Anecdotes of Public School Teachers on Work-Life Balance: A Multiple Case Study

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Research Article

ABSTRACT

This study examined the ways in which public school teachers in Davao del Norte's Tagum City Division manage their personal and professional lives. In order to participate in the study, six teacher-mothers, ages 30 to 60, with at least three years of teaching experience and roles ranging from Teacher I to Teacher III, were specifically selected. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to in order to safeguard their identity and privacy. The findings demonstrated how difficult it was for these teachers to manage their two jobs. Particularly when they were caring for children with special needs, they had to give up their personal hobbies, struggled to multitask, and were stressed, exhausted, forgetful, and overthinking things. The participants employed a range of strategies to address their issues, including scheduling, socializing, establishing boundaries, taking breaks when they felt overburdened, remaining upbeat, seeking support from friends, and maintaining their faith in God. Their stories emphasized the value of prioritizing family, forming healthy bonds with others, striking a balance, and maintaining a spiritual connection.

Keywords: education, teaching, balance

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a multifarious profession that requires significant emotional, mental, and physical investment. Nurturing and managing households were the intricate tasks of being a mother. Balancing these two roles, the demands of work and family life, was a significant challenge for many professionals; this was particularly true for teachers who were also mothers. Pursuing work-life balance became a craft as teacher-mothers walked the tightrope between lesson planning and bedtime stories. The dual roles of being an educator and a mother often overlapped, creating unique stressors and challenges, including time conflict, inter-role conflict, insufficient support from schools, and feelings of guilt and inadequacy (Arthur & Guy, 2020). In India, working women like teacher-mothers struggled to strike a work-life balance because of their lengthy work hours, rigid jobs, work overload, childcare responsibilities, bias and discrimination at work, a lack of support from supervisors, a dominant management style, and limited family support, even though both men and women should have been equal in work and family responsibilities (Geetha et al., 2017). The study of Hong et al. (2021) in China also revealed that a unique set of women who worked as both mothers and teachers in preschools experienced challenges in their work-life balance. They had to educate other people's young children because they worked as preschool teachers. As mothers, they had to accompany their children at home due to family obligations. If these two roles were not managed appropriately, there would be an imbalance and potentially harmful effects. Being a mother and a teacher simultaneously was a difficult road that called for grace, endurance, and forbearance. In the Division of Surigao del Sur, the study of Rufin and Buniel (2022) found that female teachers had difficulties

balancing their time and responsibilities in both work and life. Teacher-mothers' workloads became challenging due to the various responsibilities, such as caring for their children (Mercado, 2019). The journey of handling a teacher's roles and responsibilities, combined with a mother's tasks, was arduous. Though work-life balance was not evident because of their busy schedules, teachers still played a pivotal role in developing holistic individuals (Aquino et al., 2023).

In the Division of Tagum City, particularly in Pandapan Integrated School, there was an emerging phenomenon of teacher-mothers experiencing challenges in balancing work and life. The school had 32 teachers, and 27 were teacher-mothers required to work before, during, and after teaching. The researcher observed that some teachers experienced postpartum anxiety and depression, with one contributing factor being the demands of work and personal life. Unfortunately, others exhibited suicidal thoughts and actions and were on the verge of ending their lives. Feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and failure were what the researcher felt for not giving her best instruction to her pupils and for not being the best mother to her son. However, while these were some cases, some managed to navigate the unique crossroads of exhausting work and household chores. They even extended their energy to care for family members at home.

Notwithstanding the recent surge in research on work-life balance, the researcher wanted to study and explore the stories and experiences of these teacher-mothers in schools in Tagum City. The aim was to boost mothers' participation and productivity in the workforce by establishing a conducive work environment for teacher-mothers. This required both comprehensive childcare support and inclusive, flexible time schedules. These interventions from the administration not only improved their general well-being, job satisfaction, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession but also enhanced their work-life balance. This multiple case study aimed to explore the six unique stories and experiences across different contexts of teacher-mothers in the Tagum City Division. It endeavored to delve deeper into the feelings, sentiments, and perspectives of the research participants' experiences as both teachers and mothers. The study ought to address the unique challenges faced by teacher-mothers, allowing schools to foster a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment, ultimately benefiting both teachers and their students.

Research Questions
This study aimed to better understand how teacher-mothers managed to balance their two careers, the impact of work-life balance on their physical and mental health and work performance, and what assistance the institution provided for them. This study aimed to answer the following questions:
1. What experiences did the participants have in balancing their work and life?
2. What were the challenges encountered by the participants?
3. How did the participants cope with the challenges?
4. Based on experiences, what insights did the participants gain?

Scope and Limitations
This study was limited only to teachers' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights. This study was limited to the six teacher-mother cases: two elementary teachers, two junior high school teachers, and two senior high school teachers in the Division of Tagum City during School Year 2024-2025. An in-depth Interview (IDI) was used to gather vital information from the teachers of the Tagum City Division. This study was limited to the veracity of the responses of the participants.

Literature Review
This chapter presented a relevant literature review that supported the findings of this study. The literature review and studies were organized into subtopics: work-life balance in the teaching profession, unique challenges in work-life balance, impact on professional and personal well-being, and coping strategies. Work-life balance (WLB) is the idea that work and leisure activities are compatible and foster growth in line with one's present objectives in life (Gragnano et al., 2020). Work-life balance refers to maintaining a healthy equilibrium between work and personal life (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). It enables individuals to meet their obligations in both areas without compromising one for the other (Oludayo et al., 2018). Achieving work-life balance is an ongoing process of seeking harmony between professional and personal responsibilities (Suhardono, 2013, cited in Rony and Yulisyahyanti, 2022). According to Voydanoff (2005), work-life balance is managing resources to meet family and work demands so that individuals can effectively participate in both domains of life. Maintaining this balance was crucial for preserving physical and mental well-being and nurturing relationships with family and friends. Musa and Chusairi (2022) stated that, for some workers, the family was a source of energy and enthusiasm that

helped them balance work and life. Some teacher-mothers also considered family to be their motivation and priority. Strategies for achieving work-life balance involve establishing boundaries between work and personal life, allocating time for oneself and family, taking regular breaks during the day, and refraining from multitasking (Bartlett et al., 2021; Kossek et al., 2014). Furthermore, pausing, evaluating priorities, and ensuring that the most crucial needs were being addressed were essential.

Moreover, work-life balance for teacher-parents is a crucial concern in today's fast-paced world. As individuals juggling dual roles, teacher-parents were tasked with supporting their families and providing high-quality education to their students. Vijaya Mani (2013) highlighted that women professionals in India encountered various challenges, including role conflict, lack of recognition, organizational politics, gender discrimination, caregiving responsibilities for children and the elderly, health problems, time management difficulties, and insufficient social support. Educational institutions were urged to address work-life balance concerns among their staff, especially women, by adopting a comprehensive approach to creating and implementing policies that help teaching staff manage their work-life balance (Santhana Lakshmi et al., 2013). In addition to imparting knowledge, educators worked to develop students' minds. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (2024) stated that public school teachers are expected to work eight (8) hours a day, with six (6) hours dedicated to classroom instruction and two (2) hours set aside for additional teaching duties, which can be performed either on or off school grounds. In reality, the work of a public school teacher did not end after eight hours. Teachers needed to extend their time at school to finish reports and meet deadlines. Some chose to bring their work home, treating it as an assignment due to the high workload demands. In fact, according to Aquino et al. (2022), a public school teacher in the Philippines spent an average of 12.17 hours a day working with five classrooms and 141 pupils. This led to moderate depersonalization, restrained personal accomplishment, high levels of stress, and significant emotional weariness among teachers.

Like many other professionals, teachers struggled with stress and burnout, which was worsened by the substantial amount of time dedicated to their jobs. This effect was more noticeable in the teaching profession, where educators had to balance upholding classroom rules with handling a heavy workload, which could wear them out emotionally (Nyarango & Ogal, 2020). The complexities of an ever-evolving, technology-driven world worsened teachers' burnout, which impacted their overall performance (Okumbe, 2007, as cited in Nyarango & Ogal, 2020). Despite educators' significant role in shaping history, little was understood about the specific challenges of work-related stress and burnout among Kenyan public secondary school teachers. Burnout negatively affects a teacher's enthusiasm, engagement, and capacity to meet students' needs. These effects exceeded the teacher's well-being (Wentzel, 2016, as cited in Kimama et al., 2024).

