

Unwavering Passion: Predicaments and Struggles of Volunteer Teachers

Eloisa S. Abucejo^{1*}, Maria Elena P. Mendoza², Kc Jane B. Lacdo-O³, Judith P. Villas⁴

Eastern Samar State University

Corresponding Author: Eloisa S. Abucejo dearestlouisette@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the lived experiences of volunteer teachers, including their predicaments, struggles, coping mechanisms, plans for professional growth, and how they use their experiences to improve their teaching performance. This study utilized a Qualitative research design through the use of semi-structured interviews. Participant involvement in this study was voluntary, and they were interviewed privately after signing an informed consent form. The findings of this study revealed that the predicaments of being a volunteer teacher include the lack of choice in following orders because they need to protect their reputation, uninterested learners, lack of financial support and recognition, overload administrative work, and an unfair system, which leads to unfair treatment between regular teachers and volunteer teachers. Furthermore, volunteer teachers should also prioritize their wellness by maintaining self-care practices, which are essential in balancing their personal and professional life. Lastly, volunteer teachers should also be encouraged to pursue continuous professional development to provide quality education to their learners.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is the heart of education. It is a powerful means of transmitting knowledge, instilling values, and developing skills. In fact, it is the most noble profession because no other profession has as marked an impact, over such an extended time, as teaching (Caldwell, 2024). Moreover, teachers are professional educators. They are the soul of teaching and play a pivotal role in the holistic development of the learners. Teachers can be categorized by role, subject area, and teaching style. They practice different expertise, but they all have a common goal- to teach and contribute to the learning of their students. One of the crucial contributors to students' holistic development is volunteer teachers. Volunteer teachers are individuals who provide educational instruction and support without receiving a salary or formal compensation (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017).

Volunteer teachers play significant roles in education by facilitating pupils with their academic tasks and contributing to the planning, preparation, and delivery of lessons. Additionally, they play a vital role in increasing educational resources in underdeveloped areas and in moving them toward a balanced state (Lili & Yingjin, 2020). Unfortunately, they faced various challenges during their service. According to a study by Zhou and Shang (2011), volunteer teachers in rural China did not receive sufficient training or support from the agency and experienced burnout. Similarly, in Li & Zhang's (2020) study, some international volunteer teachers in China also experience limited support. Additionally, English volunteer teachers experienced unpaid teaching and a broader context of insecurity and risk.

Moreover, US volunteer teachers in China's Yunnan Province also face challenges reconciling cross-cultural views of education in post-colonial global contexts (Jackson & Adarlo, 2014). Similarly, according to Burns et al. (2025), volunteer teachers face challenges to program implementation that require careful management.

Furthermore, Vancouver volunteer teachers experience emotional labor due to a lack of funding, poor organizational structure and teacher recognition, challenges of online teaching, limited parental support, and a lack of training (Afreen & Norton, 2024). Additionally, Chinese volunteer teachers in African Confucius Institutes also experience emotional labor (Wu & Yan, 2025).

Moreover, Filipino volunteer teachers cannot escape from these struggles. In fact, Billena and Paylangco (2022) found that they experience insufficient resources, limited expertise, and struggle with time management. On the other hand, volunteer teachers also struggle in implementing technology in the teaching process (Gurung, 2021).

Considering that there is a limited study of the lived experiences of volunteer teachers in education, this study was designed and implemented. The researchers aim to explore the lived experiences of elementary volunteer teachers, including their predicaments, struggles, coping mechanisms, and plans for professional growth. Also, this could raise awareness about how volunteer teachers navigate the diverse predicaments and struggles they face.

