

Support Systems, Challenges, and Coping Mechanisms of Volunteer Teachers in Elementary Schools of North District, Bayugan City Division

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the support systems, challenges, and coping mechanisms of volunteer teachers in elementary schools within the North District of Bayugan City Division, Philippines. Employing a phenomenological research design, the study explored the lived experiences of these teachers through interviews. The research aimed to understand the motivations behind their volunteerism, the difficulties they encountered, the coping strategies they utilized, and the support systems available to them. The findings revealed that volunteer teachers faced various challenges, including limited resources, lack of adequate support, and emotional strain. To navigate these challenges, they employed a range of coping mechanisms, demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness. Support systems, while often informal, played a crucial role in providing emotional and practical assistance. The study also highlighted the need for more structured support and resources to enhance the experiences and contributions of these teachers. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of volunteerism in education within resource-constrained settings and informs the development of targeted support programs for volunteer teachers in the Philippines.

KEYWORDS

Bayugan City; Philippines; challenges; coping mechanisms; phenomenological research design; support systems; volunteer teachers

INTRODUCTION

Volunteer teachers encountered various challenges, including limited resources, lack of adequate training and support, and the emotional toll of working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Maulida & Herniti, 2025). These challenges resonated with recent studies emphasizing the importance of understanding the support systems required for volunteer teachers to thrive and effectively contribute to educational goals. Njenga (2023) recognized the need for these support systems by highlighting the challenges faced by volunteer teachers in Kenya, which included limited resources, inadequate training, and insufficient support from the school system. Similarly, Coleman et al. (2022) emphasized the psychological well-being of volunteer teachers, recognizing the impact that their experiences, such as witnessing educational disparities, could have on their mental health and overall quality of life. These studies underscored the need for comprehensive support systems to address the challenges faced by volunteer teachers and ensure their well-being.

Republic Act No. 9418, also known as the Volunteer Act of 2007, provided the overarching legal basis for volunteerism in the Philippines, recognizing the valuable

contributions of volunteers across various sectors, including education. This Act promoted and encouraged volunteerism by creating an enabling environment for individuals to engage in volunteer work. Furthermore, the Department of Education (DepEd) had issued various policies and guidelines that supported the engagement of volunteer teachers in public schools. DepEd Order No. 4, s. 2009, outlined the guidelines on the utilization of volunteer teachers, emphasizing their role in augmenting the teaching force and addressing teacher shortages. Additionally, DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2016, on the hiring and deployment of teachers, recognized the contributions of volunteer teachers in expanding access to quality education, particularly in underserved areas. This study is also aligned with the principles enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which mandated the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels.

Volunteerism in the education sector had been explored in various contexts, highlighting the motivations, contributions, and challenges faced by volunteer teachers. Hustinx et al. (2020). Onyango et al. (2021) emphasized the significance of understanding the support systems necessary for volunteer teachers to thrive and effectively contribute to educational goals. This research focused on the psychological well-being of volunteer teachers, recognizing the impact that their experiences could have on their mental health and overall quality of life (Cheng et al., 2023; Smith & Jones, 2022).

Despite the growing body of research on volunteer teachers, there remained a gap in understanding the support system, challenges, and coping mechanisms employed by volunteer teachers in the context of the Bayugan City Division. This study addressed this gap by examining the lived experiences of these teachers, drawing on their narratives to identify the recurring challenges they faced and the strategies they utilized to navigate these difficulties. Observations from the researcher in the division of Bayugan City revealed concerns about the lack of adequate training and support, financial constraints impacting their ability to meet basic needs, and the emotional toll of witnessing the educational disparities within the school. These persistent challenges underscored the need for a comprehensive investigation into the experiences of volunteer teachers in this context. This study investigated the challenges, coping mechanisms and support systems of volunteer teachers in the elementary schools of North District, Bayugan City Division.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigated the challenges, coping mechanisms and support systems of volunteer teachers in elementary schools of North District, Bayugan City Division, aiming to understand how their experiences aligned with existing theories of motivation, resilience, and social support. By examining the interplay of these factors, the study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the volunteer teacher experience and inform strategies for enhancing their support and well-being.

The main theory underpinning this study was the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). This model proposed that job-related stress arose from an imbalance between job demands (e.g., workload, emotional demands) and job resources (e.g., support, autonomy, feedback). While originally developed for paid employees, the JD-R model could be adapted to understand the experiences of volunteer teachers. This study examined the specific demands faced by volunteer teachers, such as limited resources, lack of formal training, and challenging classroom environments. It also explored the resources available to them, including social support from colleagues and communities, intrinsic motivation, and personal coping strategies. By analyzing the interplay of these demands and resources, the study aimed to identify factors that contributed to both challenges and resilience among volunteer teachers.

Second, the Social Support Theory developed by Cohen and Wills (1985), emphasizing the crucial role of social relationships in buffering the negative impacts of stress and promoting well-being. This theory was particularly relevant for understanding how volunteer teachers coped with challenges. The study explored the sources of social support available to volunteer teachers, including colleagues, school administrators, families, and community members.

One relevant theory that relates to coping mechanisms is the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This theory is particularly pertinent to the study of volunteer teachers' coping mechanisms. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping posits that stress arose from an imbalance between demands and resources, emphasizing the role of cognitive appraisal in the stress response. This model suggested that individuals evaluated the significance of a stressor and their ability to cope with it, outlining two main types of coping strategies: problem-focused coping, which involved taking direct action to mitigate the stressor or its effects, and emotion-focused coping, which involved managing the emotional response to the stressor rather than changing the stressor itself. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that effective coping depended on the individual's appraisal of the stressor and their perceived ability to manage it. The theory highlighted the dynamic and subjective nature of stress and coping, recognizing that coping strategies could vary widely among individuals and situations.

This theory was highly relevant to the study of volunteer teachers in the North District of Bayugan City Division because it provided a framework for understanding how these teachers perceived and responded to the challenges they faced. The lack of resources, limited professional development opportunities, and emotional stress identified in the study could be analyzed through the lens of the Transactional Model. By examining how volunteer teachers appraised these stressors and the coping strategies they employed, the study could offer insights into the effectiveness of different coping mechanisms and inform the development of support systems to enhance their well-being and performance.

In conclusion, the theoretical framework of this study integrated several key theories to comprehensively understand the challenges and coping mechanisms of volunteer teachers in the Bayugan City Division. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) served as the primary framework, highlighting the balance between job demands and resources. Complementing this, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000) provided insights into the intrinsic motivations driving volunteer teachers, while the Social Support Theory by Cohen and Wills (1985) underscored the importance of social relationships in mitigating stress. Additionally, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) offered a nuanced understanding of how teachers appraised and responded to stressors. Together, these theories provided a robust foundation for analyzing the experiences of volunteer teachers, identifying effective coping strategies, and informing the development of targeted support programs to enhance their well-being and effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of volunteer teachers in elementary schools within the North District of Bayugan City Division through an interview. Phenomenology, as described by Creswell (2013), is a qualitative approach that sought to understand the essence of a phenomenon by exploring the shared experiences and perceptions of individuals. This design is particularly suited to this study as it aimed to delve into the subjective realities of volunteer teachers, knowing

their support systems, capturing their perspectives on the challenges they faced, the coping mechanisms they employed, and the meanings they ascribed to their experiences. By employing a phenomenological lens, this study provided rich insights into the lived experiences of volunteer teachers, contributing to a deeper understanding of their motivations, challenges, and resilience in the context of their work.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in the Bayugan City Division, located in the province of Agusan del Sur, Caraga Region, Philippines. Bayugan City is a relatively young city, having been officially established in 2007. It is characterized by a predominantly agricultural economy, with a significant portion of the population engaged in farming and fishing. The city also faced challenges related to poverty and access to quality education, particularly in its rural barangays (villages). The choice of Bayugan City as the research locale was strategic due to several factors. First, anecdotal evidence suggested a significant number of 32 volunteer teachers within the city's elementary schools, particularly in remote areas with limited access to limited items for teachers. Second, the city's socio-economic context, with its challenges related to poverty and educational access, provided a compelling backdrop for understanding the motivations and challenges of volunteer teachers who dedicated themselves to serving this division.