In addition, teachers' workload required not only their time within the institution but also extended to their homes, where they prepared for the next day, managed student records, and handled various institution-related tasks. The research of Gunes et al. (2021) examined the work-life balance of teachers who held two jobs, and the results showed that time constraints, guilt-related emotions, and behavior-based conflicts made it difficult for instructors to manage their duties as parents and professionals. This illustrated how challenging it was for teachers to achieve a fulfilling work-life balance while managing parental responsibilities. According to Otuya and Andeyo (2020), it was challenging for married working women with young families to balance the responsibilities and duties of both their jobs and families. They experienced more physical and mental stress. The demands of juggling multiple responsibilities led to tension, guilt, and arguments, negatively affecting their emotions and daily functioning. To provide teachers with the necessary provisions to manage their home and work tasks effectively, educators and organizations must be aware of these challenges. Furthermore, in the study of Lall and Sahay (2024), factors that contributed to the challenging scenario of maintaining work-life equilibrium among women teachers include lengthy working hours, demanding workload, and management of emotional labor. The tough reality of teachers' work requires physical effort and emotional investment. It will also require teachers to manage student behavior and cater to individual differences, leading to pressure and exhaustion. To successfully transfer knowledge, teachers must manage the classroom well, get learners' attention, and inspire them.

Teachers' psychological states affect not only their well-being but also others. Findings suggest that students' mental health and well-being relate to teachers' well-being (Harding et al., 2019). Education research indicates that when burnout increases, teachers' eagerness lowers abruptly (Voss et al., 2023). Teachers' emotional exhaustion leads to less engagement and effort in lesson planning and more negative attitudes toward students (Frenzel et al., 2021). Regarding work-life balance, conflict arises when a person performs exceptionally well in one role and gives up in another, which is equally crucial, as indicated by (Anwar et al., 2013, as cited in Otuya

and Andeyo, 2020). Support from school administration, including reasonable workload expectations and professional development opportunities, can significantly impact teachers' work-life balance. The study by Levkovich and Gada (2020) revealed that teachers with dual roles often felt unsupported by their schools and were usually unable to find adequate resources to fulfill both roles. Additionally, the availability of resources like textbooks and other classroom learning materials and the lack of teaching aides added to the demanding workload of teachers, played a crucial role in managing job and stress, and led to a decrease in teacher performance and motivation (Akram, 2014, as cited in Mang'uu et al., 2021). Schools should be aware of these challenges and give teachers the materials and support needed to manage their multiple responsibilities while maintaining their overall performance effectively. Struggles can be prevented, and teachers will be given more consideration and care for effective performance, fulfilling work, and an optimistic viewpoint on work.

Teachers' traits like resilience, time-management ability, and family support impact their work-life equilibrium capability. With the correct balance in fulfilling their roles and tasks as a teacher, they become more stable in every challenge they experience, thus improving their efficiency and productivity. In fact, according to Jundran and Saleem (2021), time management offered distinct benefits by helping identify the most productive periods. Since teachers also had parenting duties, they needed to allocate their time effectively between their personal roles, responsibilities, and professional obligations. Oladipo and Oladejo (2018) noted a significant relationship between time management practices and teachers' job performance. Hence, when a person lacks time management skills, they lose their sense of direction, affecting their teaching, learning processes, performance, and productivity in school. Furthermore, when priorities were unclear and focus was lost, it affected the performance and effectiveness of a teacher. As education evolved, so did teaching methods. Under these standards, each teacher could evaluate their abilities, recognizing that their primary role was to impart knowledge and develop students' skills and behavior (Aquino et al., 2023). These standards also guided teachers on what they needed to improve, upskill, and prepare for in the modern teaching profession. They provided clear expectations that contributed to the success and excellence of educators. By empowering and providing teachers with training in their specialization, keeping up with the current trend in teaching will not be hard.

Unique Challenges on Work-Life Balance. Unique challenges impacted the work-life equilibrium of teacher-mothers who tried to balance their dual role of teaching and parenting. The following literature explored the different challenges faced by teacher-mothers and assessed the factors affecting these difficulties. It also discussed the potential impact of these challenges on their personal and professional effectiveness and the possible approaches to support teacher-mothers in attaining a better work-life balance. Teacher-mothers face everyday clashes between parenting duties, such as taking care of a child, attending to children's needs, and managing household chores, and the demands of teaching, like lesson planning, education, and grading. Teachers were reported to work an average of 43 hours per week (Carroll et al., 2022). Thomson and Hillman (2019) found that female teachers perceived higher stress levels due to excessive administrative work, which was considered a significant source of stress. Pocock et al. (2010) stated that women who worked long part-time hours (35 hours per week or more) experienced significantly worse work-life outcomes compared to those working shorter part-time hours (less than 35 hours per week). Burnout occurs when individuals fail to manage stress and when there is a conflict between work and personal life (Pangemanan et al., 2017, as cited in Rony and Yulisyahyanti, 2022). The work-life balance of teacher-mothers became a subject of increasing scholarly interest due to their dual demands in managing professional responsibilities and family obligations. The teacher's job description extended beyond helping and mentoring students. They were not only members of the community but also parents, spouses, and caregivers. According to McKnight and Mutch (2023), teaching during this period was personally and professionally difficult for educators, particularly those juggling work and family obligations. Teachers needed to effectively manage their personal and professional responsibilities, as they were considered role models and sworn professional members. Borowiec and Drygas (2022) noted that one of the most notable outcomes of inadequate work-life balance was the decline in both physical and mental health.

Teachers reported spending three to four hours on family matters. They mentioned that most of their weekdays were spent at school, often returning home after 5:00 P.M. to spend limited time with their children before bedtime. According to the teachers, they dedicated more time to their professional duties than to their families. They frequently worked beyond regular school hours, creating instructional materials or lesson plans. Teachers said they typically spent three to four hours preparing materials or other teaching-related tasks for the following day. As a result, parents found it challenging to fulfill their teacher roles due to their demanding work schedules. Educators had to operate under various constraints (Treceñe, 2022). Research indicated that women teachers

often faced conflicting demands between their professional and personal lives, particularly in managing childcare and household responsibilities (McGowan, 2018).

Moreover, Lantsoght et al. (2021) found that academic women had to leave their offices at fixed times due to childcare obligations. Many academic parents reported working early mornings and late evenings to find extra hours to complete their tasks, often when their children were asleep (Weeks, 2018). When regular childcare arrangements fell through, such as during sick days or snow days, academic parents faced significant challenges as their tight schedules were disrupted (Bascom-Slack, 2011). According to Rashmi et al. (2022), parents of children with special needs often face high levels of dependency on their children, and the ongoing stress of caregiving could negatively affect the parents' overall quality of life. In addition, the teaching profession typically requires long hours within and beyond the school day. During ultimate times like an examination period and parent-teacher conferences, teacher-mothers could not find time for their kids. This often led to feelings of guilt and stress. Owens-Horton (2022) suggested that women were more susceptible to emotional fatigue and anxiety than men; thus, they were more likely to experience burnout. This is due to the complexity of their responsibilities, increased levels of stress, and the emotional strain of having multiple roles. If the demands of work are too high and there is a heavy workload, it results in much time being spent at work and less time for oneself, family, and the social environment we live in (Rony & Yulisyahyanti, 2022).

As a result, exhaustion was felt by teacher-mothers who tried to manage the pressure of teaching alongside the emotional and physical demands of parenting. They struggled to maintain the energy needed to execute both roles successfully, which impacted their efficiency at home and in their classroom. As women's responsibilities grew, the levels of stress and burnout elevated (American Psychological Association, 2020). The difficulty of balancing work and family life also results in a higher degree of stress-related stress, among other things, due to the feeling of not having enough time. This was particularly true for parents and single mothers between the ages of 25 and 44 who worked full-time jobs (Geetha et al., 2017). Another challenge teacher-mothers experience is the unsupportive educational institutions, which do not provide sufficient support for teacher-mothers, such as flexible scheduling, on-site childcare, or family leave policies. The absence of such support systems can exacerbate the difficulties of balancing work and family life. Geetha et al. (2017) coined that those working women in India experienced stress at work, the stress of raising children, and the stresses that come with aging parents -- any of these situations could provide a moderately high amount of stress. Teacher-mothers were described as multitaskers who handled numerous tasks simultaneously. They experienced high stress levels upon facing these demanding roles of teacher and a mother. These contributed to health problems, absenteeism, low self-esteem, and a reduced ability to take on extra tasks and responsibilities. Lall and Sahay (2024) revealed that juggling the family responsibilities of women teachers, such as household chores and childcare, affects their work-life management. McGowan (2018) added that women teachers commonly experience overlapping roles in their professional and personal lives, especially in managing household and childcare responsibilities.

