

# Absence of Master Teachers in Non Central Schools: Perspective of School Heads

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of school heads in the absence of master teachers in their particular school setting. Illustrated also in this study is how school heads responded, managed and gained insights in fostering quality school curriculum despite the absence of master teachers. Qualitative Phenomenological approach was employed to 14 school heads of the Division of Compostela Valley. In depth interviews and focused group discussions were conducted. The results of the interview were transcribed, translated and coded to produce themes. As regards to perspective of school heads on the absence of master teachers the following themes were generated: Under the experiences coming from the School Heads five major themes emerged; Resiliency in the field, burdened and weight down, reduced ability to deliver, limited mentoring and coaching and indisposition of teachers. Whereas under the coping mechanism the following themes were observed; delegation, multitasking, ingenuity and resourcefulness, establishing good rapport, strengthening faculty development. As to their insights, the themes gained were: must be avoided whenever possible, disadvantageous but not deleterious, mitigated by delegating, alleviated by being creative. Hence, study implied that a school head's task is crucial in the overall functionality of the school it also determines the learning outcomes of the learner. Moreover, managing schools without MTs would mean an extra load placed on the shoulders of the school heads, the rest of those that they cannot anymore handle were delegated to the teachers but with appropriate managerial strategies a school head can successfully surpassed the given situation.

**Keywords:** *education management, leadership, master teachers, non central schools, school heads perspectives, phenomenology, educational management,*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Instruction suffers without highly proficient teachers who are expected to take charge of the mentoring of the beginning teachers, troubleshooting instructional inefficiencies and crafting instructional materials that work. Having only beginning and proficient teachers in non-central schools puts the learning outcomes at stake since no one can take care of the instruction in general; someone who has the full authority over these matters. As a former classroom teacher and a current school head in a public school, I understand the struggles of the classroom preparations to meet the needs of the learners and have immersed myself with the hassles of being a school head ranging from the piles of documents to be reviewed and signed, mobilization of resources, collaborating with stakeholders and a lot more. This deters me from supervising the implementation and development of the curriculum. The school heads indirectly influence the learning outcomes since they determine the needs of the teachers and provide them with necessary support and mentorship to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Myerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Maxwell & Riley, 2017). Having master teachers (MTs) or the highly proficient teachers in school helped a lot since they take care of the majority of classroom observations and other instructional aspects since these are part of their performance targets.

Having master teachers in school would mean that someone in authority would take initiative in developing instructional materials based on in-depth understanding of the subject matter and the needs of the class. They also take responsibility over the outcomes and evaluate these outcomes to determine what else has to be done. Their colleagues look at them as models for instructional implementation and development. In addition, they provide mentorship for their colleagues. Hence, they are called experts in the field (Ibrahim, Aziz, and Nambiar, 2013a). Under DepEd order no. 42 s 2017, MTs are expected to demonstrate a high level of performance as compared to Teachers I to III. MTs are expected to focus on planning, facilitating, developing and evaluating instructional support such as engaging classroom strategies and instructional materials that promote higher order thinking skills. These strategies and materials are to be piloted in their individual classes so that they can evaluate the outcomes for appropriate redevelopment when needed. The beginning and proficient teachers will be under their leadership.

To have a full understanding on the point of view of the school heads assigned in non-central schools with no MTs, it is necessary to point the gaps in the existing research. One identified gap is in the research of instructional implementation, development and supervision in the basic education. A number of researchers pinpointed the significant role played by MTs in the academic life of a school (Ibrahim et al. 2013; Rido, 2017; Rido, Ibrahim & Nambiar, 2014). Recent researches have been done as well emphasizing the demonstration of the school heads' instructional

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leadership as vital in the success of the school (Boldt, 2016; Cole-Foppe, 2016; Cooper, 2017; Leithwood, 2016; Maxwell & Riley, 2017). I have not come across a similar study that dealt on the perspectives of the school heads in the absence of master teachers in their schools. It is on this premise that I am interested to know the experiences of the school heads as they strive to fill in the roles and responsibilities of the master teachers, their means of coping and their insights to come up with significant implications for the success of the educational outcomes despite of the deficiencies in the organization. Hence, the conduct of this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of the school heads assigned in non-central schools in the absence of master teachers particularly the experiences, means of coping and insights of the different public schools heads in elementary and secondary level who are currently stationed in non-central schools with no master teachers. At this stage in the research, the absence of master teachers in non-central schools was generally defined as the absence of a highly proficient instructional managers who were supposed to provide scaffolding and mentorship to the beginning and proficient teachers in schools that are not considered a mother school in the locality.

### **Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the School Heads experiences in managing schools without master teachers?
2. What are the coping mechanism adopted by the School Heads to handle the absence of master teachers in their schools?
3. What are the School Heads insights on the absence of master teachers?

### **Theoretical Lens**

The study was viewed from the lens of David (2005) and Hashim (2005) on the Strategic Management Theories (SMT) which stem out into profit maximization, resource-based, survival, human resource, agency and contingency. Strategic management encompasses the capacity of the top management to formulate and implement initiatives in consideration with the available resources that can warrant its sustained performance. Moreover, the theory looked into the management's strategic choices in employing actions that would suit to the current state of the organization. The school heads, being referred to as the top management in schools are bound to set the overall direction and specific course of actions towards the realization of the schools' vision, mission and goals. In an educational system, one of the important resources that school heads have to consider in crafting plans and implementing their course of actions is the capacity of the human resource.

Specifically, under the strategic management theory is the resource-based theory which gave emphasis on the features of an organization and its valuable capabilities as theorized by Barney (1991) and subsequently supported with premises of Grant (1991) and Peteraf (1993). Successful school managers or school heads are those who have demonstrated the effective and efficient utilization of resources that can add up to the value of educational outcomes. In case of the scarcity of a resource, say the human resource of a school, strategic managers maximize the use of resources through empowering the teachers and provide them with appropriate development programs such that they become a valuable resource of the school which can contribute to its sustained competitive advantage as described by Barney (1991).

Essentially, the way the school heads respond to the challenges can be viewed from the lens of psychological theory specifically on Self-efficacy theory. From the viewpoint of Bandura (1977), the perceived self-efficacy of a person is instrumental in further developing his/her potentials and capabilities which are vital to produce the desired outcomes.

Moreover, the theory of Hershey and Blanchard (1972) opens a window in understanding the leadership styles employed by school heads in devising feasible means of responding to the concerns of the school based on the Situational Leadership theory. School heads have their personal choices on the kind of management and leadership style that they are going to utilize based on their confidence and expertise. However, based on the theoretical assumptions, school heads tend to vary their way of managing the school to effectively respond to the current call or to the concerns on the current environment.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study were beneficial for the schools in general. Knowing the experiences of the school heads in the absence of master teachers and how they cope with the situation can serve as bases for evaluating the assignments of teachers particularly among inaccessible areas. Having quality education outcomes is facilitated when there is someone who is an expert in the field who can facilitate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum. The findings can serve as bases for policy review in the level of the central office in the department or

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ministry of education for possible re-orientation of school heads or teacher-in-charge for them to be fully capacitated in handling curricular matters in case no MTs can be installed in their schools.

Moreover, the findings of this research have a significant bearing in the society since the outcomes of the instruction is measured in terms of the quality of the learners. Schools with quality instruction would mean a high assurance of producing quality graduates or the future resource of human capital in the country. Hence, it is very significant to look into how the school heads perform the instructional functions with no master teachers around to facilitate such role.

Further, this would benefit the school heads as this can provide them with practices that they can adapt in their schools particularly on the way school heads effectively manage the absence of expert teachers in their schools. The school heads can craft programs that would capacitate the proficient teachers to support the instructional needs of the school. This could also facilitate growth among non-central schools in terms of professional development through coaching, mentoring and development of instructional materials. The future researchers could benefit from the findings particularly those who wish to work on similar studies such as study on topics related to deployment of master teachers in the field.

### **Definition of Terms**

To provide a clearer understanding of the contents of this paper, an operational definition of the terms used in this study is presented:

**Absence of Master Teacher.** This refers to the non-deployment of school heads in non-central schools.

**Coping with the Absence of Master Teachers.** This refers to the strategies or mechanism adapted by school heads to cope with the experienced challenges on the absence of master teachers.

**Master Teacher.** This refers to a teacher who manifests an in-depth and sophisticated understanding of the teaching-learning process who is more adept in problem solving, and has the full capacity to provide instructional support and mentorship to the beginning and proficient teachers.

**Curriculum.** This refers to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes.

**Insights of School Heads.** This refers to the learnings that the school heads had as they responded and move through the instructional needs in the absence of school heads.

**Non central schools.** This refers to schools under the large, medium, and large category and is not the mother school of the locality.

### **Delimitation and Limitation of the Study**

The study confined itself to the thematic analysis of the school heads' experiences and insights relative to the management of the instructional aspect of the school in the absence of master teachers in non-central DepEd schools specifically in the Division of Compostela Valley. The study rests on the capacity of the informants and participants to express their point of view, experiences and answer the interview questions. There were seven informants who came from various schools and have been exposed to different school settings; their perceptions and insights were only based on their own personal experiences. In addition to the seven participants for the in-depth interview, there were seven more that comprised the members of the focus group discussion.

This investigation is based upon open-ended question through one-on-one interviews and focused group discussions. Owing to the fact that there were only a total of 14 participants – seven for the in-depth interview and seven for the focused group discussion, hence, the results of the investigation may hardly be generalizable to other regions of the country. This research is mainly descriptive in its investigation.

### **Organization of the Study**

The flow of the study is presented into five(5) chapters to better organized the flow of the discussion and elaborate details based on establish literature .

Chapter 1 details the problem and the phenomenon at hand to be studied. Emphasizing the gaps on previous researches and putting emphasis on the importance of conducting the study, which focus on the perspectives of school heads in the absence of master teachers in non-central schools. The chapters also presents the research questions and the theoretical lens of the study. The succeeding portion of this chapter presents the significance of the study and the people who will benefit from this research are also identified. It is also necessary to have a clearer understanding of the terms; thus, important words in the study are operationally defined. The last part of this chapter is the delimitation and

limitation of the study wherein the research participants are identified. The weaknesses and validity of the study are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2 contains the literature relevant to the study. It houses the main position of the researchers on the role of the school heads as instructional leaders, the absence of MTs as a challenge to be addressed in school-based management, and their insights in managing schools without MTs.

Chapter 3 discusses the design and methodology used in the study including: research design, role of the researcher, research participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness which explains the four criteria such as: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and lastly, the ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study which has four parts namely: the informant's data, the data analysis procedures and the steps in the categorization of the emergent themes, the responses to the interview, and the summary of the responses.

Chapters 5 finally presents the discussion of the results. It elaborates the key findings in relation to the literatures cited. This also contains the implications of the study, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section talks about the readings and literature related to the study. Previous studies both published and unpublished in journals, electronic copies of books as well as the organizational and educational websites are the main sources of information with regards to the school heads' exercise of leadership in the absence of master teachers in non-central schools. The review of past researches and different readings have paved the way to provide a vivid picture regarding the impact of the study. The ideas, facts, opinions reflected in the various literature presented have helped me in surmising the different issues that have arisen from the study. These also allowed me to address apprehensions and provide rationale presentation of the data gathered. The literature review in this chapter serves as the foundation for this study through discussion of the concepts on the school heads' experiences in the absence of master teachers (MTs) in non-central schools, their experienced challenges as they cope with the crucial roles of MTs in curriculum development as well as their insights on what should be the organizational make up of schools and how the challenges are expected to be addressed.

### **Absence of Master Teachers: A Challenge in School-Based Management**

No one can do better planning, implementation and evaluation than those who are experiencing the system and have foreseen the needs. It is in this context that School-Based Management (SBM) is born. Decentralization of the management of public schools was found to be appropriate since a centralized system would be very difficult particularly on the management of administrative, technical and financial aspects (World Bank, 2007). Management of schools has to be manned by people who know the school very well from the simple profile to the complex operations and proceedings. No one knows the school better than those who are actually installed in it. SBM in schools is one of the crucial strategies that has to be carefully crafted and implemented. By simple definition, SBM is a strategy that directs the authority and responsibility of managing the schools from the central to the district offices to each and every school (Ling, Khattri, & Jha, 2010). Through SBM, the authority and responsibility on the aspects on budget, personnel and curriculum are now placed on the shoulders of the school heads, the teachers, the parents, the local government unit and other concerned stakeholders with the goal of improving the outcomes of the school (Kadtong, Navarro-Parcon, & Basar-Monir, 2016).

SBM implementation has caused significant impact in the performance of both teachers and students (Brouwer, Brekelmans, Nieuwenhuis & Simons, 2012; Duflo, Dupas & Kremer, 2007). Specifically, the logic behind SBM implementation is focused on the provision of quality education. Quality education does not rest on the classroom improvement but on the kind of activities in the class, the quality of instructional materials that the learners interact with and the kind of assessment tools that are used to evaluate their performance. Further, Brouwer, et al. (2012) purported that quality education is not defined by the number of physical improvements in schools, the citations in the accomplishment of school documents which are all superficial, rather, it is assessed in terms of the improvement of the quality of the learning outcomes. The SBM is expected to have caused a dynamic change in the way schools are being managed. It has reformed the way school heads run the school from purely looking into the administrative side to prioritizing the needs of the teachers to provide meaningful instructions for the learners (Brouwer, et al., 2012; Sanzo, Sherman & Clayton, 2011). Further, Patrinos and Kagia (2007) posited that through the implementation of SBM, the concerned stakeholders can demand from the schools the alignment of the programs that would best project the economic priorities of the locality. The premises are supported with the similar findings presented by Crum and Sherman (2008) and Duflo, et al. (2007) with the inclusion of the active participation of the concerned stakeholders in the operations of the school.