Research Instrument

This study employed a researcher-made interview guide as the primary instrument for data collection. Structured in three distinct sections, the guide facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the lived experiences of volunteer teachers. The first section focused on establishing rapport and providing participants with a clear understanding of the study's purpose. The second section delved into the core of the research, presenting a series of carefully crafted questions designed to elicit detailed narratives regarding the challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems relevant to volunteer teachers. Finally, the concluding section expressed gratitude for the participants' time and valuable contributions to the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure prioritized the ethical considerations of confidentiality and privacy while ensuring a smooth and efficient process. First, the researcher sought formal approval from the Bayugan City Division from the office of the public schools' district-in-charge, and the respective school heads to conduct the study within their schools. Upon securing permission, the researcher explained the purpose and procedures of the study to the volunteer teachers, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring they fully understood the study and agreed to participate willingly.

To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned a unique code, and all data were stored securely with restricted access. The interview guide was administered to the volunteer teachers in a private and comfortable setting within the school premises, allowing for open and honest sharing of experiences. The interview was conducted at the participants' convenience, respecting their time and schedules. After each interview, the researcher expressed gratitude for the participant's contribution and reiterated the confidentiality measures in place. All interview data was transcribed verbatim, ensuring accuracy and preserving the participants' voices. Throughout the entire data gathering

process, the researcher maintained the highest standards of ethical conduct, respecting the rights and dignity of the volunteer teachers involved in the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Statistical Treatment

The following were used to treat the problems in this study.

Coding. After transcribing the interview results, this was used by the researcher to carefully read through each transcript multiple times for familiarization.

Thematic Analysis. This was used by the researcher to analyze the coded data to identify recurring themes that captured the essence of the volunteer teachers' experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Thematic analysis of the challenges experienced by the volunteer teachers

Partici- pants	Code	Category	Themes
P1	* challenges I encoun-tered are the resources, financial aspect, the environment, lack of facility * the situations of the students	Resource constraints Learner condition	Lack of resources and support
P2 P6	* lacking gyud ang teaching materials * their individual differen-ces ,pupils na mga hyper	IMs Learner diversity	Classroom management
P3	* wala koy own laptop	Financial constraints	Lack of resources and support
P6	* di pa kaayo ko pamina-won sa mga bata	Role perception	Lack of authority and recognition
P4	* naa naka na assign ana na section tapos kalit ka ipabalhin * 3 kapin ka tuig nag volunteer wala pa jud ko nahatagan item * maluoy ka sa imoha na pung mga studyante na imong nabiyaan	Class reassignment Insecurity of employme: Concern for learners	Job instability Emotional strain
P5	* transportation kay Bayugan paman ko from Poblacion mutravel ko sa Berseba. * kung muulan or lain ang panahon pud mag lisod jud ko.	Transportation and weather concern	Geographical issues
P6	*...maka take over ko sa klase kung wala ang teacher	Task delegation	Lack of Authority and Recognition

Effectively managing the classroom presents another key challenge, particularly concerning **learner diversity**. The wide range of individual differences among students, including those with hyperactivity as mentioned by P2, requires significant skill and resources to address adequately. Without sufficient training and support in differentiated instruction and behavior management, volunteer teachers can find it difficult to create an inclusive and productive learning environment for all students.

Difficulties in classroom management, particularly concerning learner diversity, echo the challenges identified in the literature. Mercado (2023) emphasizes the struggle of Filipino teachers, including volunteers, in addressing the diverse learning needs of students. The lack of adequate training and support, as mentioned by Onyango et al.

(2021), can further compound these classroom management issues for volunteer teachers who may not have received comprehensive pedagogical training.

Feelings of being undervalued and lacking proper authority contribute to a sense of **lack of authority and recognition**. P3's experience of not being taken seriously by students and P6's situation of stepping in for absent teachers without commensurate authority illustrate this theme. This lack of perceived authority can undermine their ability to effectively lead the classroom and can contribute to feelings of frustration and being unsupported in their crucial roles.

The feeling of lack of authority and recognition resonates with the broader challenges faced by volunteers. While the provided literature does not specifically address the lack of authority, the general lack of adequate support and recognition for volunteer teachers, as noted by Thomas and Brown (2021) in their call for policy changes, can contribute to this feeling of being undervalued. The intrinsic motivations of volunteers, as highlighted by Hustinx et al. (2020), are crucial, but a lack of recognition can undermine their commitment over time.

The precarious nature of their volunteer positions fosters significant **job instability**. The sudden reassignment of classes, as experienced by P4, highlights the unpredictable nature of their roles. More profoundly, the prolonged service without the prospect of permanent employment, also expressed by P4, creates a deep sense of insecurity and can impact morale and long-term commitment to the profession.

The risky nature of volunteer positions and the resulting job instability align with the understanding that volunteer teachers often operate outside traditional employment structures. The literature highlights the financial limitations associated with volunteer positions (Hustinx et al., 2020), which inherently suggests a lack of job security and the potential for frequent changes in assignments.

The dedication and empathy of the volunteer teachers often lead to considerable **emotional strain**. P5's poignant statement about the distress of leaving their students behind reveals the deep emotional investment they have in their learners' well-being. This emotional burden, coupled with the other challenges they face, can contribute to burnout and highlight the emotional demands of their roles.

The emotional toll experienced by volunteer teachers, particularly their concern for learners, is consistent with the understanding that they often work with students from disadvantaged backgrounds according to Onyango et al., (2021). The dedication and altruism that drive them as mentioned by Hustinx et al., (2020) can lead to deep emotional investment, making them susceptible to emotional strain when facing challenges related to their students' well-being or their own limitations in helping them.

Finally, external **geographical issues** add another layer of complexity for some volunteer teachers. As described by P5, difficulties with transportation to remote areas and the added burden of inclement weather significantly impact their ability to reach their schools consistently. These logistical challenges create additional stress and can hinder their effectiveness and commitment.

In the Philippine context, Mercado (2023) alludes to the varying challenges across different regions, and transportation difficulties could be a localized manifestation of broader logistical and infrastructural issues that can impact volunteer teachers in more remote areas.

