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BALANCING DUAL DEMANDS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON MASTER TEACHERS IN MANAGING TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN DINALUPIHAN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Master Teachers occupy a distinctive position in the Philippine public school system: they are expected to retain a regular teaching load while also guiding fellow teachers, demonstrating effective practice, and providing technical assistance. These two demands compete for the same limited time, attention, and resources. This qualitative descriptive phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Master Teachers in managing the dual demands of classroom teaching and instructional supervision in Dinalupihan District, Schools Division of Bataan. Specifically, it examined their experiences in balancing their responsibilities, the challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they employed, and the insights they gained, as a basis for a proposed development plan to strengthen their instructional leadership capacity. Seven purposively selected elementary Master Teachers from four schools who actively performed both classroom teaching and instructional supervisory functions participated in the study. Data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step descriptive phenomenological method with the support of MAXQDA. Credibility was supported through expert validation of the interview guide, a pilot interview, field notes, reflective memos, and member checking. The findings revealed six major themes: (1) Dual-Role Identity and Role Expansion; (2) Temporal and Attentional Conflict Management; (3) Strategic Practices for Dual-Role Effectiveness; (4) Relational and People-Oriented Instructional Leadership; (5) Professional Growth Through Reflection, Limitation, and Continuous Learning; and (6) Meaning, Purpose, and Learner-Centered Impact as Motivational Anchors. Participants experienced competing demands involving time, workload, unexpected responsibilities, and interpersonal and emotional concerns. They addressed these challenges through advance planning, prioritization, time management, flexible scheduling, collaboration, delegation, reflection, and continuous professional learning. Balancing classroom teaching and instructional supervision requires both individual competence and organizational support. Interpreted through Role Theory, Job Demands–Resources Theory, Instructional Leadership Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory, the findings show that personal coping strategies, although important, are insufficient on their own. Clear role expectations, reasonable workload distribution, administrative assistance, collaboration, and sustained professional development are essential in strengthening the instructional leadership capacity of Master Teachers. A development plan focusing on dual-role management, instructional supervision, coaching and mentoring, relational leadership, collaborative practices, reflective learning, and learner-centered leadership is proposed.

Keywords: *Master Teachers, dual demands, instructional supervision, classroom teaching, phenomenology, instructional leadership, professional development*

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Quality education is a fundamental driver of sustainable development because it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for social and economic progress. This commitment is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (United Nations, 2015). Target 4.c of the goal calls specifically for a substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers, a reminder that the quality of an education system cannot rise above the quality of the teachers who work in it. Achieving this goal therefore requires not only effective educational policies but also competent teachers, instructional leaders, and supportive school environments. In this context, instructional supervision plays an important role in improving teaching quality, strengthening professional competence, and promoting better learning experiences.

Instructional supervision is an essential component of educational leadership because it provides teachers with opportunities to improve their instructional practices through classroom observation, constructive feedback, mentoring, coaching, and professional collaboration. Previous studies have emphasized that effective supervision contributes to teachers' professional competence, reflective practice, instructional quality, and continuous school improvement (Concepcion & Labitad, 2024; Merable, 2024; Usman et al., 2023). Evidence on teacher coaching points in the same direction. A meta-analysis of 60 causal studies found that coaching produced meaningful improvements in teachers' instruction and, to a smaller degree, in pupil achievement, and that coaching was most effective when focused and combined with group training rather than simply increased in hours (Kraft et al., 2018). The quality and focus of supervisory support, in other words, matter at least as much as its quantity.

Supervision of this kind is carried out by people, and in Philippine public schools many of those people are Master Teachers who remain classroom teachers themselves. How these teacher-supervisors experience and manage the simultaneous demands of their two roles is a question that bears directly on whether instructional supervision can be sustained and made effective at the school level.

The Master Teacher Position in the Philippine Public School System

In the Philippine Department of Education, Master Teachers perform important instructional and leadership functions. Their responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching to include mentoring, coaching, providing technical assistance, conducting classroom observations, facilitating professional learning activities, and supporting curriculum implementation. The position classification and compensation scheme for the public school system states that Master Teachers are administratively under the school heads, that they "shall have regular teaching loads," and that they are expected to guide other teachers in the school or district toward improving their competencies, to lead in the preparation of instructional materials, and to serve as demonstration teachers (Department of Budget and Management, n.d.). The official description of the position thus builds the dual demand into the role itself: Master Teachers are to teach and to supervise at the same time.

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) provides a professional framework for understanding the responsibilities and continuing development of teachers, particularly those performing advanced teaching and leadership functions (Department of Education, 2017). The PPST describes four career stages, and teachers at the Highly Proficient and Distinguished stages, the stages typically associated with Master Teacher positions, are expected to work collaboratively with colleagues, support them, and lead them toward better practice. School-based professional learning has also been institutionalized through the Learning Action Cell (LAC), a school-based continuing professional development strategy in which teachers meet regularly to solve instructional problems collaboratively (Department of Education, 2016). In practice, Master Teachers are among those best placed to lead

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and facilitate these activities, which adds to the supervisory work that accompanies their own classroom responsibilities.

Dual Demands, Workload, and Role Complexity

However, performing classroom teaching and instructional supervision simultaneously presents professional demands that may compete for the same limited time, attention, and resources. Master Teachers must attend to the immediate learning needs of their pupils while responding to the instructional concerns and professional development needs of fellow teachers. They are also expected to prepare lessons, assess learning, manage classroom activities, accomplish reports, and participate in various school-related responsibilities.

The complexity of these responsibilities is consistent with the findings of Jerrim and Sims (2021), who associated longer working hours with increased workload stress among teachers. Similarly, Longmuir and McKay (2024) emphasized that workload strain is influenced not only by the number of assigned tasks but also by their complexity, intensity, and overlapping nature. These circumstances suggest that the professional demands experienced by Master Teachers involve both the quantity and the quality of their responsibilities.

Philippine evidence indicates that the problem of workload is not confined to Master Teachers. Interviews and discussions with public school teachers show that their workload extends well beyond the six-hour teaching load into administrative, reporting, training, and learner-support tasks, so that actual teaching is increasingly crowded out by other responsibilities (David et al., 2019). A study of elementary teachers likewise found high levels of workload and burnout, with workload significantly affecting both burnout and work performance (Jomuad et al., 2021). International research identifies time pressure as a leading stressor: Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) found time pressure to be the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion among teachers. The Department of Education has itself responded through issuances that remove administrative tasks from teachers (DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024) and rationalize teachers' workload around an eight-hour workday of up to six hours of classroom teaching and two hours of ancillary tasks (DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024). Where a Master Teacher's supervisory duties fall within these categories, however, is not always evident, which makes the lived experience of the dual role an important subject of inquiry.