Moreover, teacher-mothers wanted to excel in both careers, as mothers and professionals, and that added weight to their shoulders, including the societal norms and expectations. The research of Lall and Sahay (2024) stated that, regardless of gender roles, societal expectations are one of the factors women educators face in settling work and family roles. These expectations led to increased stress and a sense of inefficiency felt by teacher-mothers who were obliged to meet the standards set by society. If one of these roles hinders the other, family-to-work or work-to-family conflict will occur (Hong et al., 2021). Unsupportive school environments were another challenge faced by teacher-mothers. The school community sometimes lacked consideration, understanding, and empathy for teacher-mothers' hardships. These scenarios would have led to demotivation and resentment. The study of Alfilizy et al. (2023) emphasized that having a sympathetic and supportive workplace positively affects the personal and professional lives of teacher-mothers. As a result of achieving a successful work-life balance, women educators manifest lower stress levels, increased motivation, and better relationships with coworkers. Job satisfaction and professional well-being were closely linked as they influenced teachers' drive and commitment at work. Teacher-mothers were likelier to achieve more and perform efficiently and effectively when rewarded, appreciated, and valued. This reflects the importance of organizational commitment to employees' fulfillment of their jobs. Alfilizy et al. (2023) explained that when employees were displeased with their roles, they felt unappreciated and unfulfilled. This led to decreased organizational commitment as teachers felt apart from the school or workplace. Better classroom management enhanced learners' outcomes, and a supportive school environment resulted from high job satisfaction. Studies showed that stress management was a part of a high-stress profession, as it was essential for professional well-being. Stress management among well-managed teacher-mothers helped them effectively manage classroom problems and interactions with students and colleagues.

Work-life imbalance increases stress and lowers quality of life and work productivity (Gragnano et al., 2020). Dhanya and Kinslin (2016) recommended good work-life balance practices such as flexible working hours, a five-day week, planned vacations, leave options, talent development, and welfare schemes. Some work-life policies were implemented in schools to boost teachers' morale, productivity, and overall institutional performance. Schools must address stress management by providing resources such as counseling services, professional development on stress reduction techniques, and fostering a supportive work culture. Continuing professional development was recommended to enable teacher-mothers to remain abreast of current teaching practices, which enhanced their competence and confidence in the classroom. This accordingly led to their professional well-being and satisfaction. Continuing professional development enabled teachers to remain organized and be in a position to manage their time effectively. It helped them to acquire skill sets such as setting clear goals, SMART goals, and keeping them aligned with best practices and the current trends in their profession. It enabled them to create tailored and realistic lessons for their students, improving learning outcomes (Duncan et al., 2007). Galleto and Ramos (2020) highlighted that partaking in professional development brought significant teacher differences. It motivated them, brought in new ideas, and imparted new concepts from outside. Professional development training deals with teachers' weaknesses. Thus, continuous development and enhancement were required for every teacher, particularly for teachers who needed improvements in some aspects. The school community must be supportive as teachers seek professional opportunities.

According to Galleto and Ramos (2020), a working environment that promotes wellness improves mood and work performance. Educational institutions must provide teacher-mothers time to boost their well-being. Implement programs that provide self-care practices like regular exercise, healthy eating, and enough sleep for energy and overall well-being. In Lall and Sahay's (2024) study, schools were encouraged to craft inclusive work-life balance policies addressing teacher-mothers' precise needs and challenges, like providing access to wellness programs. Schools must be consistent in promoting wellness programs for teachers to maintain their physical health because Zahra et al. (2024) discovered that due to multiple roles and responsibilities and work pressure experienced by teachers, they were prone to physical weaknesses like diseases. The emotional obligation of teaching and mothering impacted mental health. Bishnoi (2023) reported that one of the significant reasons why work-life balance is integral is that it is linked to mental health. An equilibrium in life gives people room to breathe and think and thus make upright, wise, and better choices. Teacher-mothers must participate in relaxing and mental focus-building activities, such as mindfulness, hobbies, and quality time with family. Kimama et al. (2023) cited the significance of building a supportive work environment, providing access to mental health resources, and employing stress-reduction techniques. Additionally, Praveen (2020) supported the idea of having health and wellness programs to aid teachers in finding a balance between work and personal life. Access to mental health resources, such as therapy or support groups, served as much-needed assistance in coping with the emotional demands of each role. Good social networks enhanced individual well-being, and teacher-mothers enjoyed the support of a close network of family, friends, and colleagues. This idea was supported by a study conducted by Lall and Sahay (2024), who stated that creating a supportive workplace culture that appreciated work-life balance was crucial to the wellness of women teachers. A culture of respect, inclusivity, and integration of work and life was promoted in schools, where women teachers were respected, supported, and empowered. Leaders were committed, role models, and appreciative of women teachers. Having open communication and giving immediate feedback also helped to address work-life balance challenges and promoted a positive work environment for all. Professional and personal welfare was essential for teacher-mothers to achieve an equilibrium and a satisfying life. By resolving these challenges and difficulties and implementing supportive policies, schools should help teachers maintain their health, job satisfaction, and worthiness in their professional and personal roles. This holistic approach helped teacher-mothers and their students, families, and the broader educational community.

Coping Mechanisms on Work-Life Balance. Teachers' busy schedules made it harder for them to spend quality time with their children and family. With the help of different managing techniques and support systems, teacher-mothers could manage and balance their roles. Schools and policymakers could then support teacher-mothers in gradually balancing personal and professional lives by learning about these processes. Bella (2023) stated that people who managed their work-life balance had a better quality of life and created more sustainable and satisfying experiences at work. Effective time management was essential for teacher-mothers to perform their job better by prioritizing, having realistic objectives, and employing different strategies. Murray (2022) supported the idea that poor time management not only hinders productivity and makes it challenging to meet deadlines but also disrupts the balance between work and personal life. Bruner defined time management as using time productively and efficiently. It was synonymous with efficiency, allowing individuals to maximize every

minute (Bruner, 2019, as cited in Olivo, 2021). Effective time management was crucial for teachers, as they often had heavy workloads beyond classroom teaching. Teachers must manage their time wisely to achieve success and improve student performance. Teachers performed multifarious roles at school, and sometimes, it was a problem finding space for extra activities. Plans were not being followed rigidly during the actual application. A solution to this problem, Ather et al. (2016) recommended incorporating time management skills in training programs for teachers to manage their time better and achieve all the numerous assigned tasks, roles, and responsibilities. Zhang et al. (2021) supported that time management was key to improving quality and efficiency in a demanding and challenging work environment with multiple jobs. Otuyo (2014) highlighted that work-life balance was a blessing for working women. They feel fulfilled when they can manage work and family responsibilities. The feeling of fulfillment outweighs the physical and mental hardships faced by teacher-mothers. Caringal-Go and Hehanovah (2022) also verified that being efficient in doing things enabled one to fulfill another role productively. Indeed, there is no better immediate reward for a teacher-mother than seeing things done accordingly as planned.

Assigning household chores and sharing childcare duties with partners or relatives aided other teacher-mothers in their roles. This alleviated their workload and allowed them to focus on parenting and teaching without feeling distressed. Matula's (2022) study concluded that working women with a supportive family, considerate organizational policies, access to childcare facilities, and flexible work schedules will likely achieve stability between work and life. The study also recommended job-sharing and family leave policies, such as personal, parental, adoption, and emergency leave during unexpected situations, as measures to maintain a better work-life balance. Similarly, some teacher-mothers incorporate self-care activities such as exercise, yoga, mindfulness, and hobbies into their daily life to ensure their physical and mental well-being. Tsang et al. (2021) revealed in a study that teachers who received an 8-week mindfulness training program demonstrated evident improvement in self-actualization, positive feelings, and overall health, along with significant reductions in insomnia and stress. The study also showed that mindfulness training enhanced teachers' well-being and physical, mental, social, and cognitive stresses and exhaustion from teaching. Mindfulness and meditation activities were discovered to reduce stress and develop emotional resilience to deal with two or more roles. Chan et al. (2010, as cited in Kebbi 2018) reported that taking a day off is one of the best coping strategies. Work breaks allow teachers to unwind, lower their stress levels, and replenish their energy. Likewise, Gillespe et al. (2001) stated in their study that regular vacations, exercise, and other interventions like yoga and massage also lower stress levels. Studies revealed that active and consistent coping strategies include pursuing hobbies and other activities in daily life or even at school during free time. Mindfulness programs greatly help teachers, not just in their professional roles but also through the numerous aspects of their lives. It was essential for teachers to practice mindfulness in both professional and personal roles and responsibilities, for it was proven to affect both their students and themselves positively. Undergoing mindfulness training provides teachers with meaningful and practical techniques to handle work-related stress and prevent exhaustion. A study by Benn et al. (2012) revealed that a 5-week mindfulness training program improved teachers' self-esteem and confidence. When mindfulness is increased, teachers can control their reactions and feelings when encountering stressful classroom situations. They were also reported to have greater confidence in their teaching skills because of their mindfulness ability.