Therefore, understanding the lived experiences of elementary volunteer teachers is essential for every Bachelor of Elementary Education student, as it

provides insights into how to handle various predicaments and struggles in the practical teaching field. Similarly, the findings could serve as a resource for future researchers conducting the same study.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Elementary volunteer teachers play a vital role in supporting the learning process by assisting with instruction, classroom management, and individualized student needs despite receiving no financial compensation. Their presence helps improve students' academic performance through more personalized attention while also easing the workload of regular teachers. Research consistently shows that their effectiveness is strongly influenced by intrinsic motivation, emotional connection, and social relationships. Concepts such as altruism, *agape love*, and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—serve as key drivers of their commitment. At the same time, volunteer teaching contributes to their own growth by enhancing teaching skills, adaptability, and personal development.

However, volunteer teachers face numerous challenges, including limited resources, lack of training, financial constraints, and emotional stress, especially in underserved or high-risk environments. Despite these difficulties, they remain resilient by relying on creativity, social support, personal values, and a strong sense of purpose in helping students succeed. Their experiences often lead to a deep sense of fulfillment and meaning, reinforcing their dedication to education. These realities are well explained through Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes motivation through basic psychological needs, and Transformative Learning Theory, which highlights how challenging experiences foster reflection and perspective change, ultimately supporting both professional growth and sustained commitment.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of elementary volunteer teachers, focusing on their challenges, coping mechanisms, professional growth plans, and key takeaways. Conducted in Guiuan and Salcedo, Eastern Samar, the study involved six purposively selected participants with varying ages, genders, and teaching experiences to ensure diverse perspectives. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to freely share their experiences in their preferred language while guiding the discussion within a thematic framework. Using purposive sampling, the researchers intentionally selected individuals who could provide rich and relevant insights aligned with the study's objectives. By applying this approach, the researchers were able to capture in-depth, subjective data and gain a comprehensive understanding of the realities faced by elementary volunteer teachers in their specific context.

RESULTS

Theme 1: Strong Motivators Behind Their Volunteer Service

Many are called to be teachers, but few are chosen. This is evidenced by the volunteer teachers who shared their stories about their chosen fields. Their desire to be volunteer teachers was driven by their unwavering passion for teaching and their eagerness to be chosen in the DepEd ranking process. As they shared:

"Well, it inspires me in many aspects, one of which is that I really love teaching, and that is my passion to impart my knowledge to my learners, as well as contribute to our education system." (P4)

"To be known by the teachers, especially to the principals, to gain more support in the ranking process." (P2)

Thus, these strong motivators inspired them to be volunteer teachers. These are the strong forces that drive them to heed their calling and pursue their dream of becoming a regular teacher.

Subtheme 1: DepEd Ranking System

The DepEd Ranking System is one of the strongest forces that drives participants to become volunteer teachers. This system is used to evaluate and rank teacher applicants for public school positions. One of its ranking criteria is teaching experience, a crucial aspect of the DepEd Ranking System that is worth 15 points. Moreover, volunteer teaching experience can be considered valid experience in the DepEd Ranking System. As they shared:

"Well, since I am a BEED graduate, that is one reason why I chose to be a volunteer, and also so that I can get points for the DepEd ranking. Because we all know in our life today having backers is strong, but hopefully, maybe it helps me to have a point in ranking." (P5)

"To work in DepEd, prior experience is generally needed for any position. That is why I'm currently applying or volunteering to gain that experience, which will be beneficial in the ranking process when I apply for a teacher position later on." (P6)

Hence, the informants reckoned that through their volunteer teaching, they would have the opportunity to be ranked high enough in the DepEd ranking and might be offered an item.

Subtheme 2: Passion for Teaching

The ultimate inspiration of volunteer teachers is to follow their calling. This helps them continue pursuing their dream amid uncertainties and challenges. As one of the participants shared:

"Teaching has always been my passion, and even if the work is challenging, the joy of seeing my pupils learn and grow motivates me to continue." (P3)

Thus, their unwavering passion for teaching keeps their dream alive in their hearts. It fuels their desire to teach and have a positive impact on their learners' holistic development.