A study of the Arab education system revealed a significant improvement in the management of the affairs of the schools that crafted and implemented SBM (Arar & Abu-Romi, 2016). Specifically, based on the findings, the SBM caused a significant improvement on the management of school funds for a more efficient school operations. The

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satisfaction of the teachers in terms of the school's organizational climate significantly increased with SBM implementation. The satisfaction of these teachers are associated with the provision of an opportunity that allowed them to be part of the group that plans, implements and evaluates on aspects that matter in the school operations (Arar & Abu-Romi, 2016; Carr-Hill, Rolleston, Schendel, & Waddington, 2018; Hermino, 2016).

The SBM implementation in Indonesia encompasses three pillars: school management, joyful learning, and community participation. A study conducted in this aspect revealed that the school heads define the success of the school. School heads with strong commitment for excellence and are willing to do whatever it takes were reported to be more successful over those school heads who showed passivity in the implementation of SBM (Hermino, 2016).

The Philippine educational system through Republic Act (RA) 9155 in 2001 framed the implementation of the SBM to facilitate the operations of the public schools. The framework of the SBM in the Department of Education (DepEd) has the same context of decentralization for the purpose of framing development programs from the point of view of those who are within the local system. Upon the implementation of the K-12 curriculum with reference to RA 10533, the priority areas of the public schools have been the focus of concern which calls for consistent evaluation. A study conducted in the Leyte Division revealed that most secondary schools are in the practicing stage. Moreover, school heads are found to be moderately proficient in the implementation of the SBM which calls for more intensive trainings to become responsive leaders to the needs of the new curriculum (Tapayan, Ebio Jr., & Bentor, , 2016).

In a study conducted by Cogtas (2018) on the implementation of SBM in the public elementary schools in Davao City, it was found out that the implementation of SBM was perceived as very high by the teacher-respondents of the survey. It implies that the teachers are satisfied with the way the school is being managed. Moreover, SBM implementation is significantly correlated with the productivity of the teachers. A very high SBM implementation means very high productivity level of the teachers. Productive teachers positively influence the achievement of the students which serve the purpose of an educational institution.

School heads in public schools are also limited in their instructional expertise, particularly on specific subject matters. For instance, they have become well versed on how the school functions in a bigger scope rather than looking into the nitty-gritty of the classroom instruction. Hence, the presence of Master Teachers (MTs) in schools is very helpful. With reference to DepEd Order (DO) no.42 s 2017 or the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) provides the roles and responsibilities of the MTs. The master teachers are significant in curriculum development and implementation. Specifically, they are expected to work collaboratively with the teachers in position Teacher I-III and provide them with support and mentoring to enhance their teaching practices (DO 42 s 2017).

In the study done by Centina, R.A.C., &Guhaao, Jr.,E.S.(2022) states that principal leadership style, school culture, and success motivation are some of the elements that have been identified as helping teachers accomplish their competencies. The leadership style of the principal is one of the elements that influence teaching competency. This style naturally is reflected on how they view the roles of the MT's . This is supplemented by the study that that explored the actual roles played by MTs, four themes emerged and sum up their functions. Basically, their roles are planners in the effective implementation of the curriculum, creative and innovative facilitators in the classrooms, role models of the best pedagogical practices and developer of effective instructional materials. These made the MTs very important in the improvement of the competence of the teachers and in the improvement of the learning outcomes. For instance, as planners, MTs work with the school heads in setting the direction of the academic life of the school. Further, master teachers or even all teachers, regardless of rank, who have planned their lessons well are expected to be more successful in terms of the learning outcomes of the students over those who failed to plan. Master teachers are also expected as facilitators. From the term facilitator, it is expected that they are able to provide the right setting, the appropriate stimulation to elicit the expected responses from the learners (Ibrahim et al., 2013a). Moreover, master teachers are flexible when it comes to class facilitation. They are capable of setting aside their personal beliefs and put top priority on the needs of their classes. Their expertise can be observed on the way they handle their classes, crafting the appropriate strategies and utilizing the most suitable resources that can make the learners fully engaged in their classes. Parallel to the roles of being a facilitator is the master teachers' responsibility as role models. Master teachers are expected be demonstrate the expertise, innovativeness and creativity in ways that are far more advanced than the other teachers. Lumpkin (2016) described them as agents of change in the academe. As agents of change, they are expected to develop materials that would further enrich the curriculum. Their work shall serve as reference for the teachers in making instructional materials that would fit for their individual classes.

Considering the crucial roles played by the master teachers in support to the function of the school head as instructional leader, it is expected that school heads have to come up with the best strategy in addressing critical concerns such as the absence of MTs in schools. The absence of MTs is a critical issue simply because of the highly specialized function that they perform; of course with due consideration of the specialized skills that they have, being highly proficient in the field of teaching (Heineke&Polnick, 2013; West & Cameron, 2013). This would require high resilience on the part of the school heads, considering the fact that they have not been closely in touch with what is going on and what should be going on inside the class of each and every teacher which is described as capacity versus demands mismatch by Riley and Langan-Fox (2013). Although the study of the aforementioned authors focused on the

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staff; however, the concept of job demands and control are similar across all profession. When one losses grip over what is demanded as attributed by several factors where one of those is self-efficacy or capacity, this would eventually lead to exhaustion. Exhaustion can be physical or emotional. Regardless of its kind, it is always elevated when what are demanded in the job cannot be satisfied despite of the exhorted means (Brouwers, & Tomic, 2016; Rai, 2015).

The master teachers are expected to display excellent teaching practices and provide scaffolding to the beginning and proficient teachers (Neumerski, 2013). However, with their absence in schools, the school heads are expected to take over such great responsibility of modelling excellent practices and providing the right scaffolding for the beginning and proficient teachers. It can be recalled in the previous premises in this chapter that most school heads are tied to their administrative functions and have set aside their functions in assessing the quality of the schools' instructional aspect. Hence, the absence of MTs in their school might be perceived as burden that would add up to the existing demands. Most often, the heightened demands prevent the school heads from giving their best because they have been stressed out with the additional demand (Darmody & Smith, 2016) such as taking over the role of the MTs.

As presented in the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2013a, 2013b) one of the roles of the MTs is on mentoring the beginning and proficient teachers. With their absence in school, the school heads have no choice but to take over if they cannot find a highly proficient teacher to take the responsibility. Mentor teachers are important in ensuring that the learning outcomes of the students are becoming better, if not excellent (Izadinia, 2015). Further, mentor teachers are significant members of the school organization since the struggling, beginning teachers have to be supported; even the proficient ones still need professional support group. This support is intended to provide the teachers with assistance when it comes to instructional planning, implementation and evaluation (Van Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen, 2016). The findings of Moore (2015) further elaborated the role of MTs, not just as mentors but as person who should initiate curricular changes for excellent educational outcomes. The strength of MTs lies in their being highly proficient in the field, possessing the capacity to exercise the best pedagogical practices for excellent teaching-learning process. Although there are proficient teachers who have received citations and awards for exemplary performance, but research have shown that one of the attributing factors of their success is the support and mentorship of a master teacher (DuFour et al., 2006).

Truly, providing the right mentoring to the beginning and proficient teachers is a heavy responsibility that the schools heads have to carry on if there are no MTs in their schools. With the inevitability of the absence of MTs in some schools, the school heads resorted to considering some strategies that they have thought would work for their school. Collaboration between proficient teachers and school heads may fill in a parcel of the gap left by the absence of MTs (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). Further, the provision of the right stimulation would pave the way for the teachers to improve their performance and would allow them to become valued contributors in the endeavors of the school. This is particularly important since the efforts of the school heads would become futile without the support of the teachers. School heads who have not been a classroom teacher for quite sometime have somehow lost their grip on the things that matter during the conduct of actual classes; something that only teachers can provide. The negative feelings of teachers in schools without MTs can be alleviated when the school heads would provide the appropriate climate that promotes collaboration. Through this, the teachers are self-directed to perform other related tasks without being demanded or forced by the administrators (Heck & Hallinger, 2014). Similarly, the findings pointed out the importance of establishing strong collaboration with the teachers. School heads who managed to be successful in managing schools despite the absence of other positions in the school organization are reported to develop a shared vision and a strong collaboration with the teachers under them. They have developed them to become leaders themselves who are capable of making wise decisions for the improvement of the academic aspect of the school. Through this, the teachers become vital contributors in the management of the school and that shared responsibility is promoted (Salfi, 2011).

Delegating other tasks to teachers to fill what has been missing in the absence of MTs can be facilitated through the provision of an appropriate faculty development program. Regular and proficient teachers can become leaders and may manifest the characteristics of highly proficient teachers when their capacities are boosted to the maximum without sacrificing their wellness (Lai & Cheung, 2015). Teacher-leaders can be tasked to strategize in the improvement of the curriculum through peer mentoring. Concerns on strategies, instructional materials and assessment tools were found to be facilitated through free-flowing discussions ad sharing during peer mentorship and have been found to be effective with reference to the findings of Geeraerts et al. (2015). Further, working with colleagues in schools have been found to improve the beginning teachers' confidence and instructional readiness (Geeraerts et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2017).

Finally, the study of Kadong, Navarro-Parcon, and Basar-Monir (2016) purported that the quality of school-based management is significantly affected by the leadership of the school heads. Despite of the absence of MTs, school heads can still facilitate the smooth operations in school provided that the SBM is quality assured and has been found highly efficient. Areas affected by the school heads' leadership includes school improvement, learners' achievement and the quality of the faculty. Hence, schools can still perform well in the absence of MTs, however, it has to be emphasized that the quality of the SBM is also high (Kadong et al., 2016).

### **Instructional Leaders' Means of Coping with the Absence of Instructional Experts**

Instructional leadership as defined by Hoy and Miskel (2008) puts emphasis on the responsibility and accountability in the teaching-learning process through effective management of the schools' affairs based on the directions set forth in the vision, mission and goals. This kind of leadership also allows a favourable school climate to

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govern the life of the employees and the learners in general. The organizational climate of schools covers a wide scope ranging from the organizational structure in general down to the actual interaction within and across the system. The school heads who effectively function as instructional leaders are expected to have the acquired the best pedagogical practices despite of the fact that they have not been a classroom teacher for quiet some time. They are expected to be well versed with the curriculum such that they can provide the appropriate guidance when it comes to the enrichment and development of this aspect (Maxwell & Riley, 2017).

Indeed the absence of Master teachers in schools pose a threat in the instructional undertaking considering that the MTs are classified as highly proficient teachers in the field (DO 42 s. 2017). Nonetheless, this problem can be remedied with the adaption of the appropriate strategies and a little paradigm shift among the school heads. Literature have pointed out that schools heads are supposedly instructional experts; hence, they do not need to feel weakened without MTs in their stations. In this line, Fink (2012) explained some of the causes of the school heads' rising concerns when the work on instructional supervision is placed solely on their shoulders. One is that not all of them have general instructional expertise because majority of them are not anymore focusing on the instruction but have place more emphasis on school management. Even their trainings were geared towards management trends as well. The limitation on instructional expertise is a major concern because they cannot provide sufficient mentoring to their teachers because of time constraints. Another is that they have difficulties in crafting in-school sessions on strategic instructional enhancement programs since they haven't been in actual classes for quiet some time.

Further, it was found out that there are school heads who find it hard to prepare their teachers to become experts in the field because they too were lacking of the necessary skills needed to produce instructional experts in the field (Fink, 2012; Taylor Backor, & Gordon, 2015). Hence, having no one to assist them in the management of the instructional aspect can be too tedious on their part and essentially risking the achievement of the learners. This contention was an argument from the findings of Alvoid and Black (2014) saying that the school heads had been doing paradigm shift from the usual managerial focus to a more hands on supervision on instructional aspects. School heads had been active in coaching and mentoring the teachers to become better instructional managers in their respective classrooms. This was supported with the findings that school heads adapted strategies that made them more active to perform their roles in the enhancement of instruction (Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015).

School head battled with the numerous tasks, including the instructional supervision in the absence of master teachers. Without MTs, the school heads have been multitasking just to cope with the demands that are mostly urgent and on priority list. With the help of the teachers under them who were also cooperative and practiced multitasking, the left out task for MTs were being filled in. Ketterlin-Geller, Baumer, & Lichon (2015) purported that the culture that school heads build, say the culture of collaboration or multitasking in the school, would facilitate the completion of tasks that would seem undoable.

Making use of whatever is available and sourcing out for the inefficiency can be an effective way to cope with whatever is lacking in the organization aspect. What is needed is the school heads' active management as described by Boies and Fiset (2018). Active management describes school heads whose leadership skills have influenced the teachers to perform effectively. They are the school heads who walked their talk. Truly, the leadership styles of school heads are very influential on the prevailing environment of the workplace. These can make a teacher work either with quality or remain to be resistant to change.

It is essential for school heads to establish rapport with their teachers. Positive relationship that allows collaboration and fosters caring working environment is ideal if the target of the school head is to achieve the target outcomes with maximum cooperation from the faculty (Noman, Hashim & Abdullah, 2017). What makes the establishment of good rapport with teachers essential is that communication can flow smoothly without the fear of being misunderstood or losing cooperative teachers by the school heads' side. The attainment of instructional goals is made possible when the school heads are effective in carrying out their functions. Further, the utilization of the right approach in a particular situation can bring about positive progress in the work-related operations in school (Leahy & Shore (2018).