Middle Leadership and Teacher Leadership

Furthermore, Lipscombe et al. (2023) emphasized that middle leaders play an important role in connecting school leadership and classroom teachers through instructional leadership, professional development, collaboration, and school improvement. However, these responsibilities may also involve competing expectations, limited time, and role complexity. Their systematic review of 35 empirical studies concluded that middle leadership is difficult to define and depends heavily on context, and that the professional learning available to middle leaders does not adequately prepare them for the role. A later update confirmed that the "dual roles of teaching and leading" remain one of the defining features of middle leadership across 21 countries (Lipscombe et al., 2025). Harris and Jones (2017) similarly noted that middle leaders must navigate tensions between whole-school and departmental priorities and between hierarchical line management and collegial professionalism, even as their work is crucial to the quality of pupils' learning.

The broader literature on teacher leadership reaches comparable conclusions. York-Barr and Duke (2004) observed that teacher leadership is loosely defined and that its relationship to student learning is only weakly documented, but that teacher leaders contribute to improvement by influencing their colleagues. Hallinger (2005) argued that principals cannot carry the burden of instructional leadership alone, a position consistent with distributed perspectives in which leadership is understood as a practice spread across multiple people and situations rather than the act of a single formal leader (Spillane et al., 2004). In the Philippine setting, Gramaje and Buenviaje (2023) described middle leaders as reinforcing academic optimism in their schools through the roles of professional mentors, team builders, learning

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facilitators, and performance navigators. Master Teachers, as experienced classroom practitioners with formal responsibility for supporting colleagues, can reasonably be understood as middle leaders in this sense.

Related Philippine Studies and the Research Gap

A growing number of Philippine studies have examined Master Teachers. Quantitative and descriptive studies have assessed how Master Teachers' instructional supervision is manifested and where it encounters difficulty. Reyes and Oropa (2025) reported that Master Teachers' instructional supervision was highly manifested in a Caraga Region study, while persistent problems involved classroom observation, technical assistance, and the use of technology in supervision amid resource shortages. Gestupa (2023) found that teachers rated the technical assistance of Master Teachers in Taguig City and Pateros very highly and that Master Teachers' instructional leadership competencies were strongly related to the assistance they provided.

More recently, qualitative studies have begun to explore Master Teachers' lived experiences. Baldera (2025) used a transcendental phenomenological approach with 12 elementary Master Teachers and found that they led relationally, through mentoring, collaboration, and classroom modeling rather than authority, and that their identities shifted through reflective practice, PPST expectations, and contextual constraints. Ag-A (2026) studied eight Master Teachers in Sagada, Mountain Province, and reported that they acted as instructional models, collaborators, supervisors, program implementers, and mentors while contending with heavy workload and time constraints arising from their dual roles. In a closely related dual-role setting, Hungo et al. (2024) applied Colaizzi's method to the experiences of teacher-principals in Leyte and Southern Leyte and identified prioritization, planning, and stress management among their coping strategies.

Despite the growing body of literature on teacher workload, instructional leadership, professional development, and instructional supervision, limited attention has been given to the lived experiences of Master Teachers who simultaneously perform classroom teaching and instructional supervisory responsibilities, particularly in the Philippine public elementary school context. Existing studies of Master Teachers have tended either to measure supervisory competence through surveys or, in the case of recent qualitative work, to focus on identity and leadership enactment. Studies that examine in depth how Master Teachers experience, manage, and make meaning of the competing demands of teaching and supervision, and that interpret these experiences through role and resource-demand perspectives to inform a practical development plan, appear to be limited. The present study addresses this gap.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964), Job Demands–Resources Theory (Demerouti et al., 2001), Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), and Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). These theoretical perspectives provided complementary lenses for understanding competing professional expectations, workload demands, instructional leadership responsibilities, and professional learning through experience. Table 1 summarizes how each perspective informed the study.

Role Theory explained how competing expectations associated with teaching and instructional supervision could create role conflict. In the original formulation, role conflict arises when a person receives incompatible expectations from different role senders, and role ambiguity when expectations are unclear (Kahn et al., 1964). Role overload occurs when the combined demands of a role set exceed the time and resources available to the role holder (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Master Teachers, who answer simultaneously to school heads, fellow teachers, and pupils, are positioned at the intersection of several such expectations.

Job Demands–Resources Theory provided a perspective on how workload, available resources, and organizational support influenced the management of professional responsibilities. The theory holds that job characteristics can be

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classified as demands, which are associated with exhaustion and strain, and resources, which support motivation and engagement and can buffer the effects of demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Later developments added personal resources and job crafting, the self-initiated adjustment of work to improve fit (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Applied to teachers, the model has shown that time pressure is associated with emotional exhaustion, while supervisory support, autonomy, and collegial relations are associated with engagement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Instructional Leadership Theory explained the supervisory and developmental functions of Master Teachers. The model, originally framed in terms of defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate, is the foundation for understanding how instructional leaders influence teaching and learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005). Experiential Learning Theory provides an understanding of how professional knowledge and strategies are developed through experience and reflection, through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). This perspective is complemented by the notion of the reflective practitioner, who learns through reflection on action (Schön, 1983), and by the view that professional identity is an ongoing, dynamic process shaped by person and context (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Table 1. Theoretical Lenses and Their Application in the Study

Theoretical lens	Central ideas	Application in this study
Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964)	Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload arise from competing expectations of role senders.	Understanding the competing expectations of classroom teaching and instructional supervision.
Job Demands–Resources Theory (Demerouti et al., 2001)	Demands are linked to strain; resources support engagement and buffer demands.	Examining workload, time pressure, collaboration, and organizational support in managing both roles.
Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985)	Instructional leaders manage the instructional program and promote a positive learning climate.	Understanding the supervisory and developmental functions of Master Teachers.
Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984)	Learning occurs through experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.	Understanding how strategies and professional insights are developed through experience and reflection.

Taken together, the four perspectives guided the study's focus on the experience of the dual role (Role Theory), the challenges and coping strategies associated with demands and resources (Job Demands–Resources Theory), the supervisory practices of Master Teachers (Instructional Leadership Theory), and the insights gained through experience and reflection (Experiential Learning Theory). Because the study followed a descriptive phenomenological design, the theories were used as sensitizing lenses for interpreting the themes that emerged from the participants' narratives rather than as categories imposed on the data.