Theme 1.1: Evolution of Feelings: Uncertainty to a Deep Sense of Purpose

To be a teacher means to be courageous. As they put their vocation into action, volunteer teachers faced uncertainties that tested their faith, determination, and patience. It is only when they choose to move forward that they hold a deep sense of purpose in fulfilling their duty. As one of the participants shared:

"My feelings have evolved from uncertainty to a deep sense of purpose..." (P3)

Furthermore, volunteer teachers continue to fulfill their duties amidst an uncertain future. As a result, they strive to be better and use all uncertainties as motivation to always do their best in teaching their pupils.

Subtheme 1: Excitement Amidst the Anxiety

Volunteer teachers found excitement amidst their growing anxiety on their first day. As shared by one participant:

"At first, I feel mixed emotions, I'm so excited and at the same time nervous because I don't know if I can still teach children, but I get motivated when the School Principal said, "Welcome to the DepEd family!". I was happy because I felt that I was really meant to be here, to serve the pupils and make myself an inspiration to the pupils." (P1)

Thus, amid the different emotions they felt, they saw it as an opportunity to grow and be part of the DepEd.

Subtheme 2: Cultivating Patience

Volunteer teachers are firm believers of "patience is a virtue. It is a golden value that they have learned as a volunteer teacher, sharing:

"Volunteering taught me patience, resilience, and the true meaning of service." (P3)

Hence, being a volunteer teacher not only allows them to teach but also to learn in their profession. It helps them to be resilient and find the true meaning of service.

Subtheme 3: Fulfillment of Teaching

For volunteer teachers, nothing beats the fulfillment of seeing their learners grow. It is a different kind of happiness and satisfaction whenever their learners learned something from them, sharing:

"I feel happy and inspired to see my learners learn and enjoy at the same time whenever I handle them in class." (P4)

Furthermore, the progress of their pupils' learning became their inspiration. It inspired them to ensure that every discussion is interactive yet never fails to instill proper knowledge in the learners.

Theme 1.2: Heartwarming Reward of Being a Volunteer Teacher

Nothing is more heartwarming than being a volunteer teacher and seeing your learners grow. As one of the participants shared:

"Being able to do what I love: teaching the pupils, and showcasing my desire to nurture them." (P2)

These are the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences they have when performing their duties.

Subtheme 1: Finding Fulfillment in Learners' Development

Volunteer teachers find fulfillment in their learners' development. As they shared:

"The most rewarding or fulfilling aspect as a volunteer teacher is seeing the pupils grow and learn something from you that they will take into the future." (P1)

"The most fulfilling part is seeing my students learn little by little. When a child who once struggled can now read or solve problems, it makes all my efforts worth it." (P3)

Thus, the most rewarding aspect of being a volunteer teacher is seeing learners grow and develop. It gives them a deeper level of happiness and helps them find a deep sense of purpose in everything they do for the learners.

Subtheme 2: The Art of Appreciation

Volunteer teachers also find fulfillment whenever their learners appreciate their effort in helping them learn, sharing:

"They will remember you for what you do and for what you promise to them. So, it is heartwarming that you are appreciated even though you are still there as a volunteer teacher." (P5)

Hence, being remembered by their learners is one of the rewarding moments for volunteer teachers. It serves as a reminder to them that their effort is being seen and appreciated.

Theme 2: Unlocking the Hardest Part of Being a Volunteer Teacher

Being a volunteer teacher is both a rewarding and challenging. It involves patience, understanding, and a willingness to teach without anything in return. Despite the struggles and sacrifices, seeing the learners learn is priceless.

Subtheme 1: Uninterested Learners

One of the greatest challenges for volunteer teachers in the classroom is dealing with uninterested learners. As shared by a participant:

"The hardest part is that I am much overworked with so many papers and especially handling learners who don't behave, are noisy, and cannot read or write." (P4)

Dealing with uninterested learners is a significant challenge for volunteer teachers. The learner's lack of motivation and behavioral issues make it harder for them to create an effective learning environment. With this situation, they need an extra effort, patience, and creativity to capture the learner's attention and create strong classroom management skills that promote a meaningful learning.