For the teachers, the prevailing relationship that is being established with their school heads is essential to create a supportive and caring environment (Balkar, 2015; Gkorezis, 2016; Lee & Nie, 2014; Sagnak, Kurucz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015). Through this, the bulk of tasks left out in the absence of MTs in the field is being filled in without the negative notion of inefficiencies because there is that prevailing culture of support for one another. No task is greater for a group that supports each other's needs.

It has to be acknowledged though that in reality, school heads are hooked in their administrative functions which limit them from performing other tasks, particularly on the academic aspect of the school. They have become more of being a manager than being an instructional leader. In most cases, they have to attend on important functions, particularly among public school heads who need to outsource funds for the school. The study of Lan (2006) described the role of school principals in resource mobilization which have set aside their other significant roles. They cannot do away with this role since public schools rely so much on the support of external stakeholders in the physical improvement of the schools. Relying on the public funds is not enough considering the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom which calls for a functional instructional resources.

Schools heads have been multitasking which limits their capacity to govern the academic life of the school. The provision of safe and caring spaces for the learners, the students and the other members of the organization, enhancement of the schools' human resources and the provision of a conducive climate ( Lan, 2006) are just few of the other roles that are most often delegated to those who are next in rank.

School heads are expected to be proactive in tailoring the best instructional practices that they can possibly do for the enhancement of the curriculum (Spillane & Zuberi, 2009). Instructional practices may include the crafting of contextualized instructional materials, strategizing engaging activities and improving the assessment tools. They are also expected to monitor the performance of the teachers in their actual classes such that they can enhance the good practices of the teachers and reduce the points where inefficacy is detected. School heads are expected to be drivers of change that would provide the appropriate guidance and stimulations to the teachers particularly in the management of students' outcomes. (Spillane & Zuberi, 2009).

The educational sector across the globe envisioned to produce learners who are functionally literate after completing their schooling. The findings presented by Balyer, Oczam, Yilmez (2017) highlighted the need for the educators to be innovative starting from the choice of instructional materials down to the production of outcomes. In terms of the instructional achievement per class, the role of the teachers is very crucial; their performance directly impacts the achievement of the students (Idris, 2016). From different perspectives, Bajorek, Gulliford and Taskila (2014) associated the well-being and its opposite scenario, the exhaustion of teachers and students' outcomes. Well-being of teachers has been the focus of the studies of Richards (2012) as well as that of Subon and Sigie (2016), though there is a weak evidence that directly links the well-being of teachers with students' outcomes; however, teachers who are emotionally and psychologically well have the capacity to demonstrate creativity and innovation in the preparation of the lessons which are essential in the improvement of the learning outcomes. Creativity allows both school leaders and teachers to address work-related concerns with less stress (Eroğlu, Akbaba, Adıgüzel&Peker, 2014). The efforts of addressing school concerns require the concerned stakeholders to take part in it since the efforts of the teachers are not enough to achieve the envisioned quality education, of course, with the right leadership from the school heads.

Hence, the instructional leaders in schools are responsible for setting the goals for the school; that is, in parallel to the goals and directions of the ministry or department of education. It is expected that these goals are the products of the through planning and evaluation made between and among the leaders of the schools, the teachers, the staff and the concerned stakeholders (Hallinger, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). The government has acknowledged that the quality of the future human resource of the country is highly influenced by the kind of education that they have experienced in their schools, hence, school heads are enticed by the government to intensify the exercise of their instructional leadership (Leithwood, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008). It is for this very reason that government entities are putting in resources and are monitoring the progress of every school.

Research has tried to view the leadership of school heads as better performed when transformational leadership model is employed over instructional leadership (Ghavifekr, Hoon, Ling & Ching, 2017; Wang & Xu, 2019); however, a review of research evidences and implications still pointed out the greater impact posed by instructional leadership in bringing out quality outcomes in the teaching-learning process (Hallinger& Wang, 2015; Karadağ, Bektaş, Çoçalı, & Yalçın, 2015; Robinson et al., 2008). On a personal account, there is no one size-fits all leadership style that can fully answer the demands in a school organization. A combination of several leadership styles are being utilized to achieve the common goals of the educational sector. However, in the context of this study, instructional leadership is given more emphasis since the focus is the outcomes of the teaching-learning process is being compromised with the absence of MTs and how the issue is being handled by the school heads.

In line with transformational leadership, it is good to note that school heads spearhead the changes in the behaviour of the teachers such that they become more responsive to the needs rather than being reactive. Building resilience among teachers for them to appropriately respond to a need can be learned through appropriate faculty development programs. In this way, the school heads become effective in capacitating the teachers particularly in assisting the matters pertaining to curriculum or instruction. Teachers who are well capacitated can provide the necessary assistance and can provide appropriate instructional strategies to improve the achievement of the learners. (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley& Weatherby-Fell,2016).

Other than maintaining the quality of students' outcomes, Pan, et al. (2017) purported that the well-being of teachers has to be taken into consideration as well. The school heads have to take into account the kind of support system intended for the teachers. Somehow, school heads seem to be so focused on the general accomplishments of the school and have taken for granted the well-being of the teachers. Teachers with high levels of well-being are more likely to emanate the same positive aura to the students which are expected to improve the students' outcomes (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom, 2015).

Two important concerns on the exercise of the school heads' instructional leadership are deemed important in understanding the real picture in every public school. One is the decentralized set-up of schools. Pan, Nyeu and Cheng (2017) pointed out that the decentralization of the public schools' organizations have placed much autonomy on the teachers which limit their management roles. Another is that as instructional leaders, they are expected to be steps ahead in terms of the qualifications of their faculty. In most cases, school heads have expended much of their energy, efforts and investments on administrative tasks which can limit the exercise of their instructional functions. Issues such as teachers' reluctance to be observed or non-compliance with the scheduled classroom observations may be due to the fact that there were teachers who tend to underestimate their authority. Their expertise as leaders, and most often performing administrative tasks made them less accustomed to the latest strategies and instructional matter which have attributed to the teachers' behaviour towards them when it comes to class supervision ( Pan et al.,2015).

In a study conducted in the Solomon Islands, it was found out that instructional leadership of the school heads were not highly proficient to demand quality instruction from the teachers. It was recommended that school heads have

to undergo sufficient training for them to be highly proficient in the evaluation and implementation of assessment tools for the teaching-learning aspects. The study further described the difficulties experienced by the respondents in the study given the fact that their educational training was not sufficient for them to be critical implementers of the assessment tools for the teachers. In this case, they won't be able to provide adequate assistance to the teachers when it comes to instructional improvement. Hence, more trainings and even mini-courses on assessment is highly recommended (Lingam, 2016).

Similar studies revealed the same context that the assessment on the efficacy of the teaching-learning process should be primarily taken cared of by the school heads. They should be well versed on the different assessment tools such that they can fully evaluate the learning process that takes place inside the classrooms. This can help them in giving fair assessments to the teachers hereby providing appropriate assistance and mentorship. School heads who did not have a full grasp of the instructional proceedings in the classroom and the appropriate assessment tools to measure the extent of the learning outcomes will not be able to provide the appropriate assistance as well. School heads with limited knowledge and expertise cannot cause significant changes to the instructional practices of teachers whose expertise is limited also (Noonan & Renihan, 2006).

Teachers as front liners in the implementation of the curriculum are most often being held responsible for poor learning outcomes. Usually, classroom evaluation results would measure the teachers' performance and have it equated with the outcomes of the students. The study of Donkor and Asante (2016) provided different perspectives. Teachers could have been experts in the field but were probably unable to receive the appropriate guidance from the school head. A school equipped with the desirable resources, expert teachers and manageable classes can have poor outcomes when managed by a school head with poor instructional leadership. Instructional functions of the school heads do not stop after performing classroom evaluation. These functions include assessment on the appropriateness of the materials to be used in the classrooms, the provision of faculty development program that can enhance the skills of proficient teachers and even bridge the gap for teachers who have poor instructional readiness (Donkor & Asante, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Further, part of the school heads' leadership is to see to it that the quality of life and work of the teachers are in good balance (Hoy and Miskel, 2008).

Practices of school heads that project instructional leadership have been the centre of attention since the start of active community involvements in schools such as associations of parents and teachers, local or provincial governments as well as the other stakeholders. The heightened interest in the school affairs has sprouted from the increased awareness that the achievement of the students in schools have played a major role in the development of the community and the country in general (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). The logic of such perception lies in the fact that the future human resource all started their basic trainings in schools. With that the local community up to the central offices and establishments have put a lot of attention and even investments on the trainings in schools. Because of such great task on training the future human resource, the importance of the quality performance of the school heads as instructional leaders in all levels has to be consistently monitored by the interested external group or stakeholders (Halling & Walker, 2014).

In a study commissioned by UNESCO in West Africa, Bush and Glover (2016) posited that the predominant leadership style of the school heads is not on instruction but on the managerial aspect. As presented in the existing literature, there was no school in the identified locale that prepares the school heads to be efficient in the performance of other functions such as that of instructional management. Appropriate trainings for school heads and those who are aspiring to be one should gain the necessary trainings to provide the support on the instructional aspect which is highly needed by the teachers and the students (Bush & Glover, 2016).

In a literature review on the instructional leadership of the school heads in Singapore and East Asia, key implications such as paradigm shift, multiple views of the teaching-learning process and an academe-centered view are emphasized as significant for the improvement of the educational sector (Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015). School heads need to have a paradigm shift from merely considering school improvements as a measure of effective management into envisioning something that matters a lot in school - the academic aspect. This aspect is expected to bring beneficial effects for all clientele in the institution. Multiple views of the teaching-learning process allow the school heads, together with the teachers and the concerned stakeholders to explore a variety of strategies that would best fit the students such that the ideal teaching and ideal learning process is at least made close to reality. School principals are expected to oversee and ensure that the programs and processes are geared towards the right direction which is the improvement of the students' outcomes.

Locally, in the Department of Education, the school heads play a vital role in the management of schools; as mandated by the law, they shall have the full authority, accountability and reliability in managing all of the school affairs (RA 9155). Hence, the outcome of operations of every school depends on the kind of leadership that school heads have. In the study conducted to investigate the perspectives of the school heads with the regards to the factors that facilitate or deter the improvements of the school, one of the highlighted themes is the instructional aspect. The findings revealed that the instructional leadership of the school heads is limited with the physical profile of the students and the resources (Brooks, 2014). This is particularly true with classes that may reach up to 50 students or even more when the teacher can no longer effectively handle the students despite her expertise. In as much as the school heads would want to provide the necessary assistance, however, instances like class size and poor resources would prevent them from doing so despite the countless educational reforms being crafted (Brooks, 2014; Reyes, 2009).

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Further, the findings of Alegado (2018) posited that with the current educational system, school heads have to exercise their instructional roles along with their administrative roles contrary to the traditional notion of a school head who holds the administrative functions only. In addition, it was also found out that teachers can be capacitated to be leaders in the instructional aspect. A number of literature have supported that teachers play a vital role in educational reforms in support with the school heads' endeavours to improve the teaching-learning outcomes in the current K-12 curriculum (Alegado, 2018; Calderon, 2014; Combalicer, 2016; Sergio, 2012).

### **Insights in Managing Schools without Master Teachers**

In private institutions, the school heads or curriculum heads are most often in close contact with the teachers' instructional practices since they are not so much involved with a number of administrative tasks as compared to the public institutions. In the public schools, the school heads are bombarded with a number of functions that are equally demanding, hereby reducing their capacity to function effectively as instructional leaders (Brooks, 2014; Lingam, 2016; Ng et al., 2015). A recent study found out that there are school heads who are not effective in carrying out their instructional functions which can compromise the quality of teachers' nsepractices and learners' outcomes (Manaseh, 2016) . The instructional functions of school heads are usually delegated to the MTs who are expected to be highly proficient when it comes to pedagogical practices (Du Four, 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2013a,2013b; Moore, 2015).

Having no MTs in school may be of great disadvantage but with appropriate response, it won't cause too much impact. The way the school head perceives the situation counts. The kind of leadership also matters particularly in difficult situations. Berkovich and Eyal (2017) suggested in their literature review that the adaption of transformational leadership is essential, particularly when there are observed inefficiencies in the system manpower. Transformational leaders work in collaboration with their subordinates and encourage their teachers to innovate in response to changes or impending concerns. Not only will the teachers' instructional skills be improved under transformational leaders but their emotional wellness would also be made better. Moreover, Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) particularly specify that school heads should facilitate the improvement of the newbies in the field through coaching and mentoring. Through this, the struggling teachers may be helped to meet the expected target goals in the academe.

With these, the school heads discerned that schools should have MTs and that their absence particularly in non-central schools must be avoided considering the crucial roles that they play (Ibrahim et al., 2013a,2013b; Moore, 2015). This is particularly important for school heads whose expertise is highly concentrated on the improvement of the physical facilities of the school, the linkages with stakeholders and other administrative functions in general (Manaseh, 2016). The presence of MTs in schools would partially relieve the school heads in their instructional functions, though it is still part of their main responsibility, but at least, the task is delegated to faculty who are still teaching and have the full grasp of the roles and responsibilities of a classroom teacher as well as the outcomes of the learners. Their presence in schools increases the job satisfaction and wellness of school heads since they would only oversee the performance of the MTs and the tangible outcomes(Maxwell &Rilley, 2017). School heads who are satisfied in the performance of their tasks and have not been stressed with a lot of pressures and demands are more capable of emanating the same positive environment to the teachers under them, which eventually, results to a smooth school operation (Majumdar, 2018).