Purpose and Research Questions

In response to this research gap, the present study explored the lived experiences of Master Teachers in managing their dual responsibilities as classroom teachers and instructional supervisors in Dinalupihan District, Schools Division

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of Bataan. It sought to understand how they balanced their responsibilities, the challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they employed, and the professional insights they gained from their experiences.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the lived experiences of Master Teachers in balancing their dual responsibilities as classroom teachers and instructional supervisors?
2. What challenges did Master Teachers encounter in managing the dual demands of teaching and instructional supervision?
3. What coping strategies did Master Teachers employ to effectively manage their dual roles?
4. What insights did Master Teachers gain from their experiences in balancing teaching and instructional supervision?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what development plan could be proposed to strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of Master Teachers?

The findings of the study were intended to provide a deeper understanding of the professional experiences of Master Teachers and serve as a basis for developing a context-responsive development plan that would strengthen instructional leadership, improve supervisory practices, and support teachers' professional growth.

Significance of the Study

The study is expected to be of value to several groups. For the **Department of Education and district leadership**, it offers grounded evidence on how the Master Teacher position is experienced in practice, which can inform professional development programs, role clarification, and workload policies. For **school heads**, it identifies the forms of organizational support that Master Teachers describe as necessary for sustaining their supervisory work. For **Master Teachers**, it gives voice to their experiences, validates the complexity of their dual role, and shares strategies that colleagues in similar positions may adapt. For **classroom teachers**, it clarifies the kind of professional relationships that make supervision developmental rather than merely evaluative. For **learners**, the study is significant indirectly, since strengthening supervision and instructional leadership is intended to improve the quality of teaching they receive. Finally, for **future researchers**, it contributes a descriptive phenomenological account of Master Teachers' dual role that can be compared with studies in other districts and with other methodological approaches.

Scope and Delimitations

The study was limited to seven elementary Master Teachers from four public schools in Dinalupihan District, Schools Division of Bataan, who had at least one year of experience performing both classroom teaching and instructional supervisory functions. It focused on four aspects of their experience: balancing the dual roles, challenges, coping strategies, and insights gained. Consistent with its qualitative design, the study aimed at depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization. The development plan proposed on the basis of the findings is a proposal for consideration and was not implemented or evaluated within this study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in this study:

Master Teacher. A public school teacher holding a Master Teacher position in the Department of Education who retains a regular teaching load and also performs instructional leadership functions such as mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance.

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Dual demands. The simultaneous responsibilities of classroom teaching and instructional supervision that compete for the same limited time, attention, and resources.

Instructional supervision. The process of supporting teachers' improvement of instruction through classroom observation, constructive feedback, mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and professional collaboration.

Instructional leadership capacity. The knowledge, skills, dispositions, and organizational support that enable Master Teachers to guide and develop colleagues while sustaining effective classroom teaching.

Lived experience. The participants' first-hand, subjective accounts of how they experienced, interpreted, and made meaning of balancing teaching and supervision.

Development plan. A context-responsive set of focus areas and capacity-building activities proposed on the basis of the study's findings.

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METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of Master Teachers in managing their dual roles as classroom teachers and instructional supervisors.

Phenomenological research focuses on understanding the common meanings individuals attribute to their lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand how Master Teachers experienced, interpreted, and made meaning of balancing classroom teaching and instructional supervision. The researchers focused on the participants' personal accounts, perceptions, challenges, coping strategies, and professional insights. Through this approach, the study aimed to develop a comprehensive description of the essence of their experiences.

A descriptive phenomenological approach was considered suitable for a phenomenon that has received limited in-depth attention. Colaizzi's method in particular is recommended for under-researched phenomena because it stays close to the participants' own words and moves systematically from significant statements to an integrated description of the experience (Morrow et al., 2015). The dual role of Master Teachers is such a phenomenon: it is widely assumed in policy documents but has seldom been described from the standpoint of those who live it.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Dinalupihan District, Schools Division of Bataan. The participating schools included Jose C. Payumo Elementary School, San Ramon Elementary School, Bangal Elementary School, and Layac Integrated School. These schools were selected because they had Master Teachers who performed both classroom teaching and instructional supervisory responsibilities.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of seven elementary Master Teachers from selected public elementary schools in Dinalupihan District. Purposive sampling was employed to select individuals who had direct experience in performing both classroom teaching and instructional supervision. This criterion-based form of purposive sampling is appropriate in phenomenological research, where participants must have experienced the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To qualify for participation, the Master Teachers were required to have at least one year of experience performing dual instructional and supervisory functions. The participants were selected based on their ability to provide meaningful descriptions and insights regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The distribution of participants is presented in Table 2.

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Table 2. Distribution of Participants by School

School	Number of Participants
Jose C. Payumo Elementary School	2
San Ramon Elementary School	3
Bangal Elementary School	1
Layac Integrated School	1
Total	**7**

The adequacy of the sample was judged in terms of the richness of the information it could provide rather than its size alone. According to the concept of information power, the more relevant information a sample holds for the study aim, the fewer participants are needed; adequacy is enhanced by a narrow study aim, a highly specific sample, the use of established theory, strong dialogue between researcher and participants, and an analysis that focuses on in-depth cases (Malterud et al., 2016). The present study had a narrowly defined aim, a homogeneous sample of Master Teachers who all performed both functions, an established theoretical framework, and in-depth interviews, all of which support the adequacy of a small sample. Interviews were also continued until responses became repetitive, as an additional indication that data saturation had been reached (Guest et al., 2020; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Research Instrument

The researchers utilized a semi-structured, in-depth interview guide as the primary research instrument. The instrument consisted of open-ended questions developed from the statement of the problem, research objectives, and relevant literature. The interview questions focused on four central areas: the lived experiences of Master Teachers in balancing their dual roles, the challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they employed, and the insights they gained. Probing and follow-up questions were included to encourage participants to elaborate on significant experiences and clarify their responses.

The interview guide was submitted to a panel of experts in educational administration, qualitative research, research methodology, and instructional supervision for content validation. A pilot interview was also conducted with a qualified Master Teacher who was not included among the actual participants. Necessary revisions were incorporated before the final instrument was used.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers secured the necessary permissions from the Graduate School, the Schools Division Superintendent of Bataan, and concerned school heads before conducting the interviews. After obtaining approval, the researchers explained the purpose, procedures, and significance of the study to the selected participants. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured of confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation.