Subtheme 2: Lack of Financial Support and Recognition

Despite the dedication and commitment of the volunteer teachers, they receive little to no compensation and often use their own resources to sustain the needs in their classroom, sharing:

"The hardest part is teaching with passion while enduring financial insecurity, job instability, and lack of recognition, all while striving to provide quality education for their pupils." (P3)

Moreover, volunteer teachers often feel discouraged because they don't get enough pay or recognition, which affects their motivation and self-worth. They need more support to make sure they're appreciated for their efforts and given the tools they need to keep teaching well.

Subtheme 3: Overloaded with Administrative Work

Besides making lessons and handling students, volunteer teachers also have to do a lot of reports and paperwork. As shared by a participant:

"The hardest part is that I am much overworked with so many papers and especially handling learners who don't behave, are noisy, and cannot read or write." (P4)

On top of teaching, volunteer teachers deal with extra admin work like reports and other tasks, making their job harder. This can lead to tiredness and less motivation, which affects how well they teach. Handling these tasks together can be too much, especially without proper support.

Theme 2.1: Navigating Unclear Expectations and Role Ambiguities

Volunteer teachers often face uncertainty regarding their specific roles and responsibilities within the school. A lack of clear guidelines from administrators can create confusion, leaving them unsure which tasks fall within their responsibilities.

Subtheme 1: Open-communication

Open communication is important to help volunteer teachers deal with unclear expectations and role confusion in their work, sharing:

"At first, I was unsure of my role because no one clearly explained what a volunteer should and shouldn't do. I overcame it by asking guidance from senior teachers and watching how they managed their work." (P3)

Furthermore, talking openly with colleagues and senior teachers also help them get guidance, share experiences, and understand their role better in school. This builds teamwork, reduce confusion, and help them fit in the school environment.

Subtheme 2: Protecting Reputation by Following Orders

Volunteer teachers often feel obligated to follow orders to keep a good reputation, sharing:

"Actually, we don't have a choice but to follow their instructions because, of course, if we refuse, it would create a bad image for us, especially since we're just volunteers." (P6)

This shows that volunteer teachers do things to protect their reputation and avoid problems. Even if they have their own thoughts or struggles, they still follow what's asked of them to look good and stay respected in the school.

Theme 2.2: Conquering Uncertainties Through Unwavering Passion

Volunteer teaching often comes with uncertainties and challenges that test one's dedication and strength. Even with the struggles, many show a strong passion for their work, driven by a real love and commitment to teaching.

Subtheme 1: Love for Teaching

A strong love of teaching is a key motivator for volunteer teachers. As they shared:

"I don't have any reason to resent being a volunteer teacher because I love what I'm doing, and it's such an honor to be part of the children's success, and it's also a big help for me in my growth, and this is my stepping stone to becoming a successful professional teacher someday." (P1)

"I don't resent being a volunteer. In fact, I feel proud. What I resent is how volunteer teachers are treated as if their work is less important, when in reality, we do the same job as regular teachers." (P3)

A true love for teaching help volunteers teachers stay committed and focused, even with the problems they face.

Subtheme 2: Unfair System

Even though they are dedicated and proud to be volunteer teachers, they often feel like the system don't value their efforts enough, sharing:

"I don't resent being a volunteer. In fact, I feel proud. What I resent is how volunteer teachers are treated as if their work is less important, when in reality, we do the same job as regular teachers." (P3)

This shows that problems in the system, like lack of recognition and unfair rules, make volunteer teachers feel they're not treated fairly. Feeling like their hard work is not valued can hurt their morale and commitment, even for those who truly love teaching.