Table 2. Thematic analysis of specific examples of situations where volunteer teachers faced the challenges

Participants	Code	Category	Themes
P1	"ang mga bata maka absent tungod sa financial or family problems..."	Absenteeism	Socioeconomic Barriers to Learning
	"many are not willing to be a volunteer teacher due to financial aspect..."	Financial Constraints	Economic Insecurity
P2 P6	"kulang gyud sa resources like textbooks..."	Lack of Teaching Materials	Inadequate Instructional Materials`
P3	"tungod sa ka hyper sa mga bata , are naturally langas.."	Discipline	Classroom management
	"ma compromise na among klase..." "Dilimaminaw, dili mosulat"		
P6	"wala koy magamit para sa ako lesson... magsulat sa manila paper..."	Traditional teaching	Lack of technology
P4	"gipatawag ko...ibalhin nako sa Grade 4 Science ug ESP..."	Sudden Reassignment	Job instability
P5	" wala gyud support financially" "...pag ulan... landslide.."	Transpo-weather related issues	Geo-related issues
	"students from bukid kay looy gyud kaayo... walay pamahaw..."	Food concerns	Insufficient Basic need

The findings from the coded and categorized data from the transcribed responses of the follow up Q on the specific examples of situations where volunteer teachers faced these challenges are presented in Table 2.

Volunteer teachers frequently face **socioeconomic barriers to learning** among their students. As P1 pointed out,

"ang mga bata maka absent tungod sa financial or family problems.."

This highlights how issues outside the classroom significantly impact student attendance and engagement, creating an additional layer of difficulty for the teachers. The impact of students' socioeconomic backgrounds on their learning, leading to absenteeism, aligns with the broader understanding of the challenges faced by teachers working with disadvantaged populations as mentioned by Onyango et al., (2021).

The theme of **economic insecurity** is evident in the volunteers' own experiences. P1's observation that

"many are not willing to be a volunteer teacher due to financial aspect...."

"Many people are unwilling to become volunteer teacher due to financial reasons"

underscores the financial strain associated with these roles and how it can deter individuals from committing long-term, contributing to a cycle of instability within the teaching force. The reluctance of individuals to become volunteer teachers due to financial reasons

directly supports the literature of Hustinx et al., (2020) highlighting the financial limitations associated with volunteer positions. This economic insecurity not only affects the recruitment of volunteers but also underscores the need for better financial support or incentives to sustain their commitment.

A tangible obstacle for educators is the **inadequacy of instructional materials**. The sentiment expressed by both P2 and P6,

“kulang gyud sa resources like textbooks...”

“There is a significant lack of resources, such as textbooks”

clearly indicates a shortage of basic tools essential for effective teaching and learning, forcing teachers to improvise and potentially compromise the quality of education. The lack of essential resources like textbooks directly mirrors the challenge of limited resources faced by volunteer teachers, as noted by Onyango et al. (2021). The inadequacy of these fundamental instructional materials significantly hinders the teaching and learning process.

Managing student behavior is a recurring challenge, falling under the theme of **classroom management**. P3 noted that,

“tungod sa ka hyper sa mga bata, are naturally langas,, ma compromise na among klase”

“Because of students hyperactivity, they are naturally noisy, which compromise our class”

This illustrates the difficulties in maintaining a conducive learning environment when dealing with energetic and sometimes disruptive students. Difficulties in managing hyperactive students and maintaining discipline relate to the challenges of addressing diverse learning needs and managing large class sizes, which Mercado (2023) identifies as specific issues faced by teachers in the Philippines. Volunteer teachers, who may have limited training, might find these classroom management issues particularly challenging.

The **lack of technology** further complicates the teaching process. P3's statement,

"wala koy magamit para sa ako lesson...magsulat sa manila paper..."

"I don't have any materials to use for my lesson, so I write on manila paper.”

vividly portrays the absence of modern educational tools, limiting teaching methodologies and potentially hindering student engagement in a digitally-driven world. The absence of technology for lesson delivery, forcing reliance on traditional methods, exemplifies the broader issue of limited resources and inadequate support according to Onyango et al., (2021). The lack of access to modern teaching tools can restrict pedagogical approaches and potentially disadvantage students in an increasingly digital world.

The precarious nature of their employment leads to **job instability**. P4's experience of being

"gipatawag ko...ibalhin nako sa Grade 4 Science ug ESP..."

"I was called and transferred to teach Grade 4 Science and ESP."

exemplifies the sudden reassignments that can disrupt teaching plans, create uncertainty, and impact the continuity of learning for both teachers and students. The experience of sudden reassignment highlights the precarious nature of volunteer positions and the potential lack of consistent support structures. While not explicitly discussed as "sudden reassignment," the general lack of adequate support and the fluid nature of volunteer roles can contribute to such instability.

External **geo-related issues** present additional hurdles for some volunteers. P5 mentioned

"wala gyud support financially...pag ulan...landslide..."

"There is no financial support at all... when it rains, landslides occur."

This indicates how environmental factors, such as landslides during the rainy season, can not only disrupt transportation but also highlight a lack of support in navigating these geographically challenging circumstances. The challenges posed by transportation difficulties and weather conditions, particularly in reaching remote areas, underscore the diverse contexts in which volunteer teachers operate. While not a central theme in the provided literature, these logistical challenges can compound the difficulties faced by volunteers in specific geographical locations, potentially impacting their consistency and well-being.

Finally, the **insufficient basic needs** of the students themselves create another layer of concern for the teachers. P5's observation that

"students from bukid kay looy kaayo...walay pamahaw..."

"Students from the mountains are very unfortunate... they have no breakfast."

This reveals a fundamental issue where students' basic needs are not being met, directly impacting their ability to focus and learn effectively in the classroom. The observation that students lack basic necessities like breakfast points to the socioeconomic challenges within the community (Onyango et al., 2021). These external factors significantly impact students' ability to learn and place additional emotional and practical burdens on the volunteer teachers who are often deeply invested in their students' well-being.

Table 3. Thematic analysis of how these challenges have impacted the teaching experience and overall well-being of the volunteer teachers

Participants	Code	Category	Themes
P1	"usahay ma neglect nako akong health...ma compromise jud ang quality education..."	Health issues	Health Burnout
P2	"I've learned a lot from that challenges..classroom management.."	Experiential learning	Professional growth
P3	"ma stress nalang ko unsaon nako para maminaw sila..."	stress issues	Well-being
P4	"mag adjust na sad ko...magbalik na pud ko buhat materials"	Personal adjustment	Continuous Adjustment
P5	I used it as a motivation...go motivate nako akong kaugalingo	Positive thinking	Motivation
P6	everyday gyud ka mag adjust...makagasto ko..."	Personal Sacrifice	Commitment

Table 3 illustrates the thematic analysis of how these challenges have impacted the teaching experience and overall well-being of the volunteer teachers. The challenges impacted the teaching experience and overall well-being of the volunteer teachers by expressing a gamut of mixed emotional strain, personal and professional growth.

The persistent difficulties have, for some, led to **health burnout**. P1's statement,

"usahay ma neglect nako akong health...ma compromise jud ang quality education..."

"Sometimes, I neglect my health, which truly compromises the quality of education."

This reveals a direct negative impact on their physical well-being. The demanding nature of their roles, coupled with the lack of resources and support, can lead to self-neglect and ultimately affect their ability to effectively teach.

The experience of health burnout due to the demands and lack of support aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model discussed by Sokal et al. (2020). Increased job demands without sufficient resources can lead to stress and burnout. The neglect of personal health in the face of demanding volunteer work illustrates this imbalance, potentially compromising the quality of education as noted by the participant.

Interestingly, amidst the challenges, some volunteers have experienced **professional growth**. P2 shared,

"I've learned a lot from that challenges... classroom management..."

"I've learned a lot from those challenges, especially in classroom management."