One-on-one, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted primarily through face-to-face interactions. Online video-conferencing platforms, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, were available for use when necessary. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes or until the responses became repetitive and data saturation was reached. With the participants' permission, interviews were audio- or video-recorded, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim. Field notes and reflective memos were also maintained to document relevant observations and contextual information.

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Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step descriptive phenomenological method, which is designed to move from participants' raw accounts to a validated description of the essential structure of an experience (Morrow et al., 2015). The analysis involved the following procedures:

1. **Familiarization.** The researchers read and reread the interview transcripts to become familiar with the participants' experiences.
2. **Identification of Significant Statements.** Statements directly related to the phenomenon were extracted from the transcripts.
3. **Formulation of Meanings.** Significant statements were examined to formulate meanings that accurately reflected the participants' experiences. Because the aim was to stay faithful to what participants said, formulated meanings were derived from, and tied back to, the original statements.
4. **Organization of Theme Clusters.** Similar meanings were grouped into thematic clusters to identify recurring patterns across the participants' narratives.
5. **Development of Exhaustive Description.** The theme clusters were integrated into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon.
6. **Identification of Fundamental Structure.** The exhaustive description was reduced into a concise statement capturing the essential meaning of the participants' lived experiences.
7. **Validation through Member Checking.** Selected participants reviewed the findings to determine whether the descriptions accurately represented their experiences.

MAXQDA was utilized as computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software to facilitate the organization, storage, retrieval, and management of the interview transcripts (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). However, the researchers remained responsible for analyzing and interpreting the data; the software supported, but did not replace, the interpretive work of the analysis.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Several procedures supported the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Following the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017), the procedures described above can be summarized as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Trustworthiness Criteria and Corresponding Procedures

Criterion	Procedures in this study
Credibility	Expert content validation of the interview guide; pilot interview with a Master Teacher who was not a participant; probing and follow-up questions; member checking of clarifications and of the findings with selected participants.
Transferability	Description of the research locale, the participating schools, and the selection criteria for participants; presentation of themes supported by participants' own words so that readers can judge applicability to other settings.

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Dependability	Audio- or video-recording of interviews and verbatim transcription; systematic organization and retrieval of data through MAXQDA; use of Colaizzi's explicit, stepwise procedure.
Confirmability	Field notes and reflective memos documenting observations, context, and the researchers' reflections; the researchers' interpretations were returned to participants for validation, and findings are grounded in verbatim statements.

Member checking was conducted with selected participants to clarify their responses and to validate the accuracy of the researchers' interpretations. Consistent with Colaizzi's final step, participants were asked to respond to the findings themselves, which is regarded as a stronger form of member checking than simply returning transcripts (Birt et al., 2016). Colaizzi himself recognized that complete bracketing of the researcher's assumptions is never fully achievable (Morrow et al., 2015); the reflective memos kept by the researchers therefore served as a record of their reflections during data collection and analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers observed ethical principles throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and participants were given the right to decline questions or withdraw from the study. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the interviews, analysis, and presentation of findings. Participant codes or pseudonyms (P1 to P7) were used to protect individual identities. All collected information was handled responsibly and utilized solely for research purposes.

These safeguards are consistent with the principles of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), which requires that personal information be collected for legitimate and declared purposes, processed with the subject's consent, and protected against unauthorized access. Recordings, transcripts, and field notes contain personal information and were therefore treated as confidential research data.

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RESULTS

The analysis of the interview data revealed six major themes representing the lived experiences of Master Teachers in managing the dual demands of classroom teaching and instructional supervision. These themes emerged from the participants' narratives and were organized through Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological analysis. Table 4 presents an overview of the themes, followed by a detailed account of each theme supported by participants' statements (coded P1 to P7). Table 5 shows how the themes address the research questions.

Table 4. Overview of the Emergent Themes

Theme	Essence of the theme	Illustrative statement
1. Dual-Role Identity and Role Expansion	Responsibilities expanded from classroom instruction to mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, supervision, and coordination; teaching and supervision were experienced as interconnected.	"You cannot separate being a classroom teacher from being an instructional leader." (P7)
2. Temporal and Attentional Conflict Management	Competing demands on time and attention required deciding which responsibility needed immediate attention.	"The biggest challenge for me is really time management…" (P2)
3. Strategic Practices for Dual-Role Effectiveness	Deliberate strategies: advance planning, time-blocking, prioritization, task organization, flexible scheduling, collaboration, and delegation.	"I cannot do everything alone." (P5)
4. Relational and People-Oriented Instructional Leadership	Supervision viewed as a relational practice grounded in listening, mentoring, coaching, and constructive feedback rather than compliance monitoring.	"Leadership is not necessarily being the person who knows the most." (P1)
5. Professional Growth Through Reflection, Limitation, and Continuous Learning	Experiences treated as opportunities for reflection, self-discovery, acceptance of limitations, and continuing development.	"I don't have to prove that I can do everything." (P1)
6. Meaning, Purpose, and Learner-Centered Impact as Motivational Anchors	Motivation and fulfillment drawn from contributions to learners' progress and colleagues' growth.	"…it is about being able to make a difference, even in small ways…" (P1)

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Table 5. Alignment of the Themes with the Research Questions

Research question	Themes that address it
1. Lived experiences in balancing the dual responsibilities	Theme 1 (dual-role identity and role expansion); Theme 3 (strategic practices through which the balance was sustained)
2. Challenges in managing the dual demands	Theme 2 (temporal and attentional conflict); Theme 1 (expanded responsibilities)
3. Coping strategies employed	Theme 3 (strategic practices); Theme 4 (relational practices); Theme 5 (reflection and continuous learning)
4. Insights gained from the experience	Theme 5 (growth, limitation, and learning); Theme 6 (meaning and purpose); Theme 4 (supervision as a relational practice)
5. Development plan to be proposed	All themes; see the Synthesis of the Findings and the Discussion

Theme 1. Dual-Role Identity and Role Expansion

Master Teachers experienced a significant expansion of their professional responsibilities upon assuming instructional leadership functions. Their roles were no longer limited to classroom instruction but extended to mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, instructional supervision, coordination, and supporting the professional development of fellow teachers. One participant explained:

"You cannot separate being a classroom teacher from being an instructional leader. What happens in my own classroom influences the way I support other teachers, and what I learn from other teachers also influences my own teaching." (P7)

This statement demonstrates that classroom teaching and instructional supervision were experienced as interconnected responsibilities rather than separate professional functions. The statement also describes a reciprocal relationship: practice in the participant's own classroom informed the support given to colleagues, and what was learned from colleagues in turn informed the participant's own teaching. The expansion of the role therefore did not replace the teacher's identity as a classroom practitioner but enlarged it.