Setting borders between work and home was essential for all professionals, especially teachers. Teacher-mothers avoided taking work home and established specific times for professional tasks, ensuring they had uninterrupted family time. Windsor and Crawford (2020) suggested that academic women or teacher-mothers reserve non-teaching days for professional services, university responsibilities, or writing while protecting those times. This strategy helped establish clear boundaries for when to work and what tasks to focus on, and it reduced uncertainty in managing their workload. Clark (2000, as cited in Chung and van der Lippe, 2018) highlighted that having control over one's schedule offers flexibility and helps manage the boundaries between work and family, allowing individuals to adjust time allocation and reduce conflicts between work and family obligations. Engaging in professional development focused on stress management, time management, and work-life balance equipped teacher-mothers with the skills to handle their responsibilities more effectively. Mentoring programs and peer support networks effectively provide emotional and professional support to women educators (Foster & Ashforth, 2018). For teachers to perform in their careers, it was essential to maintain a work-life balance, which contributed to a long, fulfilling, and healthy professional life. However, some teachers resorted to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as smoking, drinking, and overeating, to manage stress and guilt (Wilton & Ross, 2017). In the worst cases, teachers in Chile increased the consumption of tobacco when experiencing high levels of emotional stress at work and home (Meza et al., 2024). Teaching and parenting were both challenging roles that created several difficulties for teacher-mothers. In maintaining these dual roles, teachers must have techniques and strategies to implement, including a strong support system. An understanding community, considerate

administration, and supportive families greatly help teacher-mothers. One's belief in herself and the Father Almighty was an excellent vessel for a healthy balance between work and the life of a teacher-mother. It was proven by Salamiah et al. (2020) that one's belief in the presence of the Almighty Father likely played an integral role in maintaining a successful equilibrium between work and life.

Insights on Work-Life Balance. Work-life equilibrium for teacher-mothers was a concerning challenge affecting the teachers' health and the educational institutions' performance. This part will explore how organizations, schools, and policymakers support these teacher-mothers to enhance their professional and personal lives. Identifying and assessing the factors influencing the work-life balance was essential in addressing the areas for enhancement and implementing essential programs and interventions to support women teachers (Lall and Sahay, 2024). Flexible work arrangements like team teaching, having a teacher-aide, and or staggered working hours significantly helped teacher-mothers to handle multiple roles more effectively. Rufin and Buniel (2022) recommended that teachers need flexible time to address their family needs. Flexible working hours and a different work arrangement for teaching and administrative tasks gave indispensable flexibility for teacher-mothers to balance teacher and mother duties. Dhanya and Kinslin (2016) suggested effective work-life balance strategies, such as flexible working hours, a five-day workweek, scheduled vacations, leave options, professional development opportunities, and welfare programs. Educational institutions must apply these concepts to enhance teachers' morale, productivity, and overall school performance. According to Lall and Sahay (2024), access to flexible work arrangements was linked with greater success in achieving work-life balance among women educators. Schools were examining the implementation and extension of flexible working hours among their employees. Giving women teachers flexibility in modifying their work schedules and sites allowed them to balance their work and personal lives better, meaning having less work burnout is work fulfillment. Nevertheless, to maintain fairness and reliability, clear guidelines and procedures must be implemented for requesting and implementing flexible work arrangements.

One effective way of supporting teacher-mothers was by offering on-site childcare facilities. This allowed teacher-mothers to be near their children during working hours, thus minimizing the stress of thinking about security. Moreover, Rosas and McNichols (2020) highlighted that access to childcare facilities and parental leave policies positively affected women teachers' capacity to balance their work and family duties. Also, the study of Lall and Sahay (2024) further stated that several programs must be implemented to meet the specific needs and challenges of women teachers. Policies must be put into action, such as provisions for parental leave, childcare assistance, and access to health and wellness programs. Schools with childcare services attracted brilliant teachers who would otherwise have quit the profession because of childcare difficulties. Support programs like peer support groups and mentorship offered professional and emotional guidance to teacher-mothers, thus giving them a feeling of belongingness in the community. Lall and Sahay (2024) proposed the development of support groups and mentorship programs to promote peer linkages, establishing a sense of belongingness for women teachers. Moreover, Galleto and Ramos (2020) emphasized the participation of teachers in professional development programs, such as establishing motivation, creative thinking, and new ideas from external sources, as it was proven to create positive changes. These opportunities addressed the areas of weakness teachers might have. Ongoing growth and development were crucial for all teachers, especially those who needed to fill the gaps in their skills and knowledge. In the study of Galleto and Ramos (2020), they emphasized that mentoring was another factor that made teachers productive. Experienced teachers offered valuable guidance and support to novice or struggling teachers. School leaders chose veteran teachers who were willing to share their best practices with colleagues. Mentor relationships were formed based on compatible personalities, ensuring a productive connection. A strong mentoring relationship was a beneficial learning experience for both the mentor and the mentee. When these implementations are regular and consistent, effectiveness will mostly happen. Implementing health and wellness activities among schools will surely address teachers' physical and mental well-being. Programs like mental health guidance and counseling, wellness workshops, and fitness facilities were a great help. This idea was also supported by the research of Galleto and Ramos (2020), which stated that guidance and counseling programs for faculty members were a big help in successfully implementing work-life balance among them. Additionally, Lall and Sahay (2024) highlighted that having a supportive administrative environment that valued and promoted work-life balance was crucial for the well-being of women teachers. A compassionate and understanding working environment will surely motivate teachers to perform well as teachers and mothers.

Effective leadership in an institution will help teacher-mothers handle multiple tasks at school. Recognizing the work of women teachers will also boost their confidence, thus increasing performance. When schools promote a culture of respect, inclusion, and balance between work and life, women teachers will feel valued, cared for,

and empowered. The study of Nandaa and Randhawa (2020) stated that emotions are the root of how people act, and therefore, emotional intelligence (EI) is the superior type of intelligence, dramatically affecting many things like work-life balance and employees' well-being. Further, organizational factors beyond an individual's control stemmed from the organization itself and impacted an individual's work-life balance. Factors like organizational support, the supervisors' leadership style, workmates' behavior, role conflict, work pressure, overlapping and unclear roles, excessive work, and modernization of work significantly affect work-life equilibrium. Olivo (2021) proposed to include time management skills in teacher training programs to equip teachers to manage teaching and administrative tasks, assisting them to have a better work-life balance. Open communication and feedback allowed for developing a shared approach to addressing work-life balance problems and establishing a positive work environment for all employees. Indeed, teacher-mothers' work-life balance was important to both schools and policymakers. Flexible work schedules, on-site child care, and supportive assistance programs made schools a better place to work for teacher-mothers. Policymakers boosted their support by crafting maternity leave policies, family-friendly workplace policies, and rules promoting work-life balance. Colleagues' support was also key to a friendly and welcoming workplace where employees could balance work and personal life. This was supported by the study of Wong et al. (2017), who stated that support from co-workers made individuals feel more positive about work-life equilibrium. Together, all the combined efforts enabled teacher-mothers to be successful in both work and personal lives, eventually benefiting the education system as a whole.

Theoretical Lens

This research applied the Spillover Theory of Graham L. Staines in 1980. The central concept in the Spillover Theory was that one role's impact would influence how we perceive another role, thus making them interconnected or related (Bello & Tanko, 2020, as cited in Khalid, 2023). The theory acknowledged the spillover effect associated with work and family balance, either horizontally or vertically. Spillover may be both positive and negative. Negative experiences produce negative experiences in the other, and vice versa. It occurred when success and satisfaction in one area facilitated fulfillment in the other. An individual's behavior, emotions, and skills from their family role often impacted their work role, and the reverse was also true. Applying this theory was logical due to its relevance in work-life balance research, particularly its emphasis on the relationship between work and family. Spillover Theory highlights the factors necessary to balance personal and professional life. If an individual felt dissatisfied with their work or was mentally distressed due to work-related issues, they often carried that negative mindset home, impacting their personal life. Similarly, if an individual experiences tension at home, such as domestic issues, it could negatively impact their work life. Furthermore, the Spillover Theory suggests that for a balanced life, a person must feel satisfied, happy, and stable in all aspects of life, including personal, professional, and social domains. The theory has two perspectives: positive and negative. The pessimistic view explained that failure to perform duties in one part of life would prevent an individual from performing well in other areas. On the other hand, the balanced, optimistic assumption of the Spillover Theory is that if an individual is satisfied performing their role, they might be able to achieve other role tasks positively by performing well in their role. The researcher believed that the Spillover Theory was highly relevant to this study. Spillover Theory was commonly applied when examining work-life balance, specifically for individuals handling multifarious and challenging roles, such as teacher-mothers. This theory hypothesized that what happens, what is felt, and what is done in one area of life (such as work) might influence another area (such as family), affecting the body's general functioning. It provided an integral structure for explaining how being a mother and a teacher interact, emphasizing how crucial it is to manage positive and negative spillovers to live a balanced, satisfying, and contented life.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Locale

The study was conducted in the Division of Tagum City, with four participating schools, namely Tagum National Trade School (TNTS), Tagum National High School (TCNHS), Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School (MPCES), and Pandapan Integrated School (PIS).