In situations when the absence of MTs cannot be avoided, their absence is a great disadvantage for schools but is never a hindrance for the success of the schools' operations. Scenarios like this call for the exercise of the school heads' leadership and resilience during hard times. MTs serve as models and mentors in improving instruction but their absence should not be the reason for poor performance of schools. School heads have the full authority to redefine the functions of the teachers, allowing them to perform other related tasks to achieve successful school operations (Day, 2017). The emotional resilience of school heads also matter during critical conditions of the school. The way school heads respond to the inefficiency of the school organization, such as the absence of MTs significantly influence the teachers' response to the situation (Day & Hong, 2016). Teachers have to assured that they are still getting the mentorship and support that they need in the field despite the absence of MTs.

Empowering the regular, proficient teachers reduces the percentage of school operations' failure in the absence of MTs. Teachers who are empowered by the school heads are given the chance to participate in decision-making and to suggest strategies that they deem important for the improvement of the instructional aspect of the school (Balyer, Özcan, &Yıldız, 2017). Teachers are the ones who know what is best to improve the learning outcomes and the achievement of the school in terms of the instructional aspect. However, their empowerment has to be coupled with the appropriate faculty development program as a concrete support as they take the functions supposed to be performed by the MTs or the school heads as instructional leaders (Balyer et al., 2017; Wong et al. 2017). Through this, teachers would be motivated to perform the tasks delegated to them without fears of being reprimanded in case they won't be able to fully exercise the roles of the master teachers (Day & Hong, 2016; Garza et al., 2014). A similar study revealed that regular teachers can actually mentor their colleagues if they are provided with the right training and opportunity to lead. The problem encountered in most schools is that the school heads tend to assign leadership roles to the teachers but the latter have not been provided with appropriate support such as capacity building. They are just left on their own to figure out what to do (Boland, 2015).

With the numerous tasks at the hand of the school heads, delegating the other tasks to capable teachers could help ease the situations. School heads tend to delegate tasks to those whom they believe can carry them out with quality (Lee &Nie, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Further, it was found out that delegating the tasks have mutual benefits. On the part of the school heads, the tasks can be well attended to because it was delegated to someone who can do it, giving

them more sufficient time to do their other functions. On the part of the teachers, it is also of advantage because they get to show their best and hone their skills which are essential for them to become better instructional managers.

The way the roles are delegated and the success of the school operations are highly affected by the leadership of the school heads. Their roles as leaders in schools are very crucial since it can make or break the school organization. Failure on the part of the school heads to perform their functions lead to the schools' poor performance. School heads have to be creative in finding solutions to every concern that may come. Creativity as defined by Mitchell and Reiter-Palmon (2017) can provide a clear vision and can facilitate in setting the direction of the school. The creativity of school heads affect the way their subordinated view the problem as well as the solution that they may employ. Despite of the school heads' limitations, they are expected to perform to the maximum such that the professional development of the teachers are prioritized so that they can be empowered to perform other related tasks, particularly in the improvement of the learning outcomes or even to assist the school heads in performing their tasks (Morshed, 2016).

School heads who have been performing well can influence the performance of both the teachers and the learners. They serve as role models for the improvement of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes. They do not rest on the inefficiency but strive to become agents of change themselves, exercise creativity to counteract the impact of critical situations and invest in whatever possible means for the success of the school (Bhengu, & Myende, 2016; Leithwood, 2016). Moreover, performing school leaders are also proactive leaders. They are those who set direction for their subordinate to be guided in which path to traverse (Fidan & Balci, 2016). Proactive leaders take strategic actions to neutralize if not fully eliminate the concern. In addition, the work engagement of school heads matter a lot in the organization. They influence the teachers' capacity to generate ideas, innovate solutions and evaluate the outcomes. The level of school heads' work engagement has a strong and significant influence on the creativity of teachers. Both factors are powerful forces that can bring about success in schools (Koch, Birniewies, & Dormann, 2015).

Finally, the abovementioned literature speaks of how school heads have managed to rise above the circumstance in the absence of master teachers. Effective leaders do not allow unfavorable circumstances to cause negative impact to the performance of the school where they are currently stationed. Specifically, since the school heads in the public schools are given the full authority with the decentralization of the school governance, they are enticed to resort all possible strategies that can improve the performance of the school without sacrificing the well-being and professional development of the teachers under their care. The multiple tasks expected of them to perform have put their performance, flexibility and resilience to a crucial test; nevertheless, in the context of this study, such tests have been successfully surpassed by the school heads.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Presented in this chapter are: the nature of the study, the research design used with regards to presentation, the analysis and interpretation, the philosophical assumptions, role of the researcher, the research participants, the data collection, its process, data analysis, trustworthiness which includes the following: credibility, conformability, transferability and dependability of the study and all individuals who were involved and the ethical considerations in the process.

#### Research Design

In this research study I employed a phenomenological qualitative research design. I find it appropriate for this investigation because my primary intention was to bring into the surface the perspectives of the participants on the identified phenomenon rather than providing proof for the acceptance or rejection of assumptions. Phenomenology is concerned with the study of human perception of the events or a phenomena. A detailed understanding of the phenomena can be derived through going deeply into the participants' thoughts and drawing out their essence through lengthy review of their lived experiences (Campbell, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I used the phenomenological approach because it is an effective way of obtaining a detailed understanding of the phenomena based on the individual participant's experiences and the significant meanings that they associate them with. Through phenomenology, I can facilitate the emergence of their insights based on their openness in bringing back the thoughts, feelings and actions associated with the experience. Wertz (2005) posited that phenomenological approach enables the researcher to draw out sensitive insights from the point of view of those who actually experienced the phenomenon. To Creswell (2007), the use of phenomenology made possible the reduction of one's lived experiences into a description of the universal essence. In this study, I endeavored to enter into the participants' own experiences to explain the phenomenon and give light to the realities they were in. This study, therefore, provided the perspectives of the school heads in managing the instructional aspect in schools without master teachers.

In the conduct of this phenomenological investigation, I utilized bracketing. This was done so that the personal biases of the researcher were set aside and that the harmful effects of presumptions that may affect the research process can be prevented, thereby improving the precision of this research study. Setting aside personal biases such as pre-conceived knowledge and previous experiences about the phenomena allow the researcher to fully capture the experiences being told by the participants with an open mind (Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Taylor, 2012; Tufford & Newman, 2010). I was interested to know how the school heads coped with the absence of the instructional experts of the MTs and how they find meaning in these experiences.

Through phenomenological reduction, the researcher simply lessened the realm from how it is recognized naturally to a domain of pure phenomena (Dowling, 2007). Thus, the essence of the phenomena is allowed to surface. In

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addition, the participants' verbatim accounts were used throughout the process of data analysis and phenomenological depiction. This was done so that the researcher can fully capture the essence of the phenomena (Creswell, 2007).

These made the phenomenology the most fitting approach for my study. I have to make the voices of the school heads be heard by the concerned parties with the hope of actualizing the aspired quality educational outcomes. The concerns on the absence of master teachers in non-central schools have not been fully resolved simply because there was no full understanding of the phenomenon from the point of view of those who have struggled to cope with the deficiency in the teaching force. To provide a clearer understanding of the complex phenomenon, I considered the emergence of the insider perspectives as described by Davis and Rabinowitz (2007). The sources of qualitative data included interviews, observations and documents (Creswell, 2007; Suter, 2012). Since I wanted to report about the lived experiences of the participants, I employed the conventional face-to-face dialogue and the written account of their experiences transcribed from their verbatim narrations which cannot be easily distorted by a software. In my study, I used distinct methodologies such as in-depth interviews, focused group discussion and field note-taking, giving much consideration to details, allowing the participants to speak up their thoughts so that a passionate content of their experiences would emerge. Hence, the phenomenological approach offers a complete account of the experience that the participants' have lived through (Giorgi, 2009).

In using a descriptive phenomenological approach, preconceptions about the teachers' experiences were documented prior to the onset of the study and were compared to what had transpired and been observed during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The preconceptions, beliefs, and findings of the researcher were revealed clearly in the research report. The researcher observed flexibility and openness which were connected with having learned to maintain a fair amount of ambiguity (Strauss and Corbin, 2008) to have a useful and positive output.

In my research study, I was able to classify themes of the phenomena with seven informants for the in-depth interview and seven participants for focused group discussion. In phenomenology, the researcher can obtain significant findings through in-depth conversations of a minimum of five participants and up to a maximum of 25 participants who experienced the same phenomenon or until data saturation is achieved (Creswell, 2007; Giorgi, 2009). On the other hand, Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, (2009) further stated that focus groups were considered to work quite well with approximately eight people or less, provided that they were geographically similar and can provide a rich account of the phenomena

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this study, I took the role of being an interviewer for both in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD). I have a personal stake in this study since I am a school head in my station, specifically, Assistant Principal in the Senior High School. I had been assigned as a classroom teacher as well prior to my appointment as a school head.

I personally gathered the data during the interviews and discussions. The basic feature of qualitative inquiry is that the researcher was the main instrument who facilitates in the emergence of the participants' experiences, thoughts and insights and that the quality and credibility of the research findings depend on the skills and commitment of the researcher (Patton, 2002).

I was fully aware that in the conduct of this investigation, I should possess the required abilities of a qualitative researcher and that I should be aware and be reflective of the philosophical assumptions that guided my view of the world. I have to have the subjectivity of the participants' point of views and values regarding the phenomenon. I reflected on the preconceived knowledge and beliefs that shape reality and how they affect the process and results. I consistently reflect on interpretation and analysis such that I only presented the essence of the participants' experiences and not my own personal biases.

In the conduct of the study, I interviewed the identified school heads of the non-central schools. I was assisted by two of my colleagues who took down notes during the dialogues and served as my independent reader and analyst. We analyzed the data accumulated from the interviews and discussions. After coming up with the same results, I employed an expert professional data analyst and thereafter, formed our personal intuitions.

### **Research Participants**

In this study, I employed purposive sampling. In this type of sampling, the researcher selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. The use of purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of participants that fit in the study based on the inclusion criteria set by the researcher which is believed to provide a rich account of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2007; Saunders, 2012; Speziale& Carpenter, 2007).

There were seven informants for the IDI and seven participants for FGD who were purposively selected based on the inclusion criteria. They were school heads in either elementary or secondary schools who were designated in non-central schools with no master teachers, despite requesting from the division office for the deployment of MTs or even the allocation of the MT position in their schools. Participants were identified through the help of gatekeeper; a person who is able to arbitrate access to social role, field setting or structure (Saunders, 2012). The gatekeeper led me to the participants whom I have identified for my study.

Prior to the conduct of the IDI and FGD, I made sure that the participants fully understood the extent of their participation. This was done during a preliminary meeting that was called for their orientation. During the preliminary

meeting, the participants were made to understand that they were to recall their experiences and that possible outburst of emotions might take place. This was done for them to be physical, mentally and emotionally prepared during the interview. I employed the protocols suggested by Silverman (2006) to assure the participants that I don't intend to harm them nor create prejudices with the experiences that they would share. In this way, I gained their trust, confidence and eventually, their full cooperation. At this time also, the researcher had a little chat with the participants to develop rapport. This was also an opportunity for the participants to clear their apprehensions. As for me, this was an opportunity to explain the purpose of the study, the importance of participants' role in the outcome of the research study, address their questions, concerns, review some ethical considerations and completely fill up the consent forms. This was also an avenue to review the research questions with the participants. In this way, they were guided on the direction of the interview. They were then better prepared during the actual interview. Developing a good rapport with the participants is crucial in gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomena as experienced by the participants who have a personal stake in it (Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Dundon & Ryan, 2010).

Finally, the participants were made to understand that the researcher would uphold the required ethical standards during the conduct of the interviews and discussions, specifically applying the the key propositions of ethical concerns (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

### Data Collection

This study followed the qualitative data collection techniques suggested by Sutton and Austin (2015). The personal accounts of the informants in the IDI and participants in the FGD were recorded through hand-written notes and employed only video or audio recording only upon their consent. The obtained data were transcribed in verbatim before the conduct of the data analysis. Obtaining information from the in-depth interview was done in consideration of the standards of reliability and validity. The researcher set aside personal judgment and avoided drawing conclusions from the interview. Instead, the researcher allowed the rich-data resource to emerge from the accounts of the study informants themselves (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008; Bricki& Green, 2007). The data obtained from the FGD were dependent on the researcher's conduct of the discussion and the group's cooperation. During the focus group discussion, I gathered all the participants in a place that allowed conversations to take place without hesitation and distractions. I conveyed a genuine appreciation of their participation, explained the purpose of the discussion, and spent time explaining why I recorded the discussion. The protocols that I employed were reflected in the works of Hancock et al. (2009).

To have an uninterrupted flow during of the interviews and discussions, an interview guide was prepared and the participants were made to understand that additional questions could be included as needed. Finally, to ensure the confidentiality of the informants and participants, pseudonyms and or codes were utilized to cover their real identity (Bricki& Green, 2007).

### Analysis of Data

In this study, the data analysis was done through the utilization of the three synchronized flows of action: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions and verification. The process produced an output that represented the important features of the uncovered experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007).

Data reduction facilitated the coming up of abstraction from the verbatim accounts of the participants. The data is reduced into a simple and comprehensive material which is easily understood. The unimportant data were deleted. The paring and sieving of data often is termed as thematic analysis (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the intricate measures of data reduction were done with the guidance of a professional data analyst, employing proper protocols in handling the large volume of data as in organizing, sorting and as well as in retrieving and locating words and phrases. The data which came out were appropriately sorted, categorized and consolidated.