This suggests that navigating difficult situations, such as managing diverse classrooms with limited resources, has fostered resilience and enhanced their pedagogical skills, turning adversity into an opportunity for learning and development. The unexpected professional growth derived from overcoming challenges resonates with the concept of resilience discussed by Cheng et al. (2023). Their study on volunteer teachers in South Korea found that navigating difficulties can lead to the development of coping strategies and enhanced skills, contributing to professional development.

The cumulative effect of the various challenges has understandably taken a toll on the **well-being** of the volunteer teachers. P3 expressed,

"ma stress nalang ko unsaon nako pag paminaw sila..."

"I just get stressed thinking about how to make them listen to me."

This highlights the emotional burden and stress associated with the difficulties they face in their daily teaching, impacting their overall mental and emotional health. The negative impact of stress on well-being is a central tenet of stress and coping theories, such as the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The stress experienced by the volunteer teacher due to the challenges directly affects their overall well-being, highlighting the importance of support systems to mitigate these negative impacts.

Many volunteer teachers demonstrate **continuous adjustment** in response to the ever-changing circumstances. P4's comment,

"mag adjust na sad ko...magbalik na pud ko buhat materials"

"I have to adjust again and start making materials once more."

This reflects a constant need to adapt to new assignments, resource limitations, and other unforeseen challenges. This highlights their flexibility and resilience in the face of an unpredictable work environment. The need for continuous adjustment reflects the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of volunteer work, particularly in resource-limited settings. While not explicitly termed "continuous adjustment" in the literature, the challenges of limited resources mentioned by Mercado, (2023) necessitate ongoing adaptation and resourcefulness on the part of the volunteer teachers.

For some, the difficulties have surprisingly served as a source of **motivation**. P5 stated,

"I used it as a motivation...gi motivate nako akong kaugalingon..."

"I used it as motivation and encouraged myself to keep going."

This indicates a remarkable ability to find strength and drive from the very obstacles they encounter, pushing them to persevere and find inner resources to continue their work. Finding motivation amidst challenges can be understood through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000). Intrinsic motivations, such as a passion for education and a desire to contribute mentioned by Hustinx et al., (2020), can drive volunteers to persevere and find personal meaning and motivation even when faced with adversity.

Despite the hardships, a strong sense of **commitment** prevails among the volunteer teachers. P6's remark,

"everyday gyud ka mag adjust...makagasto ko..."

"Every day, I have to make adjustments, and it costs me money."

This underscores their dedication to their students and the profession. Their willingness to make personal sacrifices, even financially, demonstrates a deep commitment to fulfilling their teaching responsibilities despite the inherent challenges. This dedication, even to the point of personal financial contribution, underscores the deep commitment these individuals have towards their students and communities, embodying the spirit of "bayanihan" as mentioned by Gonzales (2022).

In conclusion, the challenges faced by volunteer teachers have a multifaceted impact on their experiences and well-being. While some endure health burnout and significant stress, others find opportunities for professional growth and motivation. A common thread is the need for continuous adjustment and a remarkable level of commitment that drives them to persevere despite the numerous obstacles they encounter. These findings underscore the resilience of these educators and highlight the urgent need for greater support to mitigate the negative impacts and foster a more sustainable and positive teaching environment.

Table 4. Thematic analysis of some difficulties faced by the volunteer teachers in terms of resources and support

Partici-pants	Code	Category	Themes
P1	"limited to none ang support... dili kaayo conducive to learning kay init, sigeg brownout.. makaguba sa devices"	Classrooms not conducive to learning power interruptions	Inadequate school infrastructure and technology support
P2	"kulang gyud ug supplies like crayons, pencils, papers..." "ang books para additional reference..."	Lack of school supplies and references	Inadequate learning materials
P5	"kulang gyud"		
P3	"wala man jud koy laptop... naglisod jud kog kuan ato maam..." "maglisod ko materials na need iprint..."	Difficulty in producing teaching materials	Insufficient teaching aids
P4	"kaugalingon nalang gyud pagpaning-kamot kung asa ka mangayo ug materials"	Difficulty in procuring teaching materials	Self-reliant

Table 4 presents the thematic analysis of some difficulties faced by the volunteer teachers in terms of resources and support. Volunteer teachers are consistent in describing their difficulties in an unsupported and resource -deprived schools. Inadequacy of school facilities, insufficient technological access make their instructional delivery extremely difficult. Good for volunteers who can supplement themselves with their own teaching materials or modern teaching aids otherwise, they have to develop self -reliance and patience to overcome these difficulties.

A significant challenge revolves around **inadequate school infrastructure and technology support**. P1's statement,

"limited to none ang support... dili kaayo conducive to learning kay init, sig'e'g brownout, makaguba sa devices"

"Support is very limited to nonexistent... the learning environment is not very conducive because of the heat, frequent brownouts, and damage to devices."

This paints a picture of learning environments that lack essential infrastructure and reliable utilities, directly hindering effective teaching and potentially damaging personal equipment used for instruction. The issue of inadequate school infrastructure and technology support directly relates to the challenge of limited resources highlighted in the literature of Onyango et al., (2021). The lack of conducive learning environments due to factors like heat and power outages further exacerbates these resource limitations, hindering the effectiveness of teaching.

The theme of **inadequate learning materials** further exacerbates the resource challenges. P2 explicitly mentions

"kulang gyud ug supplies like crayons, pencils, papers..."

"There is a significant shortage of supplies, such as crayons, pencils, and paper."

and P5 adds

"ang books para additional reference...kulang gyud"

"There is a significant shortage of books for additional reference."

This scarcity of basic learning tools and supplementary resources directly impacts the quality of instruction and limits the teachers' ability to provide engaging and comprehensive lessons. The scarcity of basic learning supplies and reference materials is a concrete example of the limited resources faced by volunteer teachers, as noted by Onyango et al. (2021). This lack directly impacts their ability to plan and deliver effective lessons and can compromise the quality of education.

Volunteer teachers also struggle with **insufficient teaching aids**. P3's comment,

"wala man jud koy laptop... naglisod jud kog kuan ato ma'am..."

"I really don't have a laptop, so I struggled a lot with that, ma'am."

This highlights the lack of essential technology for creating and delivering lessons. Furthermore, P3 notes

"maglisod ko materials na need iprint..."

"I struggle to print the necessary materials due to the lack of resources."

Indicating a lack of access to printing facilities or personal resources to produce necessary visual aids and worksheets. The lack of access to technology like laptops and the difficulty in producing printed materials further illustrate the resource constraints faced by volunteer teachers. This aligns with the broader challenge of inadequate resources mentioned by Onyango et al., (2021) and can limit their pedagogical approaches and the engagement of their students.

In response to these widespread resource limitations, some volunteer teachers have had to become remarkably **self-reliant**. P4's statement,

"kaugalingon nalang gyud pagpaningkamot kung asa ka mangayo ug materials..."

"You have to rely on your own efforts to find and request materials."

This underscores the lack of institutional support in providing necessary resources. This forces teachers to take on the additional burden of sourcing materials themselves, often using their own time and money. The necessity for volunteer teachers to be self-reliant in procuring materials underscores the lack of adequate support systems. While the literature emphasizes the importance of support mentioned by Duffy et al., (2020); Evers et al., (2019), this finding indicates a gap in providing readily available resources, forcing teachers to take on additional burdens.

In summary, the thematic analysis of resource and support difficulties reveals significant shortcomings in school infrastructure, a lack of basic learning materials and crucial teaching aids, and consequently, a need for volunteer teachers to be highly self-reliant. These findings emphasize the urgent need for improved resource allocation and support systems to enable these educators to create more effective and conducive learning environments for their students.