Theme 3: Uncovering the Biggest Challenges Faced by Volunteer Teachers

a. Lack of Resources

Facing your own fears are just the start of the challenges that a volunteer teacher deals with to do their duty. They also faced additional factors along the way, such as a lack of resources, support, or infrastructure. This challenge can hinder them from giving quality education to their learners. As they shared:

"Sometimes our school doesn't have many resources..." (P4)

"Sometimes there's no comfort room, lack of textbooks, lack of an electric fan to make the classroom setting conducive..." (P5)

Not having enough resources isn't just a problem for giving good education; it also makes it harder for volunteer teachers to be creative with their lessons.

b. Providing Alternative Materials

Amidst the challenges, volunteer teachers do not let these things stop them from doing what they love. They provide alternative materials, such as creating improvised flashcards and visual aids from old magazines and recycled paper, and leverage technology and real-world objects to ensure that their learners receive the quality education they deserve, sharing:

"...I will have my alternatives in order for my learners to learn and understand our lessons. I also maximize technologies and real-world objects for them." (P4)

Thus, volunteer teachers also need support and resources to deliver their lessons. Having enough resources could help them deliver their lessons effectively.

Theme 3.1 Addressing Teaching or Instructional Challenges

a. Challenge in Classroom Management and Scarcity of Learning Materials

Just like regular teachers, volunteer teachers also face teaching and instructional challenges. These challenges, such as classroom management and scarcity of learning materials, hinder them from effectively delivering their lesson. As they shared:

"Classroom management was a big challenge. I had to earn respect. I did that by showing consistency, fairness, and care for my students." (P3)

"Difficulty in producing teaching materials, especially when I don't have resources." (P2)

Volunteer teachers find it hard to understand their learners and provide appropriate strategies. On the other hand, the scarcity of learning materials helps the volunteer teachers to develop their creativity.

b. Maximizing Learning Materials

Maximizing learning materials helps volunteer teachers address the challenge of scarcity. Volunteer teachers used a variety of learning materials to cater to pupils' individual needs, sharing:

"...maximize different learning materials for them to understand and cater to their individual needs." (P4)

Hence, creativity and flexibility are essential for volunteer teachers. However, they also need support in providing learning materials for their learners to ensure the quality education they deserve.

Theme 3.2: Disclosing the Emotional and Personal Struggles of Volunteer Teachers

Volunteer teachers do not merely struggle to provide learning materials; they also struggle emotionally. In fact, their worries, stress, and the pressure from the high expectations of those around them lead to a loss of motivation to teach. As they shared:

"I experience depression and at times give up..." (P2)

"I constantly worried if all this sacrifice would ever pay off. The uncertainty about my future as a teacher was very heavy on me." (P3)

Hence, it only shows that volunteer teachers also need support, not just in providing learning materials and resources, but also emotional support. A supportive environment could help the volunteer teachers manage their stress.

Theme 4: Strategies in Managing Stress and Burnout

Volunteer teachers are bound to face numerous challenges and problems in the field. It is inevitable to encounter diverse issues, including significant

psychological problems such as stress and burnout. As part of their profession, they have developed various strategies to manage this. As they shared:

"I set clear boundaries, prioritized self-care, and enjoyed every moment even when times were tiring, just kept going." (P1)

"I manage stress by talking to my co-teachers. Sharing experiences makes me realize I'm not alone." (P3)

The stories of volunteer teachers show this: the job is hard, but they can handle it. They cope by setting limits, resting, talking to others, and enjoying small things. It shows how strong teachers are.

Theme 4.1: Managing Personal Struggles Through Seeking Help and Support

Being a volunteer teacher, asking for help and support from others is a big part of the problems we deal with. The hard work means we can't only rely on ourselves; we need to find useful and emotional help to avoid burnout and stay okay. As shared:

"I tend to share and listen to them as well, we share our experiences and problems, and we give advice to comfort each other." (P4)

It reminds us that asking for help isn't weakness, but a good way to care for yourself. By helping each other, sharing advices, and giving support, these teachers make bonds that help them deal with the hard parts of their jobs.

Subtheme 1: Seeking Guidance

Getting help and advice from experienced people in any job gives big help to improve skills. Their advice can support and guide those with less experience, helping them solve problems and do better in their work, sharing:

"When I want to clarify something, I humbly ask my colleagues or my mentors what to do." (P1)

Asking advice from experienced people are not weakness but shows smart thinking and wanting to improve. We should follow this way of learning and helping, knowing that working together helps us grow and face problems as a group.