Master Teachers developed an expanded professional identity that integrated classroom practice and instructional leadership. Their experiences reflected the understanding that effective leadership requires maintaining a connection with actual classroom realities while providing guidance and support to colleagues.

Theme 2. Temporal and Attentional Conflict Management

One of the most significant challenges experienced by Master Teachers involved competing demands on their time and attention. Classroom instruction, learner concerns, classroom observations, mentoring, reports, coordination, and other school responsibilities frequently required attention within the same period. One participant stated:

"The biggest challenge for me is really time management, especially when several responsibilities come at the same time." (P2)

The statement points to the simultaneity of demands as the heart of the difficulty: the problem was not only that there was much to do, but that several responsibilities converged on the same moment. Another participant explained that

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responsibilities involving learner safety and immediate learning needs were given priority, while less urgent supervisory concerns were scheduled for a more appropriate time. In this account, prioritization was anchored on the welfare of pupils, with supervisory work rescheduled rather than abandoned.

These experiences demonstrate that the challenge of balancing dual responsibilities involved more than workload volume. It also involved deciding which responsibility required immediate attention and determining how to respond when competing demands occurred simultaneously. Thus, the experiences of Master Teachers indicate that effective management of dual responsibilities requires flexibility, sound judgment, communication, and the ability to adjust priorities according to the urgency and impact of each task.

Theme 3. Strategic Practices for Dual-Role Effectiveness

Master Teachers employed deliberate and organized strategies to manage their classroom and supervisory responsibilities. These included advance planning, time-blocking, prioritization, task organization, flexible scheduling, collaboration, and delegation. One participant explained:

“I usually plan my activities ahead of time. I prepare my lesson plans, instructional materials, and other classroom requirements early so that I can allocate time for mentoring and instructional supervision.” (P3)

In this account, early completion of classroom requirements was a means of creating protected time for supervision: planning ahead for teaching released time for mentoring. Another participant emphasized the importance of collaboration and delegation:

“As School President and BAC Chair, I learned early on that I cannot do everything alone. I empower committee members and distribute responsibilities fairly.” (P5)

These accounts indicate that effective dual-role management depended not only on individual discipline but also on the ability to organize responsibilities and work collaboratively with others. The participants recognized that they could not accomplish every responsibility independently. They therefore utilized delegation, communication, and shared responsibility to manage their workload more effectively. The strategies described thus operated at two levels: personal practices of planning and prioritization, and relational practices of empowering and sharing work with others.

Theme 4. Relational and People-Oriented Instructional Leadership

Master Teachers viewed instructional supervision as a relational and people-oriented practice rather than merely a process of monitoring compliance. Participants emphasized listening, understanding, mentoring, coaching, providing constructive feedback, encouraging colleagues, and helping teachers become more confident in their professional responsibilities. One participant expressed:

“Leadership is not necessarily being the person who knows the most. Sometimes, leadership is being the person who is willing to listen, support, guide, and learn together with others.” (P1)

The statement defines leadership by willingness to listen and to learn alongside others rather than by superior knowledge or authority. Another participant emphasized that teachers require different forms of assistance depending on their professional needs, which reflects an understanding of supervision as responsive and differentiated rather than uniform.

These accounts suggest that effective instructional supervision is grounded in trust, empathy, collaboration, and mutual respect. Master Teachers recognized that professional growth requires understanding individual differences and providing appropriate guidance.

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Theme 5. Professional Growth Through Reflection, Limitation, and Continuous Learning

Master Teachers considered their professional experiences as continuing opportunities for reflection, self-discovery, and professional development. Participants recognized that although they had developed the capacity to handle expanded responsibilities, they also had personal and professional limitations. They emphasized that professional competence did not require accomplishing everything independently. One participant stated:

"I realized that I can handle more than I initially thought, but I also learned that I have limitations. I don't have to prove that I can do everything." (P1)

The statement holds two realizations together: that the role revealed capacities greater than the participant had expected, and that it also revealed limits that did not need to be hidden. Another participant explained:

"Being a Master Teacher is a journey... I am still learning what it really means to be a Master Teacher... It is about being willing to continue learning and improving." (P1)

These statements demonstrate that professional growth emerged through actual experiences, reflection, and the willingness to recognize areas requiring improvement. Growth was described as ongoing and unfinished, and the acceptance of limitation was presented as a part of professional maturity rather than a deficit.

Theme 6. Meaning, Purpose, and Learner-Centered Impact as Motivational Anchors

Master Teachers derived motivation and professional fulfillment from the positive contributions they made to learners and fellow teachers. Despite the demands and difficulties associated with their dual responsibilities, participants considered their work meaningful when they observed improvements in pupils' learning and colleagues' instructional practices. One participant explained:

"There are days when I feel fulfilled because I know I was able to help a learner or support a colleague... Being a Master Teacher is not just about the position. It is about being able to make a difference, even in small ways, in the lives of learners and fellow teachers." (P1)

Another participant emphasized:

"Leadership is not about how many responsibilities you can carry; it is about how many people you can help grow while carrying those responsibilities." (P6)

These accounts indicate that learner-centered service and the professional growth of colleagues served as important sources of motivation. Fulfillment was located in the impact of the work rather than in the position or in the quantity of responsibilities carried. The findings further suggest that continued classroom engagement strengthened Master Teachers' credibility and empathy because they remained connected to the actual experiences and instructional needs of teachers and learners.

Synthesis of the Findings

The six major themes demonstrate that the experiences of Master Teachers in balancing teaching and instructional supervision involve interconnected professional, organizational, relational, and personal dimensions. First, the participants experienced an expanded professional identity that integrated classroom teaching and instructional leadership. Second, they encountered competing demands involving time, workload, and attention. Third, they developed strategic practices through planning, prioritization, collaboration, and delegation. Fourth, they understood supervision as a relational process grounded in empathy and professional support. Fifth, they recognized reflection and continuous learning as essential components of professional growth. Finally, they derived motivation from the positive contributions they made to learners and fellow teachers.

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In keeping with the sixth step of Colaizzi's method, the findings can be condensed into a statement of the fundamental structure of the experience: for Master Teachers, balancing classroom teaching and instructional supervision is the lived work of holding two interdependent roles together under conditions of competing demands. They sustain the balance through deliberate planning, prioritization, and shared responsibility; they exercise supervision relationally, through listening, support, and mutual learning; they grow by reflecting on both their capacities and their limits; and they are sustained by the sense that their work makes a difference for learners and colleagues.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that successful dual-role management requires both individual capabilities and supportive organizational conditions.

