>	<p>understanding professional responsibilities</p> <p>Professional practice development</p> <p>Professional responsibility</p> <p>Professional adaptation</p>	<p>Professional Growth Through classroom challenges</p>

	<p>-these experiences are challenges that influence how I handle my responsibilities in the classroom.”</p> <p>5. Natakabang para mas mu-improve akong pagmanage sa akong profession. -help me improve in managing my profession better.”</p>	<p>Professional improvement</p>	<p>Continuous professional development</p>	
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Table 3 shows the results concerning teachers' construction of their 'lived experiences' in the teaching profession. Teachers generally feel fulfilled, grateful, inspired and satisfied as they see students grow and succeed, thus fueling their motivation to teach. They are also burdened with issues like high workload, teaching multiple grades, challenges in managing the classroom, long distances and working with a wide range of learners. These challenges are not seen as negative, however, but as a part of the responsibility of the teacher, which also supports his/her professional development. Also, the data reveal that teachers' experiences include emotional rewards as well as professional challenges that affect the teachers' practice.

The results show that teachers' motivation is significantly determined by their emotional engagement with pupils and their satisfaction on the progress of pupils. Although the challenges are present, teachers remain in their work as these experiences are linked to their sense of purpose. They also demonstrate that challenges in teaching are not one-off events, but a persistent condition that will need on-going changes to classroom management, lesson planning and teaching. It implies teaching is a process that contains dynamic interplay between emotional fulfillment and professional demands.

The findings suggest that teachers begin to become resilient and adaptable throughout their experiences and reflections in positive and challenging classroom scenarios over time. Stress or challenge becomes part of their professional development later in the process and their attitudes change from negative to positive, and from a focus on "difficulty" to "acceptance" and "learning". The skills they gain are not only related to their lived experiences but also to their professional identity as well, as they find meaning in challenges. Successful and unsuccessful practice is not just a mechanism for growth, but also for understanding and dealing with challenges and problems in teaching.

The findings are consistent with Self-Determination Theory that argues that motivation rises when there are feelings of competence and meaningful relationships, which both the teachers and students reported. They also reflect the philosophy of Donald Schön, who stressed that one becomes an expert by reflecting on real-life experiences. Furthermore, Wang and Zhao (2023) reported that multigrade teaching brings challenges to teaching, and the teacher needs to adjust teaching strategies; UNESCO (2021) pointed out that teachers in difficult environments are still very committed to teaching despite the difficulties in the environment and

workload. All of these studies indicate that the experience of teaching leads to emotional fulfillment as well as ongoing professional development.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the findings of the study concerning teachers in remote areas. It synthesizes the data gathered to provide a comprehensive understanding of their situation and offers practical recommendations to improve support systems for educators in these challenging environments.

➤ Summary

This study found that the teachers in Mahayahay Integrated School experience multifaceted geographic and environmental challenges which shape their everyday school life. Some of these challenges include muddy and rough terrain, a long distance to travel, and weather conditions that affect their physical energy and ability to work. Data collection was achieved using qualitative case study with five (5) grade school teachers assigned in a geographical isolated and multigrade setting.

To address these issues, teachers continue to have a structured morning routine to ensure that they are ready to teach and maintain discipline in the school. They have a systematic approach to their daily activities: early morning trips, preparation of multigrade lessons, pre-class activities such as cleaning, spelling etc. Their high level of organisation is an important factor in establishing a successful learning environment when the logistics of location pose significant challenges. The study also identified the major pedagogical and classroom management issues that are associated with multigrade education. Teachers reported having problems planning more than one lesson simultaneously, especially planning to work with more than one class at the same time. Working with different age groups, developmental stages, and levels of academic ability calls for ongoing flexibility and places a significant cognitive load on their job. Teachers' experiences, despite all these physical and instructional needs, do not lead to a decrease in motivation but rather to a continued dedication to teaching. The participants said that during their tribulations they became more committed to continuing in the profession and being dedicated to their students. Their determination in the face of difficulties demonstrates a high degree of internalization and reinforcement of their motivation, which is strengthened by

the fact that they can face the difficulties they encounter every day in their professional lives.

Finally, the teachers get a sense of purpose from their experiences as they see themselves as important to the growth of their learners. They have learned to be patient, flexible and resilient in their professional and personal development through their daily struggles. They interpret the meaning of their work and understand that it is significant in the community and that teaching is a worthwhile career to have even when it's a remote job.

➤ *Conclusion*

From this conclusion it can be seen that teachers in remote areas have a very high resilience in terms of their professional identity which is manifested in a "pedagogy of sacrifice". Having structure and organization as tools for professional survival is demonstrated by their ability to have organized routines within the harsh geographic and environmental constraints in which they work. They found that while teaching in a "Last Mile School" is not only pedagogically challenging, it is also physically and emotionally demanding and can eventually enhance their professional character.

Moreover, the study findings validate the motivation in the remote educational context as being related to a profound sense of purpose and commitment to the learners, rather than being based on the convenience of the environment. Teachers' commitment to challenges suggests that mastering the demands results in positive experiences of mastery, which in turn increases teachers' self-efficacy in handling the challenges. The vision that these teachers have of their profession is tied to the difficulties they face in their work so that their teaching is integral to who they are.

Finally, multigrade teaching is a highly complex and professional need that not only helps develop advanced teaching flexibility, but also demands focused institutional support. Teachers show great flexibility in meeting the needs of a wide range of learners, but the multigrade planning and classroom management are a constant cause of teaching stress. For this reason, in addition to resilience, it is essential to make systemic improvements in infrastructure, resources, and specialized training for remote contexts in order to ensure the effectiveness and health of the teachers in the medium and long term.

➤ *Recommendations*

The study results reveal some positive and some difficult aspects of teachers' experiences in rural school environments. To counteract this, the following suggestions are offered:

Collaborative and peer support should continue to be encouraged and promoted in the school, so that teachers can share effective multigrade strategies, and emotional support. They are encouraged to continue their structured routines and to create innovative uses for local community resources both in their lessons and to relieve the shortage of instructional materials.

School leaders need to make staff's mental and professional health a priority by establishing a local mentoring program and wellness program. They should also look for opportunities to accommodate administrative needs that are more flexible and recognize the different time and energy requirements of teachers in geographically remote locations.

The department shall enhance institutional support for "Last Mile Schools", such as enhancing road access and infrastructure, to make it safe and comfortable for teachers to travel. In addition, hardship allowances need to be reviewed and improved, and special, ongoing training needs to be focused on and adapted to multigrade classroom management in remote environments.

Local stakeholders and community members are encouraged to be involved in school maintenance and support activities, for instance assisting to improve local pathways, or providing safe spaces for teachers. A better connection between school and community can make the teaching of learners a more supportive environment and help reduce some of the physical stresses of a teacher.

Similar studies could be done in the future using a quantitative or mixed methods approach to generalise the findings to other remote locations in the Province. They might go into the particular implications of teacher resilience on the long-term learning outcomes of learners in multigrade schools and further highlight the significance of teacher support in remote schools.

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