Design

This research study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design. According to Cresswell (2012), qualitative research aims to deeply investigate, comprehend, infer, and interpret social phenomena in their natural setting. Mills et al. (2010) comprehensively explained that a case study approach focuses on an in-depth examination of a specific, confined system with various data collection techniques to comprehend how the system

operates methodically. Additionally, DeFrazo (2011) intensely focuses on the experiences and viewpoints of the participants; this research design seeks to understand the phenomenon and disclose their attitudes and feelings thoroughly. This multiple case study method was chosen to comprehensively narrate the stories and explore the unique experiences of the six teacher-mothers from the selected school in Tagum City Division. The six cases were carefully chosen based on the set criteria to gain a deeper grasp of the subject. Multiple case studies looked at the number of cases to see how they were similar and different from each other. It will also explore how different environments affected each case and what situations led to a particular finding. According to Cresswell (2013), a multiple-case design uses extensive, in-depth data collection from multiple sources to examine a real-life and multiple-bounded system. This method helped the researcher find differences and similarities by enabling a more thorough analysis of the theoretical development and research question. Furthermore, it made it easier to examine complex problems systematically and offered insights into the system's behavioral conditions based on participant feedback.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher evaluated the participants' thoughts and emotions by adhering to Fink's seven roles (2000): thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. The researcher planned what was going to be studied, why it was going to be studied, and how it was going to be studied. Since the data analysis used in this study was thematic analysis, the researcher designed and planned the step-by-step data-gathering process. The researcher then acted as a data collector during the in-depth interviews to obtain data on how the participants experienced work-life balance across different contexts. The researcher preferred to probe participants while gathering data and then sought to build a comprehensive picture using ideas and theories from various sources. In selecting the six participants, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique. These participants were chosen based on criteria to answer the research questions comprehensively. The researcher used an interview guide to conduct interviews, which were recorded to capture the different aspects of the interview situation. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the participants' responses. A data analyst analyzed the transcribed data. Its credibility, dependability, and transferability were then verified with the highest ethical consideration, ensuring the welfare and rights of the participants. Furthermore, the qualitative data gathered helped the researcher conduct an in-depth study of the subject matter. Thus, the results became the basis for further interventions in addressing teacher-mothers' challenges and determining how schools could foster a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment, ultimately benefiting both teachers and their students.

Participants

In this study, the researcher interviewed six participants who were public school teachers and, at the same time, mothers employed at the Department of Education - Tagum City Division. The participants held Teacher I-Teacher III positions, were 30 – 60 years old, were non-IP members, and had three or more years of teaching experience. They were particularly chosen because they had unique personal experiences handling dual roles as both mothers and teachers. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants for this study. Patton (2002, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015) described purposive sampling as a method for identifying and choosing valuable data from participants to use limited resources efficiently. This approach involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups with relevant knowledge or experience about the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013). In this sampling method, participants were chosen based on specific criteria to obtain detailed and meaningful responses from those willing to participate. The researcher ensured that the participants met the criteria described in the following section. The criteria for inclusion were as follows: (a) a 30-year-old elementary school teacher-mother of three, all delivered via caesarian section, who traveled 34 kilometers daily from home to school with her son using her single motorcycle; (b) a cancer patient teacher-mother teaching grade three pupils with eight teaching loads; (c) a junior high school single teacher-mother and businesswoman battling depression; (d) a junior high school religious teacher-mother undergoing annulment with her husband; (e) a senior high school teacher-mother with a son who had a physical disability and had undergone three operations, as well as a Palarong Pambansa medalist daughter; and (f) a Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) teacher earning education units while caring for her son with special needs.

Data Collection Procedure

To collect data, the researcher engaged in various activities. After the proposal defense, experts validated the interview guide, and the manuscript underwent an ethics review. Following the validation process, the researcher

secured an endorsement letter from the graduate school office of Assumption College of Nabunturan to proceed with the study. Then, the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) and the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) were granted permission. Permission was also sought from the school heads of the research participants. Once approval from the authorities was given, the researcher approached the prospective participants and informed them of the purpose of the study. Proper protocols and standard operating procedures were followed to gather the necessary information. First, the researcher ensured the participants were treated with the highest respect and were thoroughly informed about the study's content and objectives. A comprehensive informed consent form was provided to the participants, outlining the study's procedures, potential risks such as triggering past traumas, breaches of information, and possible exploitation of participants' data, which could create issues with higher authoritiesIt was also clarified that participants could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any penalties or needing to provide further explanation. The participants' availability regarding schedule, emotional state, and mental stability was considered before conducting in-depth interviews. Additionally, a registered guidance counselor from the division office was on standby if needed, and the interview would be rescheduled. Second, the interviews were audio recorded using a password-encrypted mobile phone and stored in a personal Google Drive account. Everything that transpired during the interviews was recorded and could only be accessed by the researcher. The privacy and confidentiality of the data provided by the participants were safeguarded to ensure their protection. Moreover, pseudonyms were used by the researcher when reporting the data. Finally, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interviews word by word, except for very personal information and highly sensitive words. A copy of the transcription of their interview will also be given to the participants for transparency.

Data Analysis

Analyzing data requires several techniques and steps. It involved converting data into meaningful sections to find themes, categories, and patterns (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, Polit and Beck (2010) explained that it also entails the process of structuring, organizing, and deriving meaning from the collected data. The researcher produced transcripts, notes, audio recordings, and any other information that could help with the analysis of the data gathered for this study. The data was then arranged and categorized by the queries asked during the interviews. Before forwarding the findings to a data analyst, the researcher carefully reviewed the participants' answers several times to guarantee a comprehensive interpretation of the data gathered. After organizing and reviewing the data, the researcher then started coding the data to analyze the content. To code, Creswell (2014) stated that the data must be categorized into smaller groups and assigned a word to each group to serve as a code. The researcher used themes to examine and organize the data. Themes were then categorized to produce key concepts appropriate to the research questions. Key concepts were contracted from the in-depth interview responses of the six teacher-mother participants. Central themes were identified and highlighted from the participants' responses. Data analysis and theming methods were vital for the next steps. Then, the researcher created categories or primary themes for analysis based on the coded data. Analyzing themes was vital as it included identifying and analyzing patterns to derive meaning from the qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This process summarizes the study's findings based on the experiences and perspectives of the participants. According to Creswell (2013), themes are broad data segments with multiple codes grouped to represent a single concept. The researcher analyzed the coded data and organized it into key themes. The researcher did the theming to develop a general description and categorize it according to the research question. In this study, after transcribing the individual interviews, statements related to the topic were broken down into core ideas representing specific thoughts. The data analysis process involved categorizing and carefully examining the data through thematic analysis. The participants' responses were then grouped into major themes that highlighted different aspects of the phenomenon.Thematic analysis was conducted to ensure appropriateness in analyzing the participants' responses.

Trustworthiness

One of the main concerns in qualitative research was its trustworthiness. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Shenton, 2004), to guarantee the trustworthiness of a study, it must be anchored on the framework for qualitative research with four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. These criteria aimed to confirm the study's quality, validity, and reliability. By verifying the research, the researcher can check if the necessary conditions for its use have been met. These processes aimed to lessen the possibility of erroneous results. Credibility is the reliability of the information obtained from the original data, guaranteeing that the researcher appropriately interpreted and presented the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in

Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Additionally, Shenton (2004) highlighted that credibility sought to verify the study's internal validity, ensuring it measured what it was supposed to measure. The provisions put forth by Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Shenton, 2004) were employed by the researcher to demonstrate the validity of the study. In addition to selecting the best participants, the most appropriate research methodology was applied for this study. An interview guide comprising general and specific research questions was used to conduct the interview. Lincoln and Guba (2000) stated that participants were encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions freely through these processes. Then, the researcher collected, evaluated, and validated the data in compliance with ethical guidelines and legal requirements. Validation procedures and ethical considerations were the processes needed to achieve credibility. According to Polit et al. (2006, as cited in Moon et al., 2016), dependability is the consistency and reliability of the data under comparable circumstances. To ensure the study's dependability, the researcher guaranteed honesty and fairness throughout the research process. With that, the researcher used audio recordings for the interviews, which were transcribed afterward. The researcher repeated this process with all six participants, upholding the study's dependability. As Shenton (2024) stated, if the study were repeated in the same setting, with the same methods and participants, it is expected to come up with similar results, thus ensuring the study's dependability. Korstjens and Moser (2018) defined transferability as the degree to which the study's results and findings can be applied to various settings or circumstances. The researcher must provide sufficient detailed information so that others can determine whether the findings can be used in different situations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, as cited in Polit & Beck, 2010). In this study, the researcher provided a rich and detailed description of the research methods and findings to achieve transferability. With this, the study's results significantly impact others in real-world contexts. Confirmability is the degree to which the participants influenced the study's conclusions rather than the researcher's prejudices, comforts, opinions, or viewpoints (Guba, 1981, as cited in Moon et al., 2016). The conclusions of this study were developed straight from the data. The researcher guaranteed neutrality, unbiased results, objectivity, and separation from outside influences during the investigation.