Data display on the other hand is the organization of data and showing it in a form of graphic organizers such as: charts, graphs that would enable the viewer to draw his conclusion (Suter, 2012). It is one step beyond data reduction, showing the data in an arranged and orderly manner, clearly showing the interrelationships of bits of information, readily available to the viewer. At this stage, other higher order categories could come out that was beyond those discovered during the first step of data reduction (Namey, Guest, Thairu& Johnson, 2007; Paul, 2006).

Conclusion, drawing and verification completed the steps undertaken in the qualitative analysis. I bear in mind the assertion of Paul (2006) that definitive conclusions cannot be drawn yet unless it is revisited as many times as possible and that cross-checking should be done to verify the emergent conclusions. The data were allowed to speak by themselves through the development of the conceptual categories and detailed themes. These themes were usually implanted in a structure of interconnected ideas that make sense. For Miles and Huberman (1994), the meanings that emerge from the data have to undergo validity tests such that these can now be considered as credible data resource.

### Trustworthiness

To establish the steadiness of the study, I observed its four components. These were the following: conformability, credibility, dependability and transferability.

Credibility. To establish the credibility of my study, I ensured that my findings represent the undistorted truth of the participants' experiences, thoughts and insights. I employed the protocols of understanding the situation that the participants were in. I spent sufficient time for data collection and allowed the data to sprout out directly from the

participants. I established rapport with them to gain their trust and confidence. During the collation of data, I ensured that no relevant data were excluded and that irrelevant data were set aside. I employed triangulation method to ensure the consistency of the findings. I sought the help of two other colleagues who served as the independent reader and analyst. At this point, the peer debriefing allowed the thorough analysis of the data to prevent the personal biases of the researcher to interfere with the significant findings. The aforementioned protocols were consistent with the evaluative criteria for establishing credibility in qualitative research (De Wet, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Suter, 2012).

**Conformability.** To address the conformability of this study, I followed the protocols suggested in the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and further expanded my views with the discussion of Anney (2014). To establish that the data and interpretation were not products of my creative imagination, I kept an audit trail of the participants. This served as a proof that the findings were based on the participants' personal accounts. I also kept field notes and conferred with my two other colleagues who assisted me in the conduct of the interviews and FGD. The field notes served as my bases in the conduct of preliminary data analyses and the significant understandings that have incurred or have arisen during the interviews and discussions.

**Transferability.** To address transferability, I described the details of my research in thick description and have purposively chose my participants guided by the protocols of Bitsch (2005). I ensured that all data were presented transparently and contain rich details such as those who wishes to compare these to other context can have a clear understanding and can make a sound judgment of its possible transfer. The employed method was supported in the premise that the rich details of the methods and context of the study facilitates the thorough examination of the report for possible transferability to the other context of research (Anney, 2014).

**Dependability.** To ensure the dependability of the study, I was guided with the protocols of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and the criteria set by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) on the employment of external audit. I sought the help of my colleagues to evaluate the findings of the study as well as the interpretations that were made. The evaluation was done in order to assess the accuracy of the data, the plausibility of the interpretations and conclusions based on the actual information from the lived experiences of the study participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research uphold the ethical standards due for qualitative research. I was guided by the critical principles described by Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, GuestandNamey(2005), namely: the respect for persons, its beneficence, justice, the consent and confidentiality.

Respect for persons requires a responsibility to ensure that the freedom of research participants is protected and possible exploitation of their weakness is avoided. The participants in this research were informed of the purpose of the investigation and the extent of their participation. They were allowed to make voluntary decision to participate based on their likelihood to be part of those who can add to the body of literature in the field of school management and governance. True to the voluntary nature of their participation, the participants were informed and were made to understand that they can withdraw at any time and that the action shall not be held against them. In addition, all participants had the freedom to negate or to refuse to answer a question asked of them. Hence, the researcher secured permission to conduct the study from the Division Office of Compostela Valley where the participants were being stationed. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants at their place of work where the data collection also took place. The best interest of each participant was considered throughout the process. I underwent all these processes as a symbol of my respect for the persons involved in the study.

Beneficence requires a commitment from the researcher to ensure the participants were not harmed and that the risks associated with the research is minimized, if not fully prevented (Mack et al, 2005). Hence, to ensure the adherence to the principle of beneficence, the researcher has to safeguard the identity of the participants through the use of pseudonyms or codes (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Denzin, &Giardina, 2016).

Confidentiality of the findings and protection of the identities of the informants by using a coding system to hide their true identities were explained to the participants (Maree and Van der Westhuizen, 2007). In this study, I made it sure that any distinguishable features that would divulged the identity of the participants were excluded in the reports. Participants were protected at all times so data or files of information were not left lying around in notebooks or in unprotected computer files (Bricki& Green, 2007). The records of the interviews and participants were stored securely and can only be accessed by the researcher during the data analysis. I assured the participants that the entire database as to digital voice recorders, field notes, typed transcripts and other related materials would be destroyed or deleted upon completion of the analysis.

Justice refers to the equal share or fairness in the associated benefits and risks in the study and that the no participant is singled out. Adherence to the principle of justice prevents the exploitation and abuse of participants. In this study, I was guided with the protocols of Bloom and Cabatree (2006) on mapping the vulnerability of the participants and their contributions in the course of the study. The participants were made to understand that their participation would not entail compensation. During the process of data collection, I recognized and appreciated their efforts. The token of gratitude provided for each participant was not a compensation but a gesture of appreciation for their participation.

#### IV. RESULTS

Presented in this chapter are the experiences of the participants, their insights and experiences as well as the impressions which emerged from the information culled through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Presented in Table 1 is the profile of the participants.

**Table 1**

*Participants' Information*

Assumed Name	Gender	Location	Years of Experience	Level	Study Group
Joaquien	Male	Pantukan, Comval	12	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Lando	Male	Pantukan, Comval	24	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Venus	Female	Pantukan, Comval	15	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Juliet	Female	Pantukan, Comval	12	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Rey	Male	Mabini, Comval	25	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Corazon	Female	Nabunturan, Comval	20	Grade School	In-depth Interview
Ipe	Female	Mabini, Comval	9	Grade School	In-depth Interview
P1	Male	Maragusan, Comval	10	High School	Focus group
P2	Male	Pantukan, Comval	27	High School	Focus group
P3	Female	Pantukan, Comval	23	High School	Focus group
P4	Female	Pantukan, Comval	35	High School	Focus group
P5	Male	Montevista, Comval	10	High School	Focus group
P6	Female	Nabunturan, Comval	15	High School	Focus group
P7	Female	Mabini, Comval	26	High School	Focus group

This chapter is divided into four parts. Part 1 tackles the participants' data from which the qualitative data were collected. Part 2 covers the data analysis procedures and the steps in the categorization of the emergent themes from the result of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Part 3 deals with the responses to the in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion questions under each research problem and part 4 contains the summary of the informants' and participants' responses.

#### Participants

*Key informants.* There were seven key informants in this study, four females and three males who are all currently school heads of the different schools of Compostela Valley Division. Their teaching experiences ranged from 9 years to 25 years of service. They were selected based on the objective of the research to assess the current experiences of non-central schools that have no Master Teachers. Their range of experience as former teachers and as current school heads without master teachers (MTs) made them ideal as key informants. The insights and experiences of these school heads were utilized to address the concerns on the absence of master Teachers in non-central schools. For purposes of confidentiality, the participants were given pseudonyms as presented in Table 1.

*Focus Group.* One focus group discussion were done with seven participants, four females and three males. All of them came from the non-central schools of Compostela Valley. Their years of experience ranged from 9 to 35 years as both teacher and school head. The focus group discussion was done to shed light on the absence of master teachers in non-central schools. It also served to strengthen and verify data presented during the individual in depth interview. To conceal the true identity of the participants, the use of the participants' real names during the discussion were avoided. They were referred to according to their number in the table.

The same questions were asked of both groups. Most of the participants are my classmates in my baccalaureate and masters and while doing my post graduate. I have a cohesive knowledge that they have been wanting and waiting to have a master teacher in their area of assignment. Other participants were given by the District Supervisor a school without current master teachers, as such, the selection as immediate. Another avenue I did was the snow ball sampling

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method as suggested by Mack et al. (2005), I was able to find more informants through referrals and recommendations made by them. I met the informants and arranged a preferred time for the interview, knowing that their schedule is tight, I managed to conduct the interview with the help of my classmates and collected data smoothly also because of their help. The close association I have established with the informants before facilitated an easier approach in gaining their trust with regards to the confidentiality of the discussions. There were some who were anxious because the topic directly relates to the human resource allocation of each school and district, still they were able to give ample data and were very enthusiastic in sharing their experiences.

The individual interview was basically conducted in their schools so as not to constrict their schedule and to gain first hand observation with the school setting and its environment. The place are far flung area of the locality and needs to be traversed through various means of transportation, nevertheless it was a worthwhile experience because of the positive reception of the school heads. The genuine love for their profession can be easily observed among the teachers and school head especially during the actual interview of the respondent. Some were elated to have a good conversation on their dilemma and suggested possible actions, though others are still hesitant at first until reassured.

The focus group discussion was very alive in its discussion since most of them knew each other as school heads. The discussion and display of answer was very spontaneous. Stern voices and tinge of disappointment to some who were already longer in service were also echoed by the younger school heads. The reaction and responses have for the most part similarity.

As stated by Fansworth and Boon, Sutton and Austin (2010, 2015) it is extremely important to have 2 facilitators to help make sense of the data and its notes as well as the group dynamics since much of the communication can be glean through non-verbal communication and this can reshape or reconstitute information that we have gathered. Those with the help of my two colleagues and a tape recorder I believed I managed to secure important and minute details of the focus group discussion.

### Experiences of School heads in Managing Schools without Master Teachers

From the data collected on the experiences of the study participants, five major themes emerged as presented in Table 2. These themes are: *resiliency in the field; burdened and weighed down; reduce ability to deliver; limited mentoring and coaching; indisposition of teachers*.

Table 2

*Themes and Core ideas on Experiences of School heads in Managing Schools without Master Teachers*

Major Themes	Core Ideas
	Teachers adopt changes on their own and still became competent.
Resiliency in the field	Teachers are still diligent in following instructional supervision schedule. Classrooms continue to be well-managed There is a noticeable increase in the student performance. Teachers were able to source out funds on their own to finance projects/ programs. When school cannot provide for them, they pool their resources. With meagre resources, teachers still organize their classroom well. Teachers come freely to the office to seek assistance or feedback. I have additional work load because I do the tasks supposed to be done by MTs. I encounter difficulty in accommodating teachers need for mentoring.
Burdened and weighed down	It is very taxing for school head to function both as administrative officer and curriculum manager. I had difficulty in the indigenization or localization of the curriculum. There were very limited researches conducted. It is very difficult to conduct research without aid of MT We remain stuck to giving only description; but no prescription. Lack of technology or techniques to hold students' interest in class.
Reduced ability to deliver	Lack of competent teachers to teach specific tracks in SHS Help for necessary intervention not provided. Teachers feel they are not supported; not given technical assistance. There is lack of models where teachers can learn from. Teachers complain due to lack of experts to teach them.
Limited mentoring and coaching	Tracking and diagnosing of teachers' needs and difficulties are not attended to No resource person that can readily help teachers Lack of skilled demo teachers and mentor-teachers Lack of much needed assistance in curriculum development

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	Teachers refuse to cooperate saying it is not their job to do school reports.
	Teachers lack initiative to innovate.
	Level of teacher participation is low.
	Some teachers do not like to be monitored and supervised; give excuses not to be observed.
	Some teachers resist change.
Indisposition teachers	of They blame it on lack of skilled (master) teachers.
	Teachers miss work (deliberately) so that observation will not take place.
	Some teachers are so set in their old ways; cannot relate to the new curriculum
	Some teachers get complacent and remain stagnant.
	Teachers refuse to follow the competencies.

### **Resiliency in the field**

It can be gleaned from the responses during the interviews and discussion that the school heads adapt changes on their own yet still managed to become competent. The teachers were also diligent in following the instructional supervision schedule. Even without master teachers, classrooms continue to be well managed and the students' performance still increased. Teachers tried to be resourceful and sought assistance from the school heads whenever necessary.

Lando (pseudonym) was steadfast in managing the school despite of the inconvenience of not having a master teacher in their school. In his accounts:

*Kahit pa walakaming master teacher still ang mga teachers choose to adopt ang mgakabauhansa especially sa transition sa K-12 curriculum. Makita nimongataas man pud performance this year. Ang mga teachers they were able to source funds para sa projects ug programs. Maskitsakalisudngawalay master teachers na managed ug organized and classroom.(PCVIISHPS\_2-Q1).*

Despite having no Master Teachers still the teachers choose to adopt changes and become competent in their field especially with the transition of the K-12 curriculum. A noticeable increase in the performance of the students was also observed this year. Teachers were also able to source out funds to finance projects and programs. Despite the difficulty of not having Master teacher the classroom are well managed and lessons organized.

A participant was enthusiastic when he said:

Among my teachers the best experiences I have with them is that they are very diligent and follows instructional supervision schedule. I also have observed that they have regular sharing of resources. When the school cannot provide for them they pool their resources to have a healthier class environment (PCVLFGDSHPS\_2-Q1).