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DISCUSSION

This study explored how Master Teachers in Dinalupihan District experienced and managed the dual demands of classroom teaching and instructional supervision. This section interprets the six themes in relation to the existing literature and the study's theoretical framework, compares the findings with earlier Philippine studies, and then draws out the implications for the proposed development plan.

Dual-Role Identity and Role Expansion

The expansion of Master Teachers' responsibilities from classroom instruction to mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and professional support reflects the advanced teaching and leadership functions envisioned for experienced teachers in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (Department of Education, 2017) and in the official description of the Master Teacher position, which pairs a regular teaching load with the responsibility to guide other teachers (Department of Budget and Management, n.d.). The finding is also consistent with Lipscombe et al. (2023), who described middle leaders as important links between school leadership and classroom teachers, and with Lipscombe et al. (2025), who identified the dual roles of teaching and leading as a defining feature of middle leadership internationally. Similarly, Aliu et al. (2024) emphasized the contribution of teacher leadership to professional development and school improvement.

Viewed through Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964), the additional expectations attached to the supervisory role could be expected to create competing demands, and the study's later themes show that they did. The participants' accounts, however, show that they did not experience teaching and supervision only as competing roles. Rather, the two were experienced as mutually reinforcing, with classroom practice informing the support given to colleagues and learning from colleagues informing classroom practice. This reciprocity may be understood in terms of professional identity as an ongoing and dynamic process involving both the person and the context, composed of sub-identities that must be negotiated (Beijaard et al., 2004). The participants appear to have negotiated their "teacher self" and "supervisor self" by integrating them rather than separating them. This also resonates with Baldera's (2025) finding that Master Teachers' identities shift through reflective practice, PPST expectations, and contextual constraints. It suggests that maintaining a connection with classroom realities is not only a burden of the dual role but also a source of credibility and relevance in instructional leadership.

Competing Demands on Time and Attention

The finding that time and attention were the most significant challenges is consistent with Longmuir and McKay (2024), who emphasized that workload strain is influenced by the density, difficulty, and complexity of professional tasks, and with Jerrim and Sims (2021), who associated longer working hours with increased workload stress among teachers. It also agrees with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017), who identified time pressure as the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion among teachers. Philippine studies report comparable conditions: teachers' workloads extend well beyond the official teaching load (David et al., 2019), and high workload is associated with burnout and with performance (Jomuad et al., 2021). Closer to the present study, Ag-A (2026) reported that Master Teachers in Sagada experienced heavy workload and time constraints because of their dual roles, and Reyes and Oropa (2025) found that Master Teachers' supervision was constrained by problems in classroom observation, technical assistance, and resources.

The present findings add that, for Master Teachers, the difficulty lay not only in the volume of work but also in decision-making: determining which responsibility needed immediate attention when classroom, supervisory, and administrative demands occurred simultaneously. The prioritization of learner safety and immediate learning needs, with less urgent supervisory concerns scheduled later, illustrates how this judgment was exercised in practice. In terms of Role Theory, this pattern illustrates how competing expectations from teaching and supervision can create role

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conflict and role overload (Katz & Kahn, 1978), while Job Demands–Resources Theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) directs attention to how workload and the availability of resources shape the management of these demands. Effective management therefore calls for flexibility, sound judgment, communication, and the ability to adjust priorities according to the urgency and impact of each task.

The findings also bear on current workload policy. DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 frames the teacher's day as up to six hours of classroom teaching and two hours of ancillary tasks, and DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 removes administrative tasks from teachers. The experiences reported by the participants suggest that the supervisory work of Master Teachers, which is neither classroom teaching nor clerical administration, needs to be explicitly recognized and scheduled if the policy intent of protecting teaching time is to extend to them.

Strategic Practices for Dual-Role Effectiveness

The strategies reported by participants, namely advance planning, time-blocking, prioritization, flexible scheduling, collaboration, and delegation, are supported by Aulén et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of adaptive coping strategies in promoting teacher well-being. Bayaua (2025) also identified prioritization, scheduling, collaboration, professional development, and administrative support as strategies used by Master Teachers in managing competing professional responsibilities. Hungo et al. (2024), studying teacher-principals who also teach, similarly reported prioritization, planning, and stress management as coping strategies, which suggests that these practices are common responses to dual-role conditions across positions.

Importantly, the participants' accounts show that coping was not solely a matter of personal discipline. Delegation and shared responsibility functioned as resources that allowed Master Teachers to manage their workload, which aligns with the Job Demands–Resources perspective that available resources and organizational support influence how demands are managed (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The participants' self-initiated planning, prioritization, and distribution of tasks can also be read as forms of job crafting, the proactive adjustment of work arrangements to better fit demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). A study of Philippine public school teachers found that individual resilience did not moderate the relationship between burnout and psychological well-being (Orines et al., 2023). Taken together with the present findings, this supports the view that personal coping strategies, while valuable, are insufficient without structural and organizational support, which underlies the conclusion that individual strategies alone cannot sustain effective dual-role performance.

Relational and People-Oriented Instructional Leadership

Participants' emphasis on listening, trust, empathy, and differentiated support is consistent with Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), which emphasizes managing instructional programs and promoting a positive school learning climate. It also supports the findings of Culajara and Culajara (2024), which highlight the contribution of coaching and mentoring to teachers' instructional competencies. The findings suggest that Master Teachers enact instructional supervision as a developmental and relational process rather than as compliance monitoring, a view that is in line with the broader literature associating effective supervision with teachers' professional competence, reflective practice, and instructional quality (Concepcion & Labitad, 2024; Usman et al., 2023).

The relational orientation described by participants is also consistent with Baldera's (2025) finding that Master Teachers lead relationally, through mentoring, collaboration, and modeling rather than authority, and with Ag-A's (2026) report of non-threatening supervision and collaboration among Master Teachers. The differentiated assistance that participants described parallels developmental approaches to supervision, in which the supervisory approach is matched to the needs and development of the individual teacher (Glickman et al., 2018). The finding also fits a distributed view of leadership, in which leadership practice is stretched over leaders, followers, and the situation rather

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than concentrated in a single formal position (Spillane et al., 2004), and Gramaje and Buenviaje's (2023) portrayal of middle leaders as professional mentors, team builders, and learning facilitators. Evidence that coaching improves instruction (Kraft et al., 2018) further indicates that the relational and coaching-based supervision that participants valued is likely to be a productive form of instructional leadership.