Table 5. Thematic analysis of any challenges experienced by the volunteer teachers related to teaching materials, technology, or professional development opportunities

Participant	Code	Category	Theme
P1	"Mag plano unta ko ug Science experiment... walay available na gamit." "Mag improvise nalang ko or iskip to na activity"	Lack of access to instructional materials	Inadequate resources
P2	"Ang uban TV is guba, dili magamit." "Usahay ako magprovide sa ako own chalk"	Limited access to technology	Lack of school-provided resources
P3	"Naay times maam na mawala gyud ang internet niya walay signal."	Poor technological infrastructure	
P5	"If walay kuryente dili gyud mi maka incorporate ug technology."		
P4	"Wala gyud kaayo professional development opportunities."	Neglect of volunteer teachers in training	Lack of institutional support for professional growth
P6	"Mas maayo gyud nga kung naay seminars... hatagan pud ug priority ang volunteer teachers"		

Table 5 discusses the Thematic analysis of any challenges experienced by the volunteer teachers related to teaching materials, technology, or professional development opportunities. The responses highlight widespread limitations in accessing essential teaching materials, functioning technology, and consistent professional development. Teachers frequently mentioned: Scarcity of teaching aids (e.g., chalk, TVs, science equipment, broken or outdated technology and poor connectivity).

The theme of **inadequate resources** is evident in the difficulties accessing basic instructional materials. P1's statement,

"Mag plano unta ko ug Science experiment... walay available na gamit"

"I wanted to plan a science experiment, but there are no available materials."

Furthermore, P1 notes

"Mag improvise nalang ko or iskip to na activity"

"I just have to improvise or skip the activity altogether."

highlighting the need for teachers to compensate for the lack of readily available materials, which can impact the quality and scope of their lessons, echoing the broader challenge of limited resources discussed by Onyango et al. (2021).

, Volunteer teachers also face **lack of school-provided resources**, particularly concerning technology. P2 mentions

"Ang uban TV is guba, dili magamit"

indicating limited access to functional technological tools. P2 further states,

"Usahay ako magprovide sa ako own chalk"

"Sometimes, I have to provide my own chalk."

again, highlighting the need for teachers to personally supply even basic teaching materials due to a lack of provision from the school. P3 adds to this with

"Naay times maam na mawala gyud ang internet niya walay signal"

"There are times when the internet completely goes down, and there's no signal at all."

pointing to **poor technological infrastructure** that hinders their ability to utilize online resources. P5 reinforces this, stating,

"If walay kuryente dili gyud mi maka incorporate ug technology"

"If there's no electricity, we really can't incorporate technology into our lessons."

These issues collectively demonstrate a significant gap in the provision of essential technological resources and reliable infrastructure, limiting the teaching methodologies available to the volunteers.

Finally, the theme of **lack of institutional support for professional growth** emerges as a critical concern. P4 and P6 jointly express this, with

"Wala gyud kaayo professional development opportunities"

"There are very few professional development opportunities available."

They further elaborate,

"Indeed, it would be much better if volunteer teachers were also given priority when seminars are available."

This lack of access to professional development directly contradicts the importance of providing training and professional growth opportunities for volunteer teachers, as emphasized by Garcia (2020) and the Department of Education's own guidelines (DepEd Order No. 4, s. 2009). Neglecting the professional growth of these educators can hinder their effectiveness and long-term commitment.

In summary, the volunteer teachers in this context experience significant challenges related to inadequate access to basic instructional materials, a lack of functional and reliable school-provided technology compounded by poor infrastructure, and a noticeable absence of institutional support for their professional development. These findings underscore the critical need for improved resource allocation, technological infrastructure development, and the inclusion of volunteer teachers in professional growth opportunities to enhance their teaching experience and ultimately benefit their students.

Table 6. Thematic analysis of how these resources and support limitations affected the ability of the volunteer teacher to effectively perform their teaching duties

Partici-pant	Code	Category	Theme
P1	“Ma compromise akong mga plan na mag conduct ug experiments.” “Wala nako na perform ako duty as a volunteer teacher.”	Compromised lesson plans	Limitations of teacher effectiveness
P2	“If dili ka ready to go to your class... it will really affect your teaching strategies. Wala man technology and resources na pwede magamit”	Lack of teaching aids /tools	Hindered delivery of diverse teaching strategies
P3	“Wala koy magamit na laptop... maglisod jud kog integrate ug technology”	Faith and peer communication	Inability to apply modern teaching
P4	“Kami baya usahay mangita pamaagi para sa amo teaching materials.” “Maglisod pud kog provide and makahulam pud kog kwarta.” Kung dili pud ka mag initiative, ma behind ang mga bata”	Teacher initiative and debt issues	Self-funding
P5	“TV... guba di gyud maka integrate ug technology.” “Videos para reference sa laptop nalang.” “Brownout... dili pud ko makalihok kay walay kuryente and wala pa jud signal.”	Technological limitations Power and signal issues	Lack of school-provided resources Environmental limitations
P6	“Mag provide or maghimo nalang jud ko akong own.” “Usahay di ko makaprovide kay brownout dili makaprint.”	Personal provision of materials	Resourcefulness

Table 6 posits the Thematic analysis of how these resources and support limitations affected the ability of the VT to effectively perform their teaching duties. Teachers expressed that these limitations directly affect instructional planning and delivery, Classroom preparedness, especially when burdened with personal financial constraints, teaching strategies, which are restricted due to lack of technology or electricity, hence resulting to disrupted students learning outcomes. In addition, volunteer teachers often resort to **personal spending, borrowing money**, incurring debts or **creating their own materials** or to fill resource gaps. This **emotional and financial burden** affects their morale and capacity, pushing them to rely on **initiatives and become resourceful** to ensure learners still benefit despite a lack of school-provided resources for effective teaching.

The theme of **limitations of teacher effectiveness** arises directly from the lack of resources. P1 states,

*“Ma compromise akong mga plan na mag conduct ug experiments...
Wala nako na perform ako duty as a volunteer teacher”*

The lack of resources and support seems to be making it difficult for you to fully carry out your role as a volunteer teacher, especially when it comes to hands-on learning like experiments.

This clearly illustrates how the absence of necessary materials directly hinders the teachers' ability to implement planned activities and fulfill their pedagogical responsibilities, thus limiting their overall effectiveness in the classroom, a direct consequence of the inadequate resources highlighted by Onyango et al. (2021).

The **hindered delivery of diverse teaching strategies** is another significant impact. P2 notes,

"If dili ka ready to go to your class... it will really affect your teaching strategies. Wala man technology and resources na pwede magamit"

"If you are not ready to go to your class, it will really affect your teaching strategies. There is no technology and resources available for use."

This emphasizes how the lack of both basic resources and technology restricts the variety of teaching methods that volunteers can employ, potentially limiting student engagement and catering to diverse learning styles, a constraint directly linked to the inadequate learning materials and technological infrastructure discussed earlier.

The **inability to apply modern teaching** is a direct consequence of the technological limitations. P3 mentions,

"Wala koy magamit na laptop... maglisod jud kog integrate ug technology"

"I don't have a laptop to use, so I really struggle to integrate technology."

This lack of access to essential technological tools prevents volunteer teachers from utilizing modern pedagogical approaches that often rely on technology for instruction, resource access, and student engagement, further widening the gap in the educational opportunities they can provide.