Ipe (pseudonym) also said:

*My best experience is when teacher come to the office nga well motivated sila ug high and receptiveness sahatagnimong instructional supervision atoanga department. Sa akaa experience moanhesilasa office freely ug mgangayo assistant ug feedback saila clinical observation.(MACVIISHPS\_7-Q1).*

My best experience is when teachers are well motivated and highly receptive of the instruction supervision procedure enforced by our department. As per experience my teachers would come freely to the office to seek assistants or ask for feedback of their clinical observation.

Still with the onset of the discussion leaning on the positive result experience of not having a master teachers four among the five major theme points to the areas of concerns.

### **Burdened and weighed down**

A participant noted that she has additional work load because of the need to do the work of the master teacher. In her accounts:

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*Daghanjudproblemanimogawasngalisud para saako, samasa indigenization sa curriculum ug iyang locale.Naapud ko dungagtrabaho kay ako man maglihoksatrabahosa MT(PCVIIISHPS\_2-Q1).*

A lot of problems arise which I considered difficult to handle like the indigenization of curriculum or its localization. I also have additional work load because I need to do the work that is supposed to be slated to the Master Teacher.

With resignation in her voice a participant sighed with a low voice as she narrated:

*Kapoy para sausaka school head kung mag function both as administrative officer ug curriculum manager specially kung dako ang skwelahan. (NCVFGDSHP\_6-Q1).*

It is very taxing to the school head to function as administrative officer and curriculum manager especially if the school is big.

Her sentiments were confirmed by another participant:

*Sakitsaakodughanngadili ko ka provide ug saktonga technical assistance in their field.(MOCVFGDSHPS\_5-Q1).*

Still it is heartbreaking for me that I cannot provide the best for my teachers especially when they request technical assistance in their field.

### **Reduced ability to deliver**

Another major theme that emerged is the reduced ability to deliver. Most of the participants believed that the ability to do research is hampered because of the absence of a master teacher.

Lando (pseudonym) felt the need to have a master teacher especially on conducting researches. In his narration:

*Usahay ma limited ang research ka wala may motrabaho especiallynga 6 na load samga teachers, ang master teacher man judmagbuhatsa research based sa data samga co-teacher(PCVIIISHPS\_2-Q1).*

Limited researches also are an issue because a master teacher is task to do research based on the data accumulated by her co teachers., no one will do the work since teachers have 6 loads already.

The narration of Lado (pseudonym) was substantiated by Ipe (pseudonym) and a participant in the FGD. To wit:

The schools not only need a master teacher because of instruction, an MT is needed to conduct research and implement action plan that focus on the enhancement of the curriculum (MACVIIISHPS\_7-Q1).

The lack of data analyst that can man or plan an action based on schools report card is very harmful because we could not properly assess the level of instructional competence of our teachers and the level of achievement of our learners, we remain stuck in giving only description and no prescription. (MRCVFGDSHPS\_1-Q1)

In addition, Lando (pseudonym) and Joaquin (pseudonym) aired their concerns on instructional aspect:

There is also the problem on the lack of teaching techniques or strategies to hold the students interest in class (PCVIIISHPS\_2-Q1).

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If we include the Senior High School Program the lack of competent teachers to teach in specific areas (PCVIISHPS\_1-Q1).

Had it been that their schools have master teachers, then the teachers would have been able to receive the assistance that they needed. In their accounts:

I could not provide all the assistance since we don't have master teachers (MACVFGDSHPS\_P7-Q1).

They would feel that they are neglected and not supported by the district (NCVFGDSHP\_P6-Q1).

### **Limited mentoring and coaching**

It emerged from the interviews and discussion that the school heads felt that mentoring and coaching were limited because of the absence of master teachers. The teachers have no models, resource persons or experts where they can learn from. There were no experts to teach or assist them in curriculum development.

A participant described a bad experience in the phenomenon under study. In his words:

The only bad experience in instructional supervision is the lack of model teacher or teachers that can provide expert support to other teachers which is very important since teachers rarely go out of the school for advance training (PCVLFGDSHPS\_2-Q1).

One of the participants shared that she encountered a problem in terms of curriculum implementation because the teachers under her have no skilled model to look at. In her narration:

Teachers can sometimes complain because they don't have models or expert that work together with them in dealing with students and learning abilities (PCVLFGDSHPS\_P4-Q1).

Similar concern was expressed by Rey (pseudonym):

In the school head's point of view, every school should have a master teacher to help us in tracking or diagnosing teachers need in learning and teaching process specifically on the delivery of instruction. (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q1).

Lando (pseudonym) pointed out that the teachers under his supervision could have been helped in terms of curriculum implementation if there were resource persons that can assist them. In his narration:

The Master teacher serves a mentor to all teachers in the aspect of instructional competency. They are also assigned to help teachers that are new and needs guidance in the field. Often time they serve as the resource person for clarification in the curriculum. In our the public system it is extremely important to have a master teacher in order for the administrator to have a competent person to see the management of the curriculum (PCVIISHPS\_2-Q1).

### **Indisposition of teachers**

Based on the interviews and discussion, it surfaced that the school heads encountered problems with the way teachers respond to observations and monitoring. Others even resist change and remain stagnant.

Venus (pseudonym) had a hard time assigning the tasks of the master teachers to her teachers. She sighed as she narrated:

Still I have encountered teachers who refuse to cooperate with the additional work saying that it is not part of their paid salary to do school reports aside from teaching (PCVIISHPS\_3-Q1).

On the other hand, Rey (pseudonym) observed the lack of teacher's initiative to innovate which resulted to poor output.

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To wit:

Not all teachers under my supervision can attain my expectations by far my experiences involves, lack of initiative particularly in the innovation of learning materials; low output/result in the teaching-learning performance and sometimes you will encounter lack of interest and participation (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q1).

There were instances where teachers really personally refused to be monitored and be improved. In their accounts:

Teachers would deliberately be absent so that observation would not take place. As for bad experience I can only take note of teachers who are boxed in the old curriculum and need intensive training to relate to the current curriculum(MACVIISHPS\_7-Q1).

I find it really sad when teachers get complacent and decide not to improve at all. This despite numerous call to have a satisfactory mark in their teaching they would often remark that they need skilled teachers to facilitate their teaching and student assessment. (MOCVFGDSHPS\_5-Q1).

Teachers will not give time to share their best and will not allow school heads to sit down and observed his/her class and there will be several excuses for the observation. Sometimes competencies are also not followed and teachers will have several reasons for not following the correct competencies(NCVIISHPS\_6-Q1).

### **Coping Mechanisms Adopted by School heads on the Absence of Master Teachers in their Schools**

Based on the participants' interviews and discussion, five themes emerged as shown in Table 3 – *Delegation; Multitasking; Ingenuity and resourcefulness; Establishing good rapport; Strengthening faculty development.*

Table 3

*Themes and Core Ideas on Coping Mechanisms Adopted by School heads on the Absence of Master Teachers in their Schools*

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Delegation	I assign teachers to become coordinators; Designate someone who can function as MT I designate a focal person to give new input and analyze data for the school.
Multitasking	Monitored closely the teaching learning process. I did research; conducted educational research Strengthened professional growth sessions. I serve as resource person for curriculum clarification We had to do outsourcing to obtain needed facilities and materials for our learners We endeavored to increase allotment by increasing enrolment.
Ingenuity and resourcefulness	Organized team observation; encouraged team evaluation Utilized social media to augment instructional capacity of teachers. Did peer observation and feed back Learned to prioritize; do time management Held regular conferences with teachers
Establishing good rapport	Appreciate the work and effort of teachers Respect and trust your teachers Trusting the teachers allows greater respect in the relationship Encouraged teachers to pursue graduate studies Sent teachers to various trainings and seminars Conducted regular professional development sessions I required teachers to attend 2-3 seminars per year

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Strengthening Faculty Development	Organized regular INSET; school-based trainings Managed INSET training focusing on ICT capacity building Established weekly sessions for teaching techniques and strategies I conducted school-based training on teaching and learning.
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### **Delegation**

Resting on their laurels was not an option for the school heads, the school's operation has to go on even without master teachers. Some school heads delegated the tasks to teachers in addition to their usual teaching loads. The commitment of the assigned teachers is crucial in this aspect.

The following were the experiences that the participants shared:

Because we don't have master teachers in our school we can only assign teachers to become coordinators and help the teachers (MRCVFGDSHPS\_1-Q2)

Designate someone who can bear the function of a Master teacher (PCVIISHPS\_4-Q2)

The alternative that we have is to designate focal person, despite the absence of master teacher in our school. The focal person for the month seeks and gives new input and helps analyze data for the schools (MACVFGDSHPS\_7-Q2).

### **Multitasking**

It surfaced from the interviews and discussions that with the desire to run the school smoothly even without MTs, some school heads resort to multitasking. Lando (pseudonym), Venus (pseudonym), Juliet (pseudonym), Ipe (pseudonym) and Rey (pseudonym) shared that they do several tasks at the same time. Taxing as it may seem but this has to be done rather than plainly complaining on the inadequacies.

I cannot solve the problem alone so, I monitor closely teaching and learning process (PCVIISHPS\_2-Q2).

I conduct educational research (PCVIISHPS\_4-Q2).

The only avenue I can find is to do research and address the issue based on the concern of the teachers and students (PCVIISHPS\_3-Q2).

In addressing the problems in teaching and learning we as a school decided to strengthen our professional growth sessions (MRCVIISHPS\_7-Q2).

I have learned to do the task of a Master Teacher being a school head and handling also the curriculum development: multitasking (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q2).

### **Ingenuity and resourcefulness**

It emerged from the interviews and discussion that school heads ventured possible means to cope up with the experienced absence of MTs. They have tried outsourcing got resources, organized team that took the monitoring functions of the MTs, did peer observation and feed-backing and organized priorities.

As a school head, Joaquin (pseudonym) is sensitive on the needs of the school for instructional purposes, hence, he took an initiative to provide their needs. In his narration:

Facilities are very hard to obtained, in our schools a lot of outsourcing was done just to provide materials for our learners (PCVIISHPS\_1-Q2).

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Moreover, he added:

In terms of financial allocation we can only help increase the enrolment so that we can also increase our allotment and provide better facilities and equipment for our teachers (PCVIISHPS\_1-Q2).

Since monitoring, evaluating and feed back were supposedly the tasks of MTs, the school heads strategize to address the completion of these tasks. The following were the shared strategies:

By far the in terms of monitoring the teaching and learning process we have established weekly a session for techniques and strategies to enhance the teachers. Aside from that, the evaluation of teachers is done by team (PCVFGDSHPS\_2-Q2).

In our school we have decided to have peer observation in this manner we can continuously kept abreast with our monitoring schedule and help in assessing our peers through feed back (MOCVFGDSHPS\_5-Q2).

I have learn to make do with what I have do all work and learn to prioritize matters and respond to situation with immediate need (PCVIISHPS\_2-Q2).

### **Establishing good rapport**

The interviews and discussions pointed out a common idea that establishing a good rapport with the teachers helped in the operation of the school despite of the absence of MTs. A basic philosophy is that leaders who wish to have a functional team should see to it that a caring environment is experienced by the team members. Regular conferences where they can express their success, discomforts and ideas also helped in promoting good relationship with the teachers.

The following were the narrations of the experiences that they shared:

The best experience I have is that with our minimal group we do discussions and warmly received feedbacks. It somehow lessens the burden of an administrator (NCVFGDSHPS\_6-Q2).

I cannot solve the problem alone so, I monitor closely teaching and learning process. Conference with teachers or with the students is a big help. As well as home visitation (PCVIISHPS\_2-Q2).

I appreciated the work and effort of my teachers (MACVIIISHPS\_7-Q2).

In my part trusting my teachers allows greater respect in the relationship and interaction especially in class monitoring (MACVFGDSHPS\_7-Q2).

Similarly, a participant pointed out the significance of building good relationship with the teachers under her supervision. To wit:

I can only say that patience and perseverance couple with a good relationship with your teachers can alleviate the problem of not having a master teachers (PCVFGDSHPS\_3-Q2).

### **Strengthening faculty development**

An emergent theme on strengthening faculty development emerged as one of the coping mechanisms in the absence of MTs. From the interviews and discussion, the participants shared that they encouraged their teachers to undergo trainings and even pursue in post-graduate studies. Regular In-Service Training (INSET) sessions were also organized to capacitate the teachers.

School heads who delegated the tasks of MTs or even have assumed the tasks themselves shared that they felt the need to capacitate their teachers in whatever possible means. This was contained and reflected in the narrated accounts of the following informants and participants:

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Conducts school based training and sent them to various training. Encouraged enrolment in graduate studies (PCVIISHPS\_4-Q2).

There are several strategies I personally applied in order to solve problems in teaching and learning in our school, 1<sup>st</sup> I required teachers to have 2 to 3 seminars related to teaching and learning process, in addition to, I even conducted school based training or seminar to address the said issue, second is that I encourage teachers to enroll in graduate schools for professional growth and development (MACVFGDSHPS\_1-Q2).

INSET training is regularly organize to attend to the needs of our teachers (PCVFGDSHPS\_4-Q2).

We organize and manage an INSET training that focuses on the ICT capacity building (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q2)

By far the in terms of monitoring the teaching and learning process we have established weekly a session for techniques and strategies to enhance the teachers (PCVFGDSHPS\_2-Q2).

### **Insights of School Heads on the Absence of Master Teachers**

From the collated data obtained from the interviews and discussions of the study participants, three (3) major themes emerged as presented in Table 4. These themes helped me determine which core ideas to report. These themes are one- *Must be avoided whenever possible*; two- *disadvantageous but not deleterious*; three - *alleviated by being creative*.