Professional Growth Through Reflection, Limitation, and Continuous Learning

The participants' recognition that they could handle more than they initially thought, yet also had limitations, illustrates learning that emerged from experience and reflection. This supports Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which explains how individuals develop knowledge through concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The participants' accounts are also consistent with the notion of the reflective practitioner, who develops professional knowledge by reflecting on practice (Schön, 1983). Similarly, Rushton et al. (2023) emphasized that teacher professional identity is dynamic and continuously shaped by experiences, relationships, and professional responsibilities. The participants' description of being a Master Teacher as an ongoing "journey" is consistent with this view of identity as continually developing.

The acceptance of limitation reported by participants ("I don't have to prove that I can do everything") is noteworthy because it shows a form of professional maturity that complements delegation and collaboration. In terms of the Job Demands–Resources perspective, recognizing limits may allow Master Teachers to mobilize resources, such as colleagues and school heads, rather than absorbing demands alone. It also suggests that professional development for Master Teachers should not only add skills but also support the reflective capacity to judge when to act, when to share, and when to seek help.

Meaning, Purpose, and Learner-Centered Impact

The finding that Master Teachers drew motivation from their contributions to learners and colleagues is consistent with Hascher and Waber (2021), who emphasized the multidimensional nature of teacher well-being and the importance of social relationships and working conditions. It also supports the importance of instructional supervision in promoting professional development and improved teaching practices. From the standpoint of motivation theory, the experience of making a difference for others is consistent with the importance of relatedness and competence for intrinsic motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It also accords with the view that teachers' resilience is closely tied to a sense of vocation and self-efficacy (Gu & Day, 2007). Meaning and purpose appear to act as motivational anchors that help Master Teachers sustain their commitment despite the demands of the dual role.

This theme should not be read as an argument that meaning can substitute for adequate working conditions. In Job Demands–Resources terms, the motivational process and the health-impairment process operate side by side (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007): a strong sense of purpose may sustain engagement, but it does not remove the strain produced by excessive demands. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) found that resources such as supervisory support, autonomy, and collegial relations were associated with engagement, which underscores that the organizational conditions identified in the Conclusion remain necessary.

Comparison with Previous Philippine Studies

Table 6 positions the present study alongside the most closely related Philippine studies. The comparison shows consistency in the themes of heavy workload, time constraints, relational leadership, collaboration, and continuous learning, and indicates the distinct focus of the present study on how Master Teachers manage the competing demands of the dual role.

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Table 6. Comparison of the Present Study with Related Philippine Studies

Study	Design and participants	Key findings relevant to the present study	Relationship to the present study
Baldera (2025)	Transcendental phenomenology; 12 elementary Master Teachers from six public schools	Relational leadership through mentoring, collaboration, and modeling; identities shaped by reflective practice, PPST expectations, and constraints	Consistent with Themes 1, 4, and 5; the present study focuses on balancing the dual demands
Ag-A (2026)	Transcendental phenomenology; eight Master Teachers in Sagada, Mountain Province	Heavy workload and time constraints from dual roles; non-threatening supervision, collaboration, continuous learning	Consistent with Themes 2, 3, 4, and 5
Hungo et al. (2024)	Descriptive phenomenology with Colaizzi's method; 30 teacher-principals in Leyte and Southern Leyte	Dual-role challenges; prioritization, planning, and stress management	Methodological and conceptual parallel; different population
Reyes and Oropa (2025)	Quantitative; Master Teachers and other teachers in Surigao del Sur	Supervision highly manifested; problems in classroom observation, technical assistance, and resources	Complements the findings on challenges; the present study explains lived experience
Gestupa (2023)	Quantitative; Master Teachers' technical assistance in Taguig City and Pateros	Competency of Master Teachers strongly related to technical assistance provided	Supports the emphasis on strengthening instructional leadership competencies

Integrating the Theoretical Perspectives

Read together, the four theoretical perspectives offer a coherent account of the findings. Role Theory explains why the dual role generates competing demands on time and attention, as reflected in Themes 1 and 2. Job Demands–Resources Theory explains why the strategies in Theme 3 depended on resources such as colleagues, committee members, and planning time, and why the study concludes that organizational support is essential. Instructional Leadership Theory frames Theme 4, in which supervision is exercised as a developmental and relational function. Experiential Learning Theory explains Themes 5 and 6, in which professional insight and meaning arose from reflection on experience. The integration suggests that the Master Teacher's dual role is best understood as a demanding but developmental position: one in which role conflict and overload are real, but in which experience, reflection, relationships, and organizational resources together determine whether the role is sustainable.

Implications for the Proposed Development Plan

Taken together, the findings indicate that successful dual-role management depends on individual capabilities and supportive organizational conditions. This responds to the fifth research question and serves as the foundation for the

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proposed development plan, which emphasizes dual-role management, strategic time management, instructional supervision, coaching and mentoring, relational leadership, collaboration and delegation, reflective practice, continuous professional development, and learner-centered instructional leadership. Table 7 shows how each theme informs the focus areas of the plan.

Table 7. Linkage of Themes to the Focus Areas of the Proposed Development Plan

Theme	Implication	Development plan focus
1. Dual-Role Identity and Role Expansion	Clarify role expectations and support the integration of teaching and supervisory functions.	Dual-role management; instructional supervision
2. Temporal and Attentional Conflict Management	Equip Master Teachers to prioritize and schedule competing demands; protect essential instructional time.	Strategic time management; dual-role management
3. Strategic Practices for Dual-Role Effectiveness	Institutionalize planning, collaboration, and fair delegation supported by school heads.	Collaboration and delegation; strategic time management
4. Relational and People-Oriented Instructional Leadership	Strengthen listening, feedback, coaching, and mentoring skills.	Relational leadership; coaching and mentoring; instructional supervision
5. Professional Growth Through Reflection, Limitation, and Continuous Learning	Provide structured opportunities for reflection and sustained professional learning.	Reflective practice; continuous professional development
6. Meaning, Purpose, and Learner-Centered Impact	Keep supervisory work anchored on learner outcomes and colleagues' growth.	Learner-centered instructional leadership

Table 8 presents the proposed development plan in more detail. The plan is intended to be implemented in phases: an initial phase of orientation and role clarification involving Master Teachers and school heads; a capacity-building phase focused on the competencies identified in the findings; a school-based implementation phase that uses existing structures such as Learning Action Cell sessions for coaching, mentoring, and collaborative planning; and a monitoring and review phase in which progress is assessed and the plan is refined. The activities are proposed on the basis of the findings and the literature and are intended to be adapted by the Schools Division and district to local conditions. The plan draws on evidence that coaching is most effective when it is focused and combined with group training (Kraft et al., 2018), which is the form of learning that Learning Action Cells are designed to provide (Department of Education, 2016).