In some instances, the lack of support leads to **self-funding** by the teachers. P4 states,

"Kami baya usahay mangita pamaraan para sa among teaching materials... Naglisod pud kog provide ana makapaluluoy pud kog tan-aw... Kung dili pud ka mag initiative, ma behind ang mga bata"

"Sometimes, we have to find ways to secure teaching materials on our own. I struggle to provide them, and it's heartbreaking to see the situation. If you don't take the initiative, the students will be left behind."

This highlights the personal financial burden some volunteers bear to ensure their students have necessary learning materials, underscoring the inadequacy of institutional support and the deep commitment of these teachers, even at personal cost, echoing the personal sacrifices noted earlier.

Lack of school-provided resources and **environmental limitations** further impede effective teaching. P5 notes,

"TV... guba di gyud maka integrate ug technology... Brownout... dili pud ko makalihok kay walay kuryente and wala pa jud signal"

"The TV is broken, so we really can't integrate technology. The frequent brownouts make it even harder, and without electricity, I can't do much. To make things worse, there's no signal at all."

This illustrates how both the absence of functional school equipment and unreliable environmental factors like power outages and lack of internet connectivity directly disrupt teaching activities and limit the implementation of technology-based lessons.

Finally, the theme of **resourcefulness** emerges as a coping mechanism and a necessity in the face of limited support. P6 states,

"Mag provide or maghimo nalang jud ko akong own... Usahay di ko makaprovide kay brownout... dili makaprint"

"I just have to provide or create my own materials. Sometimes, I can't do that because of brownouts—I can't print."

This highlights the proactive efforts of volunteer teachers to create their own materials and adapt to the limitations, showcasing their resilience and dedication despite the systemic challenges they face.

In conclusion, the lack of adequate resources and support significantly impacts the ability of volunteer teachers to perform their duties effectively. It limits their pedagogical approaches, hinders the integration of modern teaching methods, necessitates personal financial contributions, and disrupts teaching due to environmental factors. The resourcefulness displayed by some teachers underscores their commitment but also highlights the urgent need for improved institutional support to alleviate these burdens and enhance their capacity to provide quality education.

The Strategies made by the volunteer teachers to cope with the challenges they experienced

The table below shows the coping mechanisms used by the volunteer teachers to cope with the challenges.

Table 7. Thematic analysis of typical coping mechanism of the challenges faced by the volunteer teachers

Partici-pant	Code	Category	Theme
P1	"mag antos nalang gyud ko para sa mga bata"; "I don't want them to see me weak"; "smiles of my students...very fulfilling"	Endurance	Personal sacrifice
P2	"gipili man nako ni siya na kurso"; "akoang one way of motivating myself"; "itake as a challenge"	Self-motivation	Professional perseverance
P3	"nag ampo pud ko sa Ginoo"; "makig storya ko sako mga kauban"	Faith and peer communication	Spiritual coping and peer support
P4	"ginapasagdan nalang nako sila"; "mag ingkod rako atubangan sa ilaha"; "magpuyo na dayon na sila"	Behavioral concern	Stress management
P5	"talking to other people"; "Lisod nang ato lang luomon atong gibati"	Communication	Social interaction
P6	"magpagawas ra gyud ko sakong gibati"; "mutabang pud silag console sa akoa"	Personal outcry	Peer support

Table 7 points the Thematic analysis of typical coping mechanism of the challenges faced by the volunteer teachers. The responses reveal a deeply personal and resourceful set of coping mechanisms rooted in internal motivation, faith, and social interaction. Participants often draw strength from their commitment to teaching and the emotional fulfillment derived from their students' progress. A strong sense of vocation emerges, with several participants expressing perseverance as a deliberate choice to support their learners despite difficult conditions. Faith-based practices, such as prayer and reflection, help some teachers maintain emotional stability.

One prominent coping mechanism is **personal sacrifice**, driven by a deep sense of dedication. P1's statement,

"mag antos nalang gyud ko para sa mga bata; 'I don't want them to see me weak'; 'smiles of my students...very fulfilling'"

"I endure everything for the sake of the children; I don't want them to see me as weak. The smiles of my students are truly fulfilling."

This illustrates a willingness to persevere through hardship, finding fulfillment in the students' progress and prioritizing their well-being even at personal cost. The willingness to endure hardship for the sake of the students aligns with the altruistic motivations of volunteer teachers discussed by Hustinx et al. (2020). Their commitment often involves personal sacrifices driven by a strong sense of responsibility towards their students' well-being and education.

Many teachers exhibit **professional perseverance** through **self-motivation**. P2 shared,

*"gipili man nako ni siya na kurso; 'akoang one way of motivating myself';
'itake as a challenge'"*

"I chose this course for a reason; it's my way of motivating myself. I take it as a challenge."

This highlights an internal drive and a conscious decision to view the difficulties not as insurmountable obstacles but as challenges to be overcome, fueling their determination to continue in their roles. The act of self-motivation and viewing challenges as opportunities for growth reflects the resilience and coping strategies identified by Cheng et al. (2023). Their study highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivation in helping volunteer teachers persevere through difficulties.

Spiritual coping and peer support emerge as important resources for navigating difficulties. P3 mentioned

"nag ampo pud ko sa Ginoo; 'makig storya ko sako mga kauban'"

"I also pray to God and talk with my colleagues."

This indicates reliance on faith for strength and comfort, coupled with seeking solace and understanding through communication with fellow teachers who share similar experiences. Reliance on faith and seeking support from colleagues are identified coping mechanisms in the literature. Reyes (2021) notes the importance of faith and spiritual beliefs for many volunteers, while Smith and Jones (2022) emphasize the crucial role of social support from colleagues in promoting resilience.

Volunteer teachers also engage in **stress management** through **behavioral concern**. P4 stated

*"ginapasagdan nalang nako sila; 'mag ingkod rako atubangan sa ilaha';
'magpuyo na dayon na sila'"*

"I just let them be; I sit in front of them, and they eventually settle down."

While seemingly passive, this could represent a form of emotional detachment or prioritizing their own mental well-being by not dwelling excessively on situations they feel they have limited control over. The described behavioral approach to managing stress, while potentially less adaptive, can be understood as a coping mechanism within the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), where individuals employ various strategies to deal with perceived stressors.

Social interaction serves as another coping strategy. P5 noted

"talking to other people; 'Lisod nang ato lang luomon atong gibati'"

"Talking to other people; it's difficult to keep our feelings to ourselves."

This emphasizes the importance of communication and seeking support from individuals outside their immediate work environment as a way to process their experiences and alleviate emotional burdens. The importance of talking to others to cope with difficult emotions aligns with the literature on social support of Smith & Jones, (2022); Duffy et al., (2020). Strong relationships and open communication can provide emotional release and a sense of belonging, aiding in stress management.

Finally, **peer support** is explicitly mentioned as a valuable coping mechanism. P6 shared

"magpagawas ra gyud ko sa akong gibati; 'mutabang pud silag console sa akoa'"

"I just let out my feelings, and they also help console me."

This reinforces the significance of having a supportive network of colleagues who can provide understanding, empathy, and practical advice, creating a sense of camaraderie and shared resilience. The explicit mention of peer support as a helpful coping mechanism reinforces the findings of Smith and Jones (2022) and Duffy et al. (2020) regarding the positive impact of supportive relationships with colleagues on the well-being and resilience of volunteer teachers.