Ethical Consideration

This study carefully upheld ethical standards throughout the research process, ensuring that all procedures were conducted with integrity and deep respect for the participants. As emphasized by Creswell (2014), ethical guidelines in qualitative research are crucial because they involve real people, their stories, and their lived experiences. Guided by the Belmont Report (1979) and its core principles of beneficence, justice, and respect for individuals, the researcher remained committed to protecting the rights and well-being of the six teacher-mothers who participated. These participants were selected through purposive sampling, each representing unique and meaningful experiences in balancing their roles as educators and mothers. From the beginning, a clear and easy-to-understand informed consent form was provided, outlining the purpose of the study, procedures involved, and participants' rights, including their freedom to withdraw at any point without consequence. The researcher made sure to accommodate the participants' availability and emotional readiness, even arranging for a licensed psychologist to be on standby in case emotional distress arose during the interviews. A debriefing process followed each interview to ease any emotional discomfort. Privacy and confidentiality were deeply respected by using pseudonyms during transcription and securely storing data in password-protected digital files and locked physical storage, all of which were properly disposed of after the study's completion. This study also complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), which protects all forms of personal and sensitive information. Throughout the process, participants were treated with compassion and were never rushed or pressured—they could pause or reschedule interviews as needed, and reasonable financial compensation was provided to acknowledge their valuable contributions. The researcher made herself available to answer all questions and maintained open communication with the participants. Permissions to conduct the study were obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisor, and the school principal, ensuring transparency and respect for institutional protocols. The researcher, who had prior training in qualitative research and was an advocate for teacher and parent support through her Project AKAP initiative, approached the study with sincerity and a genuine desire to give voice to the challenges and coping strategies of teacher-mothers. Her dedication was guided and supported by a highly experienced research adviser, a Ph.D. holder and ethics committee head, whose expertise helped ensure academic rigor and ethical compliance. Resources such as books, journals, internet access, and psychological support were readily available, and participants were even given the opportunity to review their transcribed interviews and access the final results. Although the larger community was not directly involved, the findings were shared with the learning community to inform future decisions and programs. Above all, the ethical integrity of the research was continuously reflected upon and prioritized, making this study not only credible and trustworthy but also a meaningful contribution toward understanding and supporting the lived realities of teacher-mothers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implications, discussions, results, and conclusions of this study, which examined the experiences of teacher-mothers in the few public schools in Tagum City Division, were presented in this chapter. Research participants were chosen as they had unique personal experiences handling dual roles—mother and teacher. In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. Adherence to the participants' confidentiality, identity protection, and credibility was observed throughout the interview. Their responses were transcribed and analyzed. Themes were drawn from their responses, depicting their experiences as teacher-mothers. The structure of this chapter followed the sequence of the research questions in the interview guide. The discussion section emphasized the themes, which represented the study's findings, and supported them with relevant literature and previous studies. The primary participants in this study were six public school teachers who were also mothers and were selected from schools in the Tagum City Division. Meaningful stories and experiences were collected and shared in this section. The discussion of the findings was based on structured and emerging themes, with each theme connected to relevant literature and studies to enrich the overall analysis.

One's Perspective on Work-Life Balance. This structured theme summarized the views of six (6) public school teacher-mothers in the Tagum City Division regarding their perspective on work-life balance. The emerging themes were the ability to divide one's time equally, prioritizing family first, sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, practicing maintaining healthy boundaries, tricky, and a constant challenge. This was how the research participants defined work-life balance. Teacher-mothers viewed work-life balance as an equal division of time for different activities. Making routines and having a goal was an example of a proper division of time. According to the study, to promote work-life balance, strategies involved establishing boundaries between work and personal life, allocating time for oneself and family, taking regular breaks during the day, and refraining from multitasking (Bartlett et al., 2021). Although balance meant equally dividing time, some teacher-mothers viewed work-life balance as prioritizing family first. It was a 70-30 ratio, where 70 was for the family and 30 for work, since they worked for their families. According to Musa and Chusairi (2022), for some workers, the family was a source of energy and enthusiasm that helped them balance work and life. Some teacher-mothers also considered family to be their motivation and priority.

Sometimes easy, sometimes difficult—this was some teacher-mothers' contextualized definition of work-life balance. Balancing the needs of their students and their children created conflicts or guilt when one was neglected. Work-life balance is an ongoing process of achieving harmony between one's professional and personal life (Suhardono, 2013, as cited in Rony and Yulisyahyanti, 2022). Some teacher-mothers viewed work-life balance as maintaining healthy boundaries between work and life. Setting boundaries was crucial for the well-being of the teacher-mothers so that they could perform effectively in both roles. Work-life balance is maintaining a healthy equilibrium between one's professional and personal life (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). Teacher-mothers revealed that finding time for family and teaching responsibilities was extremely difficult. It seemed like playing tug-of-war, being pulled in different directions. It was challenging to fulfill the two demanding roles. According to Halpern and Murphy (2005), "balance" was compared to a balancing beam, with work and family roles on opposite sides of a fulcrum, where time dedicated to one role always hurts the other. Juggling teaching and parenting was a constant challenge for public school teachers. Some teacher-mothers defined work-life balance as a continuous challenge. It could sometimes be overwhelming and require a lot of energy, patience, and organization. Voydanoff (2005) stated that work-life balance is managing resources to meet the demands of family and work, allowing individuals to engage in both areas of their lives actively.

Experiences in Terms of Work-Life Balance as Teacher-Mother. Teacher-mothers narrated their experiences in terms of work-life balance. The emerging themes were challenging but fulfilling, very tiring, complex to balance, and difficult, especially when having a child with an intellectual developmental disorder and the need to sacrifice other activities. Teacher-mothers experienced difficulty in terms of work-life balance because of the overlapping activities as a teacher and a mother. McGowan (2018) proved that women teachers often faced conflicting demands between their professional and personal lives, particularly in managing childcare and household responsibilities. Despite this, accomplishing so many tasks at the end of the day felt rewarding for them. For a solo parent diagnosed with breast cancer, balancing work and life was very tiring. Providing food on the table, sending children to school, and battling health issues was indeed a very exhausting job that needed to be accomplished each day. Being unable to balance work and life resulted in health problems. Indeed, Borowiec and Drygas (2022) noted that one of the most significant effects of poor work-life balance was the decline in both physical and mental health. Work and life were hard to balance. The feeling of guilt about not being fully present in either role, whether for students or children, was something that teacher-mothers also experienced. It

was frustrating to neglect one role to fulfill the other. Oludayo et al. (2018) stated that work-life balance allowed individuals to fulfill their responsibilities in both areas without suffering at the expense of the other. For some teacher-mothers, balancing work and life became extra challenging. Taking care of a child with special needs while fulfilling their responsibilities as a teacher demanded extra time and patience. The unique needs and unpredictable routines were an everyday challenge. According to the study of Rashmi et al. (2022), children with special needs were very dependent on their caregivers, and the stress of continuous caregiving had a permanent impact on the quality of life of parents of children with special needs. The worst experience of having dual roles was when a teacher-mother almost lost her child due to too much stress at work. Meeting the competing roles of being a teacher and a mother, plus taking care of herself while pregnant, created an overwhelming demand for her time, energy, and physical and emotional well-being. It required her to sacrifice personal roles to fulfill her professional undertakings. The study of Rony and Yulisyahyanti (2022) noted that when work demands are excessive, a heavy workload leads to spending more time at work and less time for oneself, family, and the surrounding social environment.

Positive Impacts of These Experiences. Teacher-mothers shared the positive impacts of their experiences in terms of work-life balance. Six (6) emerging themes were drawn out of their responses. These were: lengthened patience, developed good time management, finished tasks quickly to bond with their child, developed empathy, transformed criticism into motivation, and gained more knowledge. Despite the challenges encountered in being both a teacher and a mother, these experiences brought positive impacts. It enhanced their patience in both roles, allowing them to better understand their pupils' and children's behavior. Having a positive impact at school and home resulted in a sense of purpose and fulfillment. This statement was supported by the study of Borowiec and Drygas (2022) in Poland, which found that middle-class individuals were able to manage work-life conflict and gain greater satisfaction from fulfilling professional roles; the issue of work-life balance was emphasized, particularly among social groups for whom work was seen merely as an obligation. Balancing work and family responsibilities sharpened their ability to plan, prioritize, and manage time effectively. Through their challenges, teacher-mothers learned to multitask when necessary, make the most of limited time, and develop good time management. Otuya and Andeyo (2020) stated that work-life balance was a blessing for employed women, allowing them to effectively manage their work and family responsibilities. The positive impact of the challenges encountered by a single teacher-mother was her eagerness to finish her tasks as a teacher quickly so that she could bond with her daughter. This was her way of balancing and making time to fulfill her other role. Caringal-Go and Hechanovah (2022) also suggested that doing things productively allowed individuals to meet other responsibilities. The journey of being both a teacher and a mother was challenging and demanding, but the lessons learned along the way provided invaluable wisdom and skills. The difficult days, whether in the classroom or at home, forced teacher-mothers to manage conflicts, set boundaries, and think of solutions quickly, making good decision-making essential. According to Bishnoi (2023), one of the biggest reasons work-life balance was necessary was its connection to mental health. Creating more balance in life gave individuals the breathing space to think, allowing them to make better, sound, and more informed decisions.