Subtheme 2: Supportive Environment

A place where people help each other builds strong teams. It means no one needs to fix every problem alone. They can ask for help, and others can share ideas. When they share knowledge, the team wins together. Helping this way makes work simpler and more enjoyable, sharing:

"Talking and sharing problems with colleagues and mentors helps me in managing stress." (P2)

This way of helping each other makes problems easier, stress less, and everyone do better. It makes the team stronger and more ready to win.

Theme 4.2: Practicing Self-Care to Maintain Physical and Emotional Well-being

It is essential to learn how to practice self-care to protect and maintain physical and emotional well-being. As one of the participants shared:

"Meditating and always having time for myself to recharge and enjoy walking." (P4)

Taking time to think about our life is doing something good for ourselves. We are not just taking a break for things but we actually helping ourselves to be healthy and strong all the time.

Subtheme 1: Optimistic mindset

Keeping a positive outlook is a gift that needs work, we must keep going and be committed when life gets tough. Providing the courage, determination and motivation to fight all difficulties, it allows us to see not just the obstacles we faced but also the lessons and growth we get. As they shared:

"Stay positive and good vibes to avoid stress." (P1)

"Enjoy every journey as volunteer teachers and always think positively." (P2)

Choosing to be positive is a decision to do it every day, we need to have a strong positive mind so we can avoid stress. We must try to enjoy every journey we take and choose to have a positive life that helps us to have hope and be determined leading for a good life.

Subtheme 2: Prioritizing Self-care

Taking care of yourself is necessary and should come first. Being healthy is very important to handle things better and give learners the care and support for them to learn well. As the volunteer teachers shared:

"I make sure to get enough rest." (P3)

"When I am stressed, I exercise, and I really make time for myself." (P6)

Resting, eating healthy, drinking water, and staying active are simple ways to stay strong. When you take care of yourself, you're also helping your students because you'll have the energy to teach well and inspire them.

Theme 5: Volunteering as an Avenue for Future Careers and Goals

Volunteering to teach will really help you to figure out your future. Working closely will help individual to get essential skills and knowledge, making this experience to serve others from their chosen field. You can find a deep sense of purpose and build resilience to your journey, ensuring that this prepares you well for a teaching job where you can make a big difference in your community, as well as, for your students, sharing:

"This volunteer teaching experience is helping my personal growth, as well as my professional growth." (P6)

Volunteering in education is a first step. It is a vital practice for the teacher's life and career. This experience helps them to create a strong foundation, build skills, and to grow as a person. While, preparing yourself to

serve will make a lasting impact in the world and truly achieve your future goals, which makes volunteering in education so decisive.

Theme 5.1: Developing Essential Skills Through Volunteer Work

Volunteering is a way to grow as a person and professionally. People who volunteer usually want to improve their skills in communicating, teamwork and problem-solving. As they shared:

"Learn to have different teaching strategies." (P4)

"How to deal with pupils with divergent and convergent learning styles." (P1)

Furthermore, learning with life skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and time management shows a commitment to grow and become more effective teacher. Volunteering can result for self-improvement and growth both the volunteer and the people involved.

Theme 5.2: Pursuing Professional Development

a. Pursuing a Master's Degree

To improve their careers and skills, teachers generally want to learn more and foster professional growth. Volunteer teachers are really interested to improve their work by getting trainings to get better at their jobs. As one of the participants shared:

"I can specialize in curriculum development and improve my teaching skills." (P3)

This strong desire for growth shows an inspiring commitment to education. They keep learning more and be the educators they can be. Seeing their hard works shows a love for teaching and learning, which create a cycle for improvement that benefits for everyone in the school community.

b. Attending Seminars and Trainings

Attending seminars and training classes really helps the volunteer teachers in their careers. These opportunities will help them to improve their teaching methods and use tools in class, sharing:

"I'm also taking online training, which is really helpful when I apply for promotion." (P6)

The hard work of these teachers proves that people who love to teach also loves to grow and learn more about teaching.