In summary, the volunteer teachers employ a range of coping mechanisms to navigate the challenges they face. These include personal sacrifice driven by dedication, self-motivation fostering professional perseverance, reliance on spiritual faith and peer support, employing behavioral strategies for stress management, engaging in social interaction for emotional release, and finding solace and assistance within their network of fellow teachers. These diverse strategies highlight the resourcefulness and resilience of these educators in maintaining their commitment despite the difficulties they encounter.

Table 8. Thematic analysis of specific strategies or approaches applied by the volunteer teachers in managing stress and maintaining well-being

Partici-pant	Code	Category	Theme
P1	“planting flowers”; “mangita kog nindot na spots na maka unwind ko”	Environmental	Nature connection
P2 P6	“naga kaon lang gyud kog lami”; “support sa akoang mga co-teacher”; “naga share pud ko sa ilaha”; “family of my own”	Food trip, Peer and family	Indulgent coping
P3	“mag pray raman ko”; “magpa sound ug Christian music”; “self-reflection ug meditation	Spiritual practice and inner reflection	Emotional regulation
P4	“breathe in breathe out”; “running and walking”; “puli-puli lang na”	Movement and breathing	Physical activity
P5	“talking to my co-teachers”; “pahungaw sa gibati”; “planting... maka relieve pud ug stress”	Conversation horticulture	Communication with peers and nature
P6	“magpabasa ikaon ra gyud nako ang stress”; “mag stress-eating”		Stress-eating outlet

Table 9 reveals the thematic analysis of specific strategies or approaches applied by the volunteer teachers in managing stress and maintaining well-being. Volunteer teachers in North District of Bayugan City Division employ a variety of stress management strategies that reflect their support systems. An intentional pursuit of balance—through nature,

spirituality, physical activity, or social interaction are found to be the most helpful. As a direct, though short-term, form of emotional release for some teachers. Overall, these strategies suggest that while volunteer teachers face considerable emotional and professional demands, they exhibit resilient coping by blending physical, emotional, social, and spiritual approaches. Their responses highlight the need for personal and communal resources to sustain their mental well-being.

One strategy employed by volunteer teachers is **nature connection**. P1 mentions

"planting flowers; 'mangita kog nindot na spots na maka unwind ko'"

"Planting flowers; I look for beautiful spots where I can unwind."

This suggests finding solace and relaxation through engaging with nature, whether through gardening or seeking out peaceful natural environments. Engaging with nature as a stress-management technique aligns with broader research on the benefits of nature for mental well-being. While the provided literature doesn't specifically mention "nature connection" for volunteer teachers, studies in environmental psychology suggest that spending time in nature and engaging in activities like gardening can reduce stress and improve mood. This strategy provides a personal resource for emotional regulation.

Some teachers engage in **indulgent coping** mechanisms. P2 notes

"naga kaon lang gyud kog lami; 'support sa akoang mga co-teacher';"

"I just enjoy eating delicious food; I also receive support from my co-teachers."

and

"naga share pud ko sa ilaha; 'family of my own'"

"I also share with them; having a family of my own."

This indicates finding comfort and stress relief through enjoying food and drawing support from their colleagues, who they consider as close as family. Finding comfort in enjoyable food and seeking support from close colleagues, who are considered like family, relates to both emotion-focused coping and the importance of social support. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) acknowledges emotion-focused coping strategies aimed at managing the emotional response to stress. Furthermore, Smith and Jones (2022) highlight the crucial role of social support from colleagues in promoting resilience among teachers.

Emotional regulation is facilitated through **spiritual practice and inner reflection**. P3 shares

"mag pray raman ko; 'magpa sound ug Christian music'; 'self-reflection ug meditation'"

"I simply pray; I play Christian music; I engage in self-reflection and meditation."

This highlights the use of faith, music, and introspective practices as ways to manage emotions, find inner peace, and cope with stress. Utilizing spiritual practices, listening to uplifting music, and engaging in self-reflection and meditation are all recognized emotion-focused coping strategies. Reyes (2021) mentions the reliance on faith and spiritual beliefs as a source of strength for volunteers. Additionally, mindfulness and meditation practices have been shown to be effective in managing stress and promoting emotional well-being.

Physical activity is another strategy utilized for stress management. P4 mentions

"breathe in, breathe out; running and walking, alternating between the two."

"breathe in breathe out; 'running and walking'; 'puli-puli lang na'"

Engaging in simple physical exercises like breathing techniques, running, and walking helps in releasing tension and promoting overall well-being. Engaging in physical activities like breathing exercises, running, and walking is a well-documented stress-management technique. Exercise releases endorphins, which have mood-boosting effects and can help reduce stress and anxiety according to Sharma et al., (2006), as cited in a broader context). This active coping strategy directly addresses the physical manifestations of stress.

Communication with peers and nature serves as a combined outlet for some teachers. P5 states

"talking to my co-teachers; 'pahuwayan sa gibati'; 'planting... maka relieve pud ug stress'"

"Talking to my co-teachers helps ease my emotions; planting also helps relieve stress."

This indicates the importance of social support from colleagues and the therapeutic benefits of engaging in nature-based activities like planting.

Combining talking with colleagues for emotional release with the stress-relieving benefits of planting aligns with the importance of social support as noted by Smith & Jones, (2022) and the positive impact of nature connection. Sharing feelings with peers provides emotional validation and support, while engaging in nature-based activities offers a calming and restorative outlet.

Finally, a less adaptive coping mechanism observed is **stress-eating outlet**. P6 shares

"magpabasa ikaon ra gyud nako ang stress; 'mag stress-eating'"

"I just let myself indulge in food; I cope through stress-eating."

This suggests that some individuals may turn to food as a way to cope with the pressures and anxieties associated with their roles, which can have negative long-term effects on their health. While providing immediate comfort, using stress-eating as a primary coping mechanism is often considered a less adaptive emotion-focused coping strategy. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Lazarus & Folkman, (1984) distinguishes between more and less effective coping strategies. While not explicitly supported as a healthy long-term solution in the provided literature, it represents a way some individuals manage emotional distress.

In summary, the volunteer teachers employ a variety of strategies to manage stress and maintain their well-being. These include connecting with nature, indulging in comforting activities, engaging in spiritual practices and reflection, utilizing physical activity, seeking communication with peers, and, in some cases, resorting to stress-eating. These diverse approaches highlight the individual ways in which these dedicated educators strive to cope with the challenges they face in their demanding roles.

The support systems available to the volunteer teachers

The table below presents the different support systems available to the volunteer teachers.

Table 9. Thematic analysis of the support systems available to volunteer teachers

Participant	Code	Category	Theme
P1	“naay community appreciation... mag share sila sa ilang meals, maghatag gulay”	Community Appreciation	Informal Support Systems
P2	“Moral and financial help from the principal; strong peer support”	Administrative & Peer Support	Institutional and Emotional Support
P3	“akong mga kauban na teachers sa school ila kong pahulamon ug teaching materials, ... strategies”	Peer Collaboration	Resource and Knowledge Sharing
P4	“They give mentoring sessions ... if kulang ako materials mu provide pud sila”	Professional Support	Collaborative Guidance
P5	“Orientation, mentoring, inclusion by teachers and principal”	School Integration	Supportive School Environment
P6	“gina train nami ug unsa gyuy mga buluhaton sa school... if naay gatherings sa dagat uban pud mi”	Inclusion and Involvement	Participation and Encouragement

Table 9 presents the Thematic analysis of the support systems available to volunteer teachers. Volunteer teachers rely heavily on peer support, mentorship, and community appreciation. While financial help is limited, the emotional and practical assistance they receive fosters a sense of belonging and resilience. The thematic analysis reveals a reliance on **informal support systems**, primarily driven by **community appreciation**.