Negative Impacts of These Experiences. The six teacher-mothers shared the negative impacts of the challenges of balancing the demands of work and life. From their responses, five (5) emerging themes were drawn out: additional responsibility, health conditions, difficulty balancing life and work responsibilities, burnout, and sacrificing family time. The different demands of being a teacher-mother were indeed a challenge. While there were positive impacts, there were also negative ones. It seemed like a blessing for some teacher-mothers, but for others, it was an additional responsibility to perform and fulfill. Being a mother was an unending responsibility and a job with no salary but with fulfillment in return. Moreover, Bella (2023) suggested that individuals who actively managed their work-life balance improved their quality of life and promoted a more sustainable and rewarding approach to work. The combined pressure of teaching and parenting led to chronic stress, especially when trying to meet expectations in both roles. With so many responsibilities, there was insufficient time for self-care and relaxation. This often led to health problems or, in worse cases, severe, prolonged medical conditions. The study of Zahra et al. (2024) revealed that individuals became physically vulnerable to diseases due to multiple roles, work pressure, and job responsibilities. For single mothers, the negative impact of their experiences was the extreme difficulty in balancing life and work responsibilities. It was challenging to be in a situation where they needed to be hands-on mothers while also being active teachers. A study by Otuya and Andeyo (2020) noted that married working women with young families often struggled to balance the demands and responsibilities of both family and work. Most teacher-mothers narrated that their overlapping responsibilities, when stress overwhelmed them, made them feel burned out. There was also a lingering feeling of guilt for not doing enough for their children and difficulty managing classroom behavior. It was proven that burnout occurs when individuals cannot

manage stress and when there is a conflict between work and personal life (Pangemanan et al., 2017, as cited in Rony and Yulisyahyanti, 2022). Lastly, balancing the dual responsibilities of teaching students and raising children often meant prioritizing one role over the other, leading to less quality time with family. This was a common struggle for teacher-mothers, especially those with two or more children. Regarding work-life balance, conflict was described as when an individual excelled in one role but neglected the other, which was equally important, as noted by Anwar et al. (2013, as cited in Otuya and Andeyo, 2020).

Challenges Encountered in Having a Dual Role as Teacher and Mother. Juggling the roles and responsibilities of being a teacher-mother was indeed challenging. The six teacher-mothers shared the challenges they encountered in having a dual role. Their responses drew out five (5) emerging themes: inability to multitask as a mother and teacher, worsened memory, overthinking too much, when their child got sick, and stressfulness. Ultimately, multitasking was seen as the solution to handling motherhood and teaching. Sometimes, they cannot predict or control the events in their lives, making multitasking difficult. Teacher-mothers encountered challenges that required them to choose between family and school. These situations tested their multitasking and decision-making skills. A study on women who are full-time entrepreneurs highlighted adaptive strategies, such as bringing children to work and learning to multitask, as ways to manage work and life balance (Caringal-Go & Hechanova, 2022). A complex and challenging situation for teacher-mothers was achieving work-life balance and battling work-life balance. The demands of motherhood and teaching while undergoing cancer treatment impacted multiple areas of life. The imbalance between parenting and teaching fostered conflict between work and family responsibilities, leading to a decline in the individual's well-being (Zahra et al., 2024). Another challenge they faced in having a dual role was overthinking. Overthinking was a common experience for many individuals, and this was especially evident among teachers who were also mothers, particularly in situations where they lacked trust. This often stemmed from unpleasant past experiences. According to Nanda and Randhawa (2020), emotions are the foundations of human behavior, making emotional intelligence (EI) the most effective form of intelligence, with many effects, including its influence on work-life balance and employee well-being. The unpredictable challenges of raising a child with special needs, including impulsive behavior and unique needs, often lead to frustration. It was difficult to reconcile the role of a teacher with the unpredictable nature of parenting a child with special needs. Moreover, children with special needs in the family caused more friction in relationships and stress among the primary caregivers (Moawad, 2012, as cited by Rashmi et al., 2022). The feeling of guilt about prioritizing their careers over family life affected all working mothers, especially teacher-mothers. However, the worst situation occurred when they focused too much on work and neglected their families. Zahra et al. (2024) reported that when individuals dedicated more time and effort to work, they often had less time for their personal lives. One teacher-mother had the worst and most unforgettable experience, which she considered the most challenging, when she almost lost her child due to the stress of work.

Ways Challenges Affect One's Role as Teacher and Mother. The six teacher-mothers shared how their challenges affected their roles as teachers and mothers. Their responses drew out five (5) emerging themes: affected them holistically, developed body aches, disturbed their mental health, set boundaries, and could cope with stress. Being a teacher-mother affected them holistically because both roles required significant emotional, mental, physical, and social investment. It was rewarding to fulfill their roles as teachers and mothers, but it required much time and energy. Bishnoi (2023) asserted that a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being was affected if the demands of work and life were not balanced. For a teacher-mother battling cancer, those challenges she encountered affected her physically. She managed her teaching loads mentally daily, but her body developed aches. In addition, the study of Borowiec and Drygas (2022) found that body aches, excessive fatigue, and an unhealthy lifestyle resulting from an unbalanced work-life dynamic could lead to chronic stress, disrupting physiological processes and potentially damaging specific body parts or systems, thereby increasing the risk of physical disorders and diseases. It also affected her emotionally, especially when her eldest child voluntarily dropped out of school to allow his siblings to continue their studies. Every mother's dream was to witness their children graduate and become professionals. Aside from physical health, being a teacher-mother also affected them mentally. When teacher-mothers attempted to multitask, it often led to rushing through tasks without completing them. This resulted in frustration and stress, as it felt like they were falling short in both areas. They were not just physically exhausted but also mentally drained. Otuya and Andeyo (2020) stated that married working women with young families struggled to balance their dual roles and the tasks required by both family and work, leading to considerable mental and physical stress. Stress has a common effect on teacher-mothers who are trying to excel in both roles. It was important to be realistic when setting goals, be kind to themselves, and seek support while balancing both responsibilities. This support could come from friends, colleagues, or family. The competing demands of work and personal roles resulted in stress, disrupting the balance between the

individual and their surroundings (Borowiec & Drygas, 2022). While some teacher-mothers were adversely affected by these challenges, others experienced positive effects. Some managed to block the negative impact by setting boundaries between their professional and personal lives. Certainly, Bella (2023) emphasized that setting clear boundaries between work and personal life can help prevent burnout and improve overall quality of life.

Ways to Maintain Work-Life Balance. Despite their challenge, the six teacher-mothers shared how they maintained work-life balance. From their responses, six (6) emerging themes were drawn out: with the help of supportive people, with the guidance of the Lord, being able to balance but not always, having time management, having extrinsic motivation from others, and having no choice. Balancing two full-time roles often led to burnout and stress. A supportive network, including family, helped teacher-mothers find balance by assisting with childcare duties and household chores. Support and sympathy from friends and coworkers were also significant during family troubles and emergencies. It was acknowledged by Wong et al. (2017) that care and support from workmates improved employees' thoughts and insights into work-life balance. It was a helpful tool that helped employees balance their professional and personal lives by nurturing a supportive work environment. For other teacher-mothers, having faith in God gave them calmness, relief, and hope during trying times. Their belief in the unseen God boosts their willpower and determination to find their purpose. This serves as a reminder of their significant roles in the lives of their students and children. Salamiah et al. (2020) proved this notion of teacher-mothers, who narrated that having faith in God was crucial for preserving harmony and productivity to have a work-life equilibrium. A strong personality was another way to maintain the balance, especially for solo parents. Single teacher-mothers had left with no choice but to deal with the current situation and challenge of juggling work and life, for it was necessary for their survival. They need to be strong and have to survive. They needed to keep things in balance to provide for themselves and their families. According to Arunima and Nangia's (2020) research, an individual's attitude greatly influences how well they manage their work and personal lives. Due to strong qualities, some people handled difficulties better. Managing time well was a practical and effective way of handling dual roles for teacher-mothers. To avoid exhaustion while thriving in both roles, time management was essential. It allowed them to finish school-related duties and responsibilities while having time for themselves. Caringal-Go and Hechanova's (2022) study emphasized the importance of managing time and planning properly for employees having dual roles. This will help them handle the demanding roles in the different aspects of their lives. A supportive school climate also significantly aided teacher-mothers in successfully juggling their dual responsibilities of parenting and teaching. School administrators' support, as well as their colleagues' encouragement, were incredibly beneficial. Otuya and Andeyo (2020) suggested that the management should craft and implement work-life balance policies to inspire workers and increase organizational productivity. Finally, facing the challenge and the demands of having dual roles as a teacher was the most practical way to keep the balance. The only option for teacher-mothers to survive and be productive is to take on the difficulty of maintaining the equilibrium. They chose to persevere because they prayed for their jobs, the lives of their children, and the gift of family.