#### **Must be avoided whenever possible**

It surfaced from the interviews and discussion that in as much as possible, school heads prefer to have MTs in their school because of the crucial role that they need to fulfil to improve the teaching-learning process. Hence, the absence of MTs in their schools must be avoided whenever possible.

Rey (pseudonym), Venus (pseudonym) and the participants in the FGD shared the same views as reflected in their accounts:

In the school head's point of view, every school should have a master teacher (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q3).

A school head must request for master teacher item so that there will be allocation for the next budgeting, and request if teachers needs be updated, because it will be the basis in creating master teacher position in the school (PCVIISHPS\_3-Q3).

Yes, It is a common notion that master teacher should be assigned in big school to help the potentials of the students since it is the central school but I would disagree with that, small schools in the "barrio" need same attention too (PCVFGDSHPS\_3-Q3).

I do hope that with the memorandum issued by the Regional Director deploying all MT to schools without MT be applied to all schools (NCVFGDSHPS\_6-Q3).

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Table 4

### *Themes and Core Ideas on Insights of School Heads on the Absence of Master Teachers in their Schools*

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Must be avoided whenever possible.	Every school should have a master teacher; even small schools and schools in the barrios. The need for an expert in the area of instruction is important in a school Request for a master teacher without let up. The Memo issued by the RD deploying MTs to schools must be applied. Learning goes on without a MT but it would be much better to have one. Even without master teachers, classes continue to run smoothly.
Disadvantageous but not deleterious	Without MTs, heads have to learn to be efficient in both administrative and curriculum development School heads have to work double time since one has to function as both head and MT I have to learn to do multi-tasking and allow others to become leaders. I learned to be resourceful in managing the school. Develop a culture that seeks improvement among the teachers. Have a good reward system to motivate teachers. Have a succession development plan.
Alleviated by being creative.	I have learned to make do without an MT by prioritizing. Focus and determination is needed to assist the teachers without MT.

### **Disadvantageous but not deleterious**

The school heads who participated in the interviews and discussions agreed that it is indeed difficult to manage the schools without MTs, but the situation should not be a reason for mismanagement nor a deterrent to success.

It is worth noting that like other school heads, Ipe (pseudonym) tried to adopt to the situation and thought of a strategy. But still having master teachers to assist them would still be better. This was evident as she shared her thoughts:

Learning goes on even without master teacher but it would have been better if MTs are there. An MT is needed to conduct research and implement action plan that focus on the enhancement of the curriculum (MACVIISHPS\_7-Q3).

Corazon (pseudonym) managed the school even without MTs becauseof her passion to achieve what is good for the school.

I learn to be creative in managing the school and keep my faith that with small things that push towards what is best eventually will lead to good things in the school. I can say that now I can handle well the school but a master teacher would still be best to help fully the teachers and students (NCVIISHPS\_6-Q3).

Some participants shared their victorious feelings of being able to manage in the absence of MTs.

When we do instruction supervision it is a joy to see teachers reach out to students despite difficulties and constraint of our system (MOCVFGDSHPS\_5-Q3).

During the focus group discussion, a participant shared the important lesson that he learned after going through difficulties in running the school without MTs:

It is hard to manage a school without a master teacher because you need to be efficient in both administrative work and curriculum development (MRCVFGDSHPS\_1-Q3).

With the hard labor and the challenging tasks ahead, Ipe (pseudonym) posed a reminder to manage time effectively.

#### **Alleviated by being creative**

The creativity of the mind is boundless. Most of the time, this paved way for the production of worthwhile ideas that can be used to alleviate a problematic situation. Based on the interviews and discussions, it surfaced that the school heads can be alleviated by being creative.

For instance, Rey (pseudonym), Venus (pseudonym) and Lando (pseudonym) learned to developed their soft skills in order to alleviate the problem. In their accounts:

I have learned to do the task of a Master Teacher being a school head and handling also the curriculum development: multitasking (MACVIISHPS\_5-Q3).

One must learn to be flexible, patient, open-minded, cooperative and resourceful since she/he needs to function as School Head and as a Master Teacher (PCVIISHPS\_3-Q3).

I have learn to make do with what I have do all work and learn to prioritize matters and respond to situation (PCVIISHPS\_2-Q3).

On the other hand, some school heads motivates and assists their teachers in order to improve. The following were their narrations:

I've learn to developed a culture that seeks improvement among the teachers (PCVFGDSHPS\_4-Q3).

Have a good reward system to help motivate teachers (PCVFGDSHPS\_2-Q3).

In addition, a participant pointed out a significant learning that he had in the absence of MTs:

I have learned to give more focus and determination to assist the teachers. (PCVFGDSHPS\_2-Q3).

#### **V. DISCUSSION**

In this chapter are presented the discussion, conclusions, implications for practice and implications for future research based on the themes developed during the data analysis. This study has clearly indicated its purpose; that is, to describe the perspectives of the schools heads with regard the absence of master teachers in non-central schools. It aims to take a closer encounter with the experiences of the participants, bring out their feelings and insights to determine the concepts that may be gleaned from the findings.

It is along this line that I opted to utilize the qualitative research method, particularly phenomenological approach in this research study. Phenomenology is concerned with the shared lived experiences in a specified group. Through this, the commonality of the experience is established and a deep understanding of the phenomenon is attained (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2013).

It is in the aforementioned framework of reference that 14 participants - seven for the in-depth interviews and seven for the focus group discussion were asked to participate and share their experiences, coping mechanisms and insights on the absence of master teachers in non-central schools. All of them were school heads in non-central schools in Compostela Valley. Their years of experience as school heads vary; hence, provided a rich data of the phenomenon in terms of their experiences, coping mechanisms and insights.

As the results of this study have revealed, the school heads observed that the teachers had practiced self-directed learning in the absence of master teachers paving to strong resilience in the field. They were still competent, diligent to follow instructional supervision schedules, managed their classes well and caused increase in students' performance. They were also resourceful and sought the school heads' assistance without hesitations.

The participants felt the difficulties for not having master teachers in their school; however, it was not totally the school's loss since the teachers managed to be still competent through their undertakings. Indeed, the school heads felt that were burdens were lightened with the resiliency of the teachers, making the school head move through with the challenges of not having MTs in the school. These findings parallel the assertion of Serdyukov (2017) that school heads and teachers alike can be resilient through their innovative efforts because they wanted something good to happen in the educational system. The capacity to make a sound judgment of what should not be done, what has to be done and what needs to be done is very critical. Without this, the students' achievement and operations in the school, in general, is at risk.

The way teachers respond to the protocols and to any problematic situation that gets into the system are essential so that unnecessary stresses are avoided either on the part of the school head or to the teachers themselves. As shared by one of the participants in the FGD, the teachers were very diligent and that they follow their instructional

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supervision schedule. They even find ways and means to supplement whatever was lacking. The findings parallel to the assertion that the teachers play a vital role in the achievement of the students, thus, it is imperative for the teachers to perform well in the exercise of their functions (Idris, 2016; Tesfaw&Hofman, 2014).

The findings on the resiliency of the teachers which helped the school heads to pass through the challenges on the absence of MTs find its support in the Self-Efficacy theory of Bandura (1977). Those who have a high sense of self-efficacy are capable of innovating, capable of exhorting possible means to address the concern at hand.

As implied in the interviews and discussion, the school heads exerted efforts to fill in the tasks of the MTs, however, with the tremendous tasks placed on their shoulders, the school heads were burdened and weighed down.

The feeling of being burdened and weighed down as implied by the statements of the study participants can be traced to the fact that they also have administrative roles to perform. They felt overloaded because they have to assume the work of the master teacher. Doing the roles of being an administrative officer and curriculum manager at the same time was reported to be very exhausting, really a burden for them. These findings are in cognizance with the research by Guhao (2016) it was revealed that conversational leadership of school head and teacher's self-efficacy were significantly correlated with each other. This also is in relation with the findings of Riley and Langan-Fox (2013) that high demands in the workplace is truly exhausting, this is even worsen when the unavailability of the needed resources. These would pose a negative impact on the well-being of principals which made them feel exhausted not only physically but also emotionally. Emotional exhaustion is elevated when the work demands cannot be satisfied (Brouwers, & Tomic, 2016; Rai, 2015). The resources that were being mentioned did not only pertain to the materials needed for instruction and in managing the school, but also the workforce. In this study, the MTs in school is the unavailable, important resource.

The findings of this study can be understood through the Strategic Management Theory (SMT) of David (2005) and Hashim (2005). In as much as possible, the school heads made use of the available resources. However, since the absence of MTs cannot be given a remedy right away at the time of this research endeavor, hence, the reason for the exhaustion that was felt by the school heads.

The absence of the MTs were very visible since the situation took its toll to the performance of the teachers resulting to their reduced ability to deliver. The school heads had noted that the teachers were not able to get the appropriate mentoring and coaching that they need to effectively deliver the instruction. The observed difficulties of the teachers without the MTs parallel to the findings of Neumerski (2013) that MTs are tasked to provide scaffolding to the beginning teachers for them to become proficient.

The school heads had aired a concern that they cannot just pass on the task of the MTs to the teachers like doing research since they already have six (6) loads in a day. Since the manpower were limited, the school heads were only limited on the description of the problem but were unable to concretize the solution. During the discussion, the school heads felt sorry for their teachers since they cannot provide them with all the assistance that they need, to the point of feeling neglected. On the part of the school heads, being unable to provide the instructional assistance to the teachers is charged against inefficiency.

The findings parallel that of Darmody and Smyth (2016) that the intense demands prevent the school heads from performing their usual role is considered as the most severe cause of their stress. Stressors affect job satisfaction which in turn affects job performance. The administrative roles of the school heads do not end inside the campus, a lot of these roles required them to extend beyond the school hours. They need to be highly skilled and coupled with emotional agility as they move from one task to another. In the case of the study participants, from being a supervisor in the school to the nitty-gritty of the academic instruction. Maxwell and Riley (2017) asserted that the school heads' inability to cope with the demands and being personally dissatisfied with their performance made them susceptible to higher levels of burnout and even depressive symptoms. Hence, a call for strategizing for possible means that work.

The findings in this study negate the premise of SMT in the work of Grant (1991) and Peteraf (1993) which presupposed that school heads should utilize the resources effectively. Since in this particular findings, the school heads were unable to maximize the available resources and resorted to do it in their own since they can no longer empower their teachers to do the tasks that would make them sacrifice their time in class.

The absence of MTs in schools spells limited mentoring and coaching which have caused negative experiences among the school heads. For instance, a participant shared that there were no experts who can serve as instructional models for his teachers considering that not everyone has an access for advancement trainings. In similar tone, another participant encountered a problem I curriculum implementation her teachers complained that they do not have expert teachers with them. The findings parallel to that of Izadinia (2015) that the presence of mentor teachers positively affects the performance of the beginning teachers. In this sense, the absence of mentors have negative impact to the performance of the teachers who need assistance.

The participants in this study have shared the immense need to have master teacher to help them in the assessment of the teaching-learning needs and processes. This is in cognizance with the findings that beginning teachers should have professional support groups that would serve as their collaborators in instructional planning, implementation and evaluation (Ginkel et al., 2016). Furthermore, as the need arises, they should be mentored in a mutually engaging manner. This is also in cognizance with the findings of Hudson and Hudson (2016) that successful teaching practices are mediated through positive relationships and mutual goal setting between the collaboration of an expert teacher and a beginning teacher.

Not everyone can be pleased despite of the efforts exerted by the school heads to fill the gap caused by the absence of MTs. There were teachers who neither respond to the call for classroom observations nor adopt ways to

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improve their teaching. Indisposition of teachers as shared by the participants, the experience may be due to the notion among teachers that observing classes were not part of the school heads' duties and functions. The noted negative disposition parallel to the findings of Hrestic and Bondac (2016) role conflict and role ambiguity can cause organizational stress. This would lead to non-conformance since the function being exercised was not deemed as authorized.

This study also found out that the indisposition of teachers resulted to poor learning outcomes – lack of initiative to innovate, participative and disinterested to be improved. These findings are significant in investigating both the perspectives of the school heads and the teachers. Looking through the teachers under these school heads, it can be implied that they demonstrated the characteristics of professionals who have lost the purpose of being a teacher. People who understood and have found their purpose in the profession where they are currently in find joy in performing the tasks expected from them. On the other side, teachers who have shown resistance to change or innovate may have been suffering from several intervening factors – the reason why they have lost their purpose. One of the factors that significantly affects teacher performance is teacher stress. Stressors of different sources may pose serious consequences when appropriate coping mechanism is not applied. These parallel to the concept presented in the findings of Klassen et al. (2013) that teachers who have been caught between the walls of stressors would display a reduced level of self-efficacy. The level of efficacy directly affects the teachers' functioning and behavior in a given circumstance. Furthermore, teachers who are under stressful conditions may also exhibit lower levels of commitment which directly affects productivity and the quality of the expected outcomes in teaching-learning process.

As a means of coping with the experienced challenges in the absence of MTs, the school heads resorted to delegation of tasks. There were some tasks that can be delegated so that the school heads can also be efficient with the performance of the rest of the tasks. There were participants in the FGD who vouched for the successful delegation of tasks through assigning teachers to serve as coordinator or focal person. The willingness of the teachers to assume the task as delegated by the school heads is an indicator of good leadership skills since the latter was able to make the teachers respond positively to the call. The findings parallel to that of Heck and Hallinger (2014) that effective leadership of the school heads as perceived by the teachers positively influences the way they behave and act on pressing concerns. Instructional leadership is a significant factor in allowing collective teacher efficacy and commitment to surface without any forceful intervention. If teams were established by managerial authority and had strong appointed members, these vertical relationships would encourage teamwork. But conventional principles will make teamwork easier (Guhao Jr, E. S., & Quines, L. A, 2021).