“naay community appreciation... mag share sila sa ilang meals, maghatag gulay”

"There is community appreciation—they share their meals and give vegetables."

P1 mentions indicating that support often comes in the form of informal gestures from the community they serve. This suggests a level of local recognition and appreciation, though it doesn't constitute a structured support program from the educational institution or the Department of Education.

Volunteer teachers also benefit from **institutional and emotional support**, often stemming from **administrative and peer support**. P2 reports

"Moral and financial help from the principal; strong peer support."

"Moral and financial help from the principal, along with strong peer support, make a big difference."

This highlights the crucial role of school leadership in providing both tangible and emotional support, coupled with the emotional sustenance derived from supportive colleagues. Despite this, the absence of formal programs tailored to volunteer teachers suggests that this administrative support might be more incidental rather than a systematically implemented initiative.

Resource and knowledge sharing occurs through **peer collaboration**. P3 notes

“akong mga kauban na teachers sa school ila kong pahulamon ug teaching materials, ... strategies”

"My fellow teachers at school lend me teaching materials and share their strategies with me."

This underscores the significance of the immediate peer network in providing practical resources, pedagogical strategies, and emotional understanding. While highly valued by the participants, as per the additional findings, this peer-based support operates within an informal framework, filling the void left by the lack of formal institutional backing.

Collaborative guidance is facilitated by **professional support**, as mentioned by P4,

"They give mentoring sessions ... if kulang ako materials mu provide pud sila"

"They provide mentoring sessions, and if I'm lacking materials, they also help by providing them."

This suggests that more experienced colleagues often take on informal mentoring roles, providing guidance and practical assistance. Again, while effective in providing immediate help, this relies on the initiative of individual teachers rather than a structured mentorship program.

A **supportive school environment** is fostered through **school integration**. P5 reports

"Orientation, mentoring, inclusion by teachers and principal"

"Orientation, mentoring, and inclusion provided by teachers and the principal help create a supportive environment."

This indicates efforts at the school level to integrate volunteer teachers into the community, providing some level of orientation and inclusion. However, the overall absence of formal programs suggests that the extent and consistency of this integration may vary and not be part of a standardized support system.

Finally, **participation and encouragement** are facilitated through **inclusion and involvement**. P6 mentions

"gina train nami ug unsa gyuy mga buluhaton sa school... if naay gatherings sa dagat uban pud mi"

"We are trained on the various responsibilities at school, and if there are gatherings by the sea, we join as well."

This points to efforts to involve volunteer teachers in school activities and provide informal guidance. While these actions contribute to a sense of belonging and offer some development opportunities, they do not constitute a formal, comprehensive support program designed specifically for volunteer teachers.

In conclusion, the support systems available to volunteer teachers in this context are predominantly informal, relying heavily on community appreciation, peer collaboration, and the goodwill of individual administrators and colleagues. While these informal mechanisms are reported as highly effective in providing emotional resilience and practical help, there is a clear absence of formal programs or initiatives from the school or the Department of Education tailored to the specific needs of volunteer teachers. This gap between policy and practice highlights a potential area for improvement in ensuring more structured and consistent support for these vital educators.

Proposed Plan of Action

Strengthening the Support System for Volunteer Teachers: A Sustainable Action Plan for Resilience and Growth

Rationale. The findings of this study revealed that volunteer teachers in the North District of Bayugan City Division face multiple challenges, including a lack of resources, financial constraints, classroom management difficulties, emotional strain, and limited formal support systems. Despite these challenges, volunteer teachers demonstrate resilience by employing various coping mechanisms such as self-motivation, peer support, and faith-based strategies. However, these informal support systems are not sufficient to address the institutional gaps affecting their well-being and teaching effectiveness. To enhance their experiences and contributions, a structured plan of action is necessary to provide adequate resources, financial assistance, professional development opportunities, and formal recognition. Implementing these initiatives will ensure that volunteer teachers are equipped with the necessary tools and support to effectively perform their roles and sustain their commitment to education.

Table 11. Action Plan Matrix

Findings of the study	Activities	Objectives	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Mode of Verification	Budgetary Requirements
Lack of teaching materials and resources	Procurement and distribution of instructional materials	Ensure volunteer teachers have adequate teaching resources	Quarterly (March, June, September, December)	School administrators, LGU officials, volunteer teachers	Inventory records of distributed materials	Budget allocation for materials from school and LGU
Financial constraints affecting volunteer teachers	Provide financial allowances or stipends	Improve financial stability and motivation of volunteer teachers	Monthly stipend disbursement	LGU, school finance officers, volunteer teachers	Payroll records	LGU and school fund allocation
Limited professional development opportunities	Conduct regular training workshops and mentorship programs	Enhance teaching skills and classroom management strategies	Bi-annual seminars (April & October)	School administrators, DepEd representatives, senior teachers	Attendance records and feedback forms	Training funds from DepEd and LGU
Lack of recognition for volunteer teachers	Implement formal recognition programs (certificates, awards appreciation events)	Boost morale and encourage continued commitment among volunteer teachers	Annual recognition event (December)	School administrators, local officials, teachers and students	Event documentation and issued certificates	LGU and school celebration fund
Emotional strain and job instability	Provide mental health support and career guidance	Improve emotional well-being and create pathways for permanent employment	Ongoing support program with monthly check-ins	School counselors, LGU representative, volunteer teachers	Counseling records, feedback surveys	Funding for mental health programs

CONCLUSION

Based on the given findings of this study, the following conclusions are presented:

1. Volunteer teachers in the North District of Bayugan City Division face a complex interplay of challenges, including resource limitations, classroom management issues, and emotional strain, which collectively impact their overall well-being and can lead to issues such as health burnout.
2. Despite facing significant difficulties, volunteer teachers demonstrate resilience by employing various coping mechanisms, including personal sacrifice, self-motivation, and seeking social and spiritual support, showcasing their determination and adaptability.
3. While informal support systems, particularly peer collaboration and community appreciation, provide valuable emotional and practical assistance to volunteer teachers, the absence of formal, structured support programs highlights a gap in institutional support.
4. To enhance the experiences and effectiveness of volunteer teachers, there is a need for targeted support that includes access to resources, financial assistance, professional development opportunities, and formal recognition of their contributions. This underscores that addressing these specific needs could lead to improved teacher satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, better educational outcomes for students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

Volunteer Teachers. Communicate their needs to school administrators and relevant authorities, using the findings of this study to support their requests for resources, training, and better working conditions.

In-Service Teachers. Participate in mentorship programs to support volunteer teachers, fostering collaboration and shared learning experiences.

School Administrators. Develop and implement formal support programs specifically designed to address the unique needs of volunteer teachers, rather than relying solely on informal support.

Local Government Unit (LGU) - Committee on Education. Allocate resources to support volunteer teachers, recognizing their contribution to the community's education, which may include financial allowances or subsidies and provision of teaching materials.

Department of Education. Incorporate specific modules or programs in their curriculum that address the unique challenges and needs of volunteer teachers, equipping them with relevant skills and coping strategies.

Future Researchers. Engage in further research to explore effective strategies for supporting and training volunteer teachers, contributing to the knowledge base in this area.

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