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Table 8. Proposed Development Plan for Strengthening the Instructional Leadership Capacity of Master Teachers

Focus area	Proposed activities	Responsible	Indicators of progress
Dual-role management and strategic time management	Workshops on prioritization, time-blocking, and flexible scheduling; development of a shared supervisory calendar that protects essential instructional time.	District leadership; school heads; Master Teachers	Participation records; documented supervisory schedules; Master Teachers' reflective outputs
Instructional supervision, coaching, and mentoring	Training on classroom observation, feedback conferences, and coaching cycles; school-based coaching and mentoring in Learning Action Cells.	Schools Division and district supervisors; Master Teachers	Coaching records; teacher feedback; evidence of improved instructional practices
Relational leadership and communication	Sessions on listening, constructive feedback, and differentiated support for teachers with different professional needs.	District leadership; Master Teachers	Teacher feedback; reflective outputs
Collaboration and delegation	School-level protocols for sharing tasks with committees and teams; clarification of role expectations; provision of administrative assistance.	School heads; Master Teachers	Documented role expectations; workload distribution records
Reflective practice and continuous professional development	Professional learning portfolios or reflection journals; peer reflection within Learning Action Cells; planned professional development pathways.	Master Teachers; school heads	Reflective outputs; professional development participation
Learner-centered instructional leadership	Linking supervisory activities to learners' needs and learning outcomes; sharing of effective instructional practices among teachers.	Master Teachers; classroom teachers; school heads	Evidence of improved instructional practices; teacher and school feedback

Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative phenomenological inquiry, this study involved seven Master Teachers from four elementary schools in a single district, and the findings rely on participants' self-reported accounts. The results are therefore intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within this context rather than to be statistically generalized. Readers should judge the transferability of the findings to other districts and educational settings in light of the contextual details provided.

The size of the sample is also a consideration. Empirical reviews of qualitative interview studies report that saturation is often reached with somewhat larger samples, especially when populations are heterogeneous (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The present sample was small but homogeneous and was drawn to answer a narrowly defined question with in-depth interviews, and its adequacy was judged in terms of information power (Malterud et al., 2016). Even so, additional participants, including Master Teachers from other districts and from secondary schools, might surface experiences that were not reported here. The study also relied on a single main data source, the interview, supported

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by field notes and reflective memos. Future studies may add observation, document analysis, or the perspectives of school heads and supervised teachers to triangulate the findings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that Master Teachers experience classroom teaching and instructional supervision as interconnected dimensions of their professional responsibilities. Their roles have expanded from classroom-centered teaching to a broader form of instructional leadership that includes mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and professional support for fellow teachers.

The major challenge associated with these dual responsibilities is the need to manage competing demands within limited time and attention. Classroom instruction, learner needs, supervisory activities, documentation, and other school responsibilities frequently overlap, requiring flexibility, sound judgment, communication, and effective prioritization.

The findings further establish that advance planning, time management, flexible scheduling, collaboration, delegation, and reflection are important strategies for managing these responsibilities. However, individual coping strategies alone are insufficient. Clear role expectations, reasonable workload distribution, administrative support, and collaborative school environments are necessary to sustain effective instructional leadership.

Moreover, effective instructional supervision requires more than monitoring teachers' compliance with standards. It involves listening, understanding, guiding, mentoring, encouraging, and empowering colleagues. The quality of professional relationships contributes significantly to the effectiveness of instructional leadership.

Finally, the experiences of Master Teachers demonstrate that professional growth is a continuous process shaped by actual experiences, reflection, acceptance of limitations, and lifelong learning. Their commitment is strengthened by the meaningful contributions they make to learners and fellow teachers.

Consequently, the study proposes a context-responsive development plan that integrates technical, relational, collaborative, reflective, and learner-centered leadership competencies to strengthen the capacity of Master Teachers in managing their dual responsibilities. In doing so, it contributes a descriptive phenomenological account of the Master Teacher's dual role to the Philippine literature on instructional leadership and, through the quality of supervision and teaching it seeks to strengthen, to the broader aim of quality education articulated in SDG 4.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Department of Education and District Leadership.** Expand professional development opportunities for Master Teachers, particularly in instructional supervision, coaching and mentoring, workload management, relational leadership, communication, and collaborative leadership. Policy guidance on teachers' workload and the removal of administrative tasks may also be clarified so that the supervisory functions of Master Teachers are recognized and scheduled within their working time.

2. **School Heads.** Provide organizational support by establishing clear role expectations, coordinating supervisory schedules, promoting reasonable workload distribution, protecting essential instructional time, and facilitating appropriate delegation. School heads may also provide administrative assistance and recognition so that supervisory work is treated as a shared responsibility rather than an additional burden on Master Teachers.

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3. **Master Teachers.** Strengthen personal management practices through advance planning, prioritization, flexible scheduling, collaboration, delegation, and reflective practice. Maintaining professional learning portfolios or reflection journals may also support continuous improvement. Master Teachers are encouraged to recognize their limitations, seek help when needed, and share the strategies that have worked for them with colleagues in similar positions.

4. **Schools.** Strengthen school-based professional learning communities, Learning Action Cell sessions, peer coaching, mentoring, and collaborative planning to encourage the sharing of effective instructional practices. Because coaching is most effective when it is focused and combined with group learning (Kraft et al., 2018), these activities should be purposeful and anchored on identified instructional needs.

5. **Classroom Teachers.** Participate actively in coaching, mentoring, professional learning, and collaborative activities facilitated by Master Teachers. Maintain open communication and constructive professional relationships to support instructional improvement.

6. **Implementation of the Proposed Development Plan.** Implement phased capacity-building activities focusing on dual-role management, instructional supervision, coaching and mentoring, relational leadership, collaboration, reflective practice, and learner-centered leadership. Monitor progress through professional development participation, coaching records, reflective outputs, teacher feedback, and evidence of improved instructional practices.

7. **Future Researchers.** Conduct similar studies in other districts and educational institutions to determine whether the experiences identified in this study are also evident in other contexts. Future research may also examine the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed development plan through quantitative, mixed-methods, or longitudinal approaches. Studies that include secondary-school Master Teachers, the perspectives of school heads and supervised teachers, and additional data sources such as observation would further enrich understanding of the dual role.

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