Theme 6: Making Sense of Experiences to be a Quality Teacher

Volunteer teachers reflecting on what they do and always trying to learn to become an effective teacher. In making their teaching better, they believe that feedbacks from their mentors and peers is very helpful which makes their classes better and helps their learners to learn more by applying what they learn from others, sharing:

"At the end of the day, I always pause and reflect if I really did my best in teaching my learners, and what I need to improve, and what strategies I will use to be more effective and better." (P4)

Through reflection, feedback, and adaptation, volunteer teachers actively make sense of their experiences to become more effective educators.

Theme 6.1: Incorporating Feedback or Insights into Actual Teaching

It is necessary for volunteer teachers that feedbacks from mentors and colleagues for better improvements in teaching. Participants give emphasis that getting feedback from others is a key for professional growth. As they shared:

“All the feedback or insights of my colleagues or my mentors, I actively listen to their comments and take them as a motivation to do well in my class and apply all the comments that will help me in my teaching.” (P1)

“Feedback helps me evaluate my teaching styles and how to improve them.” (P2)

Therefore, by applying feedbacks and ideas from the people around them, they ensure that their classroom instruction is effective, responsive, and meaningful for their learners.

Theme 6.2: Integrating Values and Lessons to Improve Teaching Performance

Beyond mastery of contents and teaching methods, volunteer teachers learn qualities like being committed to their work, patience, dedication and perseverance which help them to create a positive learning environment and to become effective teacher. Learning from their experiences, it fosters growth and helps them to become the teacher they want to be, sharing:

“One lesson that I learned is that each pupil is an individual with unique needs and that building relationships is key to fostering a positive learning environment, and you need to have a broad understanding of children and always be patient.” (P1)

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that elementary volunteer teachers develop both professionally and personally through their experiences, as they integrate values such as patience, empathy, perseverance, and dedication into their teaching practice. Their journey is shaped by strong intrinsic motivations, including a passion for teaching and career aspirations, while their emotions evolve from initial uncertainty to a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment, particularly when witnessing students' growth. Despite facing significant challenges – such as lack of resources, financial support, unclear roles, administrative overload, and emotional struggles like stress and anxiety – they demonstrate resilience by employing various coping mechanisms, including seeking social support, practicing self-care, and maintaining a positive mindset. Moreover, they view volunteering as a pathway for professional growth, aiming to enhance their teaching skills, pursue further education, and attend training opportunities. Ultimately, through reflection, feedback, and lived experiences, they continuously improve their teaching performance, showing that their commitment to education and student development outweighs the systemic challenges they encounter.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlights that volunteer teachers are driven by a strong sense of purpose and passion for teaching, which allows them to find fulfillment in their work despite uncertainty and numerous challenges. These challenges include lack of financial support and recognition, limited teaching materials, administrative overload, unclear roles, and emotional stress, yet they remain committed to providing quality education by using creative strategies, maximizing available resources, and maintaining resilience through support systems, self-care, and a positive mindset. Their experiences also serve as a foundation for professional growth, motivating them to pursue further training, seminars, and higher education while developing essential values such as patience, perseverance, and dedication that shape them into effective educators. Ultimately, their unwavering passion enables them to overcome difficulties and find meaning in service, underscoring the need for institutional support through adequate resources, fair treatment, professional development opportunities, and a strong emphasis on their overall well-being to sustain their contributions to education.

FURTHER STUDY

This study focused on narrating the lived experiences of elementary volunteer teachers. This was conducted in Guiuan and Salcedo, Eastern Samar. The researchers used qualitative research design. Additionally, the data for this study were obtained through an in-depth interview and were recorded using an audio or video recorder, and the collected data were transcribed into field notes. After transcribing the data, the researchers analysed the predicaments and struggles faced by elementary volunteer teachers.

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