Moreover, the findings is supported with the assertion of Ronfeldt et al., 2015 that successful collaboration between and among teachers and administrators result to better achievement and advanced professional performance as measured in the quality of output and services Given the right motivation and guidance, beginning teachers can be made to assume the task of expert teachers in parts and parcel.

The findings is in cognizance with the SMT theory wherein school heads made use of whatever resource that is available in order to make the organization function as it should be; even without the MTs.

Another means of coping the challenges on the absence of MTs was through multitasking. School heads had been multitasking rather than complaining or putting on the blame to anyone else. Although others may view multitasking as an attempt to carelessly bridge the gap, however, on the positive sense, it is a concrete exercise of the school head's proactive response to the needs of the institution.

The findings parallel to what Fidan and Balci (2016) fund out that the most frequent form of proactive behavior among school heads is strategic learning. They do not rest on whatever is lacking, nor settle on what is available without thinking of what else can be done. Strategic learning sought for ways that are feasible to address the problems at hand.

This is supported in the premise of the Hershey and Blanchard (1972) on the Situational Leadership theory. School heads act and adapt ways in response to the current situation considering success as an end point in mind.

The absence of MTs in non-central schools opted the school heads to outsource for resources. They did not just hope on those that has to be provided and what will be provided, rather, they looked for means to obtain the facilities needed by the learners. The findings parallel to what Boies and Fiset (2018) referred to as active management among school heads. These are those school who practice ingenuity and resourcefulness. Those who did not wait for change to come but worked for the envisioned changes to happen.

The participants in the FGD revealed that the absence of MTs in their schools made them decide and implement effective strategies to cope with the problem. This parallels to the concept presented by Eroğlu et al. (2014) that utilizing one's creativity in addressing the concern is one of the effective ways of managing the concerns in school. Not only would this solve the concern but would also increase the stress endurance of school heads. Failure to strategize would only add up to the stressors of the school heads, hence it is imperative to think of those strategies that would work.

It was also revealed during the interviews that putting priorities according to the urgency of the situation and immediately act on them is an effective means of coping with the challenges. This parallels to the assertion that learned resourcefulness is essential in dealing with management constraints (Eroğlu et al., 2014). The work performance of an organization is highly influence by the way administrators bring about courageous decisions and perseverance as needed in the situation. It is also in this regard the school head's resourcefulness is called in, especially on matters on the effective management of crisis and changes in the organization.

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Indeed, the premises on SMT as presented by Grant (1991) and Peteraf (1993) can be associated with how the school heads cope with the challenges. They have been effective leaders as they utilized all means and resources to fill in the inefficiency in the school.

Another means of coping the challenges on the absence of MTs was through establishing good rapport with the teachers under them. The participants have recognized the fact that they cannot solve the problem on their own, thus, they have to coordinate with their teachers and showed appreciation for their efforts. The discussions during the FGD implied that fostering positive relationship with the teachers under them eased the burdens of the administrators.

The findings is in cognizance with the idea that effective leadership are positively predicted by the leaders' capacity to build strong relationship, create a culture of people-centered administration, foster a shared vision and goals and create a positive and caring work environment (Noman et al., 2017). Moreover, the fidings of this study is in cognizance with the notion that school administrators have positive and significance influence in the school climate. School heads should create a supportive working environment, where there is mutual trust among the members of the organizations such as the teachers, the students, the parents and the rest of the stakeholders. Schools are successful with leaders who facilitates humane collaboration to happen; where people can agree, disagree without being posing negativity and move together to achieve the common goals (DeWitt, 2016).

In this study, one of the coping mechanisms of the school heads was to capacitate the teachers by strengthening faculty development in order for them to be contributors of the school's successful operation in general. The school heads shared that they encouraged their teachers to undergo trainings and even pursue in post-graduate studies. Regular In-Service Training (INSET) sessions were also organized to capacitate the teachers. In the absence of MTs, school heads had to extend the scope of their responsibilities. Technically, doing the tasks alone may only mean sacrificing the quality performance of one task just to fill in the other.

Their means of coping the experienced problem is supported by the findings of Lai and Cheung (2015) that teacher-leadership can be manifested through appropriate capacity building. Teachers can be capacitated to become better leaders that can perform other related tasks that is geared towards the effectiveness of school improvement efforts. Capacitated teachers has been found to improve teacher-leader engagement in different professional endeavors that would have significant impacts in quality leadership practices, student achievement, and improved strategies for effective implementation of school plans.

Faculty development can build resilience among teachers in times of adversities in their school environmental conditions. Enhancing the teachers' innate capacity and bridging the gaps in their skills has proved to increase their motivation to perform as well as their well-being (Mansfield et al.,2016).

As shared by the participants in the FGD, they regularly organized In -Service Training (INSET) to attend the needs of their teachers. Their means of coping with the experienced problem is an articulation of the findings of Wong et al. (2017) that promoting quality improvement among faculty was found to be more effective when teachers learn with their peers or with people that they usually associate with in school. In this way, they get to resolve shared concerns and plan out for the betterment of the school where they are currently serving.

With reference to the interviews conducted, the school heads were hoping that their schools would have MTs. They would prefer that someone would focus into curriculum development in order to improve the teaching-learning process. They won't be able to focus on the conduct of their primary role if they're the one's assuming the role of MTs in their schools. In an interview with a participant, it was pointed out that every school should have a master teacher.

Their insights pointed out to the common idea that school heads should focus on their primary tasks. They can only be effective if they have focused and that they would be able to put on their 100% efforts on it rather working part-time with administrative tasks and working part-time with curriculum development. Leahy and Shore (2018) posed a reminder that the effectiveness of educational leaders define the success of the school's operations and consequently on the achievement of the students.

School heads who have been playing various roles are prone to inefficacy and even poor well-being. The various demands in their designation have been causing burnout and dissatisfaction in work (Maxwell &Rilley, 2017),hence, placing in the role of MTs on their shoulder could mean higher levels of burnout and negative self-efficacy it must be avoided whenever possible. Maintaining the satisfaction and well-being of school heads are essential factors in the schools' success since they influence the performance of the teachers and achievement of the students (Majumdar, 2018).

Another learning that the participants had realized on the absence of MTs was that learning has to go on even without MTs, although having them in school would still make the situation better in other words it can be disadvantageous but not deleterious. School heads had strategized and kept their faith with small things that push towards what is best and with high hopes that those would eventually lead to good things in the school. In the focus group discussion, it surfaced that the school heads find it hard to manage a school without a master teacher because they have to assume with efficiency both administrative work and curriculum development. However, they were able surpass the concerns with the help of the teachers who were also able to show their best.

The positive mindset of the school heads parallel to the findings of Berkovich and Eyal (2017) that the transformational leadership of school heads can bring about positive outcomes in the system. Furthermore, the way they lead strongly affects the emotional aspect of the teachers which is one of the vital determinants of their productivity in school. School heads can boost the morale and intrinsic motivation of the teachers.

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The findings have a similar stance with Day and Hong (2016) who pointed out that during disadvantageous situations in schools, the emotional resilience of the school managers and the teachers can facilitate success. In order to attain this resilience, the school heads play a significant role in making their teachers feel that they can provide them with the support that they need.

Sustaining school improvements and successful operations in the absence of MTs require substantial strategies from the school heads. This is in cognizance with the findings of Day et al. (2016) that school heads have to combine transformational and instructional leadership approaches in order to address the problematic situation in schools. Successful school heads should have the capacity to look into the details and evaluate the needs of the school. From these needs, school heads should have the ability to strategize with reference to the school's direction, goals and culture.

Moreover, the quality of the school head's leadership significantly impact the sustenance of the school's achievements and success (Garza et al., 2014). They were expected to set the directions and capacitate the teachers to become leaders themselves. The endpoint in mind is to positively influence the teachers to perform better despite of the inadequacies in the resources in school. Their personal resilience to the problems arising in the institution should be strong enough to build the teachers' resilience as well. Successful school heads fully understood that there is a high probability of failing when they work in isolation (Garza, et al., 2014).

The successful means of surpassing the challenges would lead to the development of better leadership styles, making them more efficient when they would be facing similar problems. The aforementioned stance was in cognizance with Bandura's (1977) Self-efficacy theory which postulated that when one is able to go through successfully from a problematic situation, a person becomes more capable and would be able to develop the desired abilities needed to produce the desired outcomes.

The participants realized that they can alleviate the situation through being creative in their way. The school heads had to do multitasking, being a school head and a leader of curriculum development at the same time. They had to be flexible, patient, open-minded, cooperative and resourceful. It was also realized that they had to respond on different school matters based on priorities. They had to do those things since their teachers need to see in them that they're capable to handling the situation as the leaders of the school.

The findings are supported with the theory of Hershey and Blanchard (1972) on Situational Leadership theory which posited that school heads have their personal choices on the kind of management and leadership style that they are going to utilize based on their confidence and expertise and based on the call of the situation. The quality of leadership of the school heads define the appropriateness of the plans of action to counteract a problem. Leadership is not focus only to the leaders and their individual potentials; it is a process that facilitates the group to work hand in hand to achieve the desired results that can't be possible when working in isolation. Mitchell and Reiter-Palmon (2017) associated creativity in leadership which provided a vivid picture on what is expected from a leader. Creative leadership allows the leaders to influence their subordinates to be creative in finding solutions to a problem. Their insights parallel of the view that the leadership of school heads should provide a clear set of directions in order to achieve a sustained school success (Garza, et al., 2014). Creative and innovative school heads are capable of adapting and coping with unfavorable changes (Bhengu, & Myende, 2016). Furthermore, creative school heads are capable of determining the appropriate strategy to a problem.

When leaders fail to set the right direction, the whole organization will also fail to function accordingly. When confronted with problems, effective school heads are those who displayed proactive actions rather than feeling low and being reactive. Fidan, and Balci (2016) described a proactive leaders as those who effectively carry out strategic planning when the need arises. The school heads in this study had displayed this behavior when they sought all possible means in order to alleviate the situation. They did not regard the problem as a deterrent to success but an opportunity to explore.

### Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, the following implications for practice are offered: On the experiences of the school heads in managing schools without MTs, six themes emerged: *resiliency in the field, burdened and weighed down, reduced ability to deliver, limited mentoring and coaching, and indisposition of teachers*. These imply that the presence of the school heads alone were insufficient considering that majority of them have been accustomed to their managerial functions (Brouwer, et al., 2012; Sanzo et al., 2011). Though the implementation of the SBM have somehow shifted the way school heads think of school management from purely administrative to the inclusion of curriculum, however, not all of them are experts in instruction (Tapayan et al., 2016). In this line, it is appropriate that the school heads whose school were not stationed with MTs, be refreshed on matters pertaining to curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation; else, be stationed with MTs who were supposed to carry out the functions that focused on curriculum as stipulated in DO 42 s 2017.

On the coping mechanisms adopted by school heads on the absence of MTs in their schools, five themes surfaced during the interviews and discussions: *delegation, multitasking, ingenuity and resourcefulness, establishing good rapport, and strengthening faculty development*. These findings imply that the school heads did strategize and exhort all possible means to cope with the inefficiency. Strategic Management theory can explain the way the school heads respond as they effectively utilized whatever resource is available (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). Though active management was noted in the findings which was supported by literature to be an effective means of managing schools that lack essential resources (Boies&Fiset , 2018; Ng et al., 2015) but the findings may lead to a notion that this would put instructional outcomes at risk. Curriculum per se is a big concern that must be given attention by someone

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who have the full knowledge about it. If the Department of Education envisions quality outcomes, then it is imperative for the Division offices to look into the schools under them and assess if the number of MTs per school is sufficient for the number of teachers or if all non-central schools were really stationed with MTs.

On the insights of the school heads on the absence of MTs in their schools, three (3) themes emerged: *must be avoided whenever possible, disadvantageous but not deleterious, alleviated by being creative*. These implies that the school heads were not crippled with the absence of MTs since they did their share too in order to make up with the inefficiency. They have surpassed the challenges which gave them confidence and made them more strategic. This can be supported with Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory and the Situational Leadership Theory of Hershey and Blanchard (1972). But then, on the other side, looking into the smooth flow of organizational functions, the findings is suggestive that there is a need to fill in the deficiency in the organizational manpower. Specifically, that the manpower needed plays a very important role in curriculum. Yet it is true that school heads are supposed to be instructional experts too other than being running administrative functions only, however, it would be more advantageous on the part of the teachers and the learners, if someone is stationed to purely focus on curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. Hence, the need for Master Teachers who would work hand in hand with the school heads. With these, the school heads oversees the overall matters on curriculum while the MTs would focus on every aspect on it, leaving no stone unturned; all for the realization of quality education.

### Concluding Remarks

A school head's task is crucial in the overall functionality of the school; in the long run, it determines the learning outcomes. Managing schools without MTs would mean an extra load placed on the shoulders of the school heads, the rest of those that they cannot anymore handle were delegated to the teachers – a domino effect of the workload additions. But with appropriate managerial strategies, the school heads successfully surpassed the situation.

As a school head, I deem it very important to make myself ready for anything. I should demand from myself to be professionally equipped not only on management skills but also on the technical aspect, particularly on matters concerning the curriculum. This would make me ready should there be an instance that I would be stationed in a school with no MT's. I cannot demand so much from the Department of Education nor wait for change to come, I should make positive changes to happen.

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