Ways to Cope with Challenges to Fulfill One's Role as a Mother at Home. The six teacher-mothers revealed how they coped with challenges to fulfill their roles as mothers at home. Six (6) emerging themes were drawn from their responses: making a routine, never bringing work-related tasks home, always praying, practicing self-care, having their children help them divert their attention, and having a support system. Making a routine was a helpful way to balance professional and personal life. Routines helped manage household chores, childcare, and other personal responsibilities. At school, a well-structured classroom and a clear plan for the day saved time and ensured organization amidst a busy schedule. Another strategy to maintain balance, according to Bella (2023), was to set work hours to establish a routine and separate when the workday started and ended, reducing the likelihood of overlapping tasks. Setting boundaries between work and home life allowed teacher-mothers to focus entirely on their children and personal time at home. Teacher-mothers ensured they never brought work-related tasks home, as much as possible, to prevent overlapping tasks and roles. A study found that achieving work-life balance required strategies like establishing boundaries between work and personal life, setting aside time for oneself and family, taking regular breaks during the day, and avoiding multitasking (Bartlett et al., 2021). For many, prayer reminded them they were not alone in carrying out their responsibilities. It was a powerful and grounding practice that helped teacher-mothers strive for balance. Life could be overwhelming, but prayer created moments of stillness. It allowed teacher-mothers to pause, reflect, and find peace and guidance amidst challenges. The study by Caringal-Go and Hechanova (2022) discovered that enhancing faith and service, such as seeking spiritual guidance and practicing faith through prayer and helping others, was a key strategy for achieving work-life balance. Taking care of oneself was not selfish – it was essential. Everyone needed rest, including teacher-mothers. Taking time to recharge increased focus and productivity, making it easier for them

to make sound decisions, accomplish tasks, and remain effective in both roles. In Zahra et al.'s (2024) study, employees prioritizing personal responsibilities tended to experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment and stronger connections to their own lives, friends, and family members. For some teacher-mothers, their children became their source of healing. Moawad (2012, as cited by Rashmi et al., 2022) stated that the presence of children was an encouragement within the family. The love and bond they shared served as a source of comfort after a long day at work. Their unconditional love reassured and reaffirmed teacher-mothers that they were good mothers. Children who tried to divert their mother's attention from worries were a true gift. Support from a husband or partner was essential for teacher-mothers to balance parenting and teaching successfully. Sharing responsibilities with their husbands reduced stress and helped in managing overlapping commitments. A support system, especially from their husbands, was the backbone of balancing dual roles. According to Rashmi et al. (2022), partner or spouse support and family support in childcare were essential factors that could be considered proactive solutions to work-life balance issues.

Ways to Cope with Challenges to Fulfill One's Role as a Teacher at School. The six teacher-mothers revealed the ways they coped with challenges to fulfill their roles as teachers at school. Six (6) emerging themes were drawn from their responses: making a routine and a to-do list, thinking of it as part of their job, bonding with friends, setting clear boundaries, pausing tasks for a while, and having a positive mindset. Making to-do lists and routines at work and home was found by teacher-mothers to be effective. Accomplishing tasks was fulfilling for them. They were also grateful to their husbands and elderly parents for being part of the support system, making tasks easier at work and home. Managing personal schedules, such as making to-do lists and planning adequately for long-term goals or short-term tasks, was a strategy to balance work and life, according to Caringal-Go and Hechanova (2022). A cancer patient teacher-mother found hope and purpose despite her condition. Staying positive as a teacher and cancer patient was incredibly important, not just for her well-being but also for her students. She drew strength from her passion for teaching and her mission for her students. Caringal-Go and Hechanova (2022) also proposed that productive work involved being proactive in completing tasks and maintaining a positive mindset, which was a key strategy for achieving work-life balance. Bonding with friends was a way of coping with teacher-mothers' challenges. Friends understood their unique challenges and offered empathy and encouragement. Friends and colleagues were an outlet for their frustrations, reducing stress and preventing burnout. Also, the study of Bella (2023) highlighted that dedicating time to activities that promote well-being, such as exercise, hobbies, and socializing, played a crucial role in balancing work and life. She also emphasized the importance of treating self-care activities with the same priority as work-related tasks. Time management, making schedules, support from peers and colleagues, and implementing strategies that made work easier were the ways identified by teacher-mothers to cope with the challenges of fulfilling their responsibilities as teachers at school. Pausing for a while was another way some teacher-mothers addressed the challenges behind dressmaking competencies, especially when they took leave for their children. Pausing gave them time to recharge and prevented exhaustion from teaching and learning demands. Bella (2023) suggested that taking regular breaks throughout the workday was another effective strategy for preventing burnout and sustaining productivity. Accepting the present situation, as well as their abilities and limitations, was what some teacher-mothers did to cope with the challenges of having a dual role. They accepted what they could do at the time, along with the limitations and consequences of pushing themselves to the limit.

Insights and Realizations After Going Through Experiences. After their experiences, the six teacher-mothers shared their insights and realizations. From their responses, five (5) emerging themes were drawn out: having both roles is not easy, staying positive, planning ahead of time, support systems are essential, and prioritizing family first. Having both roles was not easy for teacher-mothers. However, it depends on how one perceives things. They said there had to be a paradigm shift, where they needed to break the monotony of life and do what was necessary. Listening to older people who had more experience was also a great help. Ortega and Hechanova (2010) highlighted the significant social support in family-oriented cultures, like that of the Philippines, where extended family members such as grandparents, in-laws, aunts, and uncles play a key role in helping manage work-life balance.

Being a positive thinker always helped some teacher-mothers in their journey. They shared that once they were positive, there was nothing they could not handle in life. All the problems could be solved if they just had faith in God. They also advised you to stop complaining and start loving work. Complaining only made them more tired because they kept thinking negative thoughts. The study by Caringal-Go and Hechanova (2022) emphasized that enhancing faith and service, including seeking spiritual guidance and practicing faith through prayer and helping others, was a key strategy for achieving work-life balance. From a solo parent's perspective, planning

ahead of time was essential. According to Caringal-Go & Hechanova (2022), planning was one of the cognitive work-life balance crafting strategies. They recommended planning who they should be with and what kind of partner they wanted for their children. They also suggested choosing someone who had a plan in life. Another advice was to accept things because they happened for a reason. Support systems, like friends and colleagues, were a great help for teacher-mothers juggling motherhood and teaching. A single teacher-mother's role was overwhelming, and having someone to talk to or lean on helped alleviate stress and heavy feelings. The support from others reassured them that they were doing their best. Strengthening support systems (Caringal-Go & Hechanova, 2022) and communicating with colleagues and friends (Bella, 2023) were healthy work-life balance strategies. All teacher-mothers agreed that prioritizing family over work was the best choice in terms of work-life balance. They were the reason why they were working, why they were earning a living, and why they kept going. Thus, they prioritized their family. The study by Bella (2023) recommended prioritizing tasks based on urgency and importance to maintain the balance between work and life.

Recommendation to Give to Help Oneself Cope with Challenges Based on One's Experiences. The six teacher-mothers recommended ways to help themselves cope with challenges based on their experiences. Six (6) emerging themes were drawn from their responses: building harmonious relationships with colleagues, always balancing time with work and family, prioritizing family, setting boundaries, reducing paperwork, and having faith in God. Turning to God, eating on time, and having the right people around them were the three ways teacher-mothers recommended to help cope with the challenges of dual roles. They believed that God could heal what medicine could not. Eating on time was also essential to nourish oneself physically and avoid toxic people, including social media. The study of Salamiah et al. (2020) revealed that one's belief in the existence of God was likely a great help in maintaining harmony and effectiveness in achieving work-life balance. Another recommendation is to set boundaries, have an outlet for unpleasant feelings, give yourself time to unwind, and know your priorities to help maintain the balance between work and life. Teacher-mothers advised not bringing work home to prioritize family and get some rest. Bella (2023) noted that establishing a physical boundary between professional and personal life was very helpful in achieving work-life balance. Teacher-mothers also recommended seeking support and engaging in self-care routines. Above all, they emphasized the role of prayer. Bella (2023) recommended setting aside time for activities that promote well-being, such as exercise, hobbies, and socializing. They emphasized the importance of giving self-care activities the same priority as work-related tasks. Prioritizing family was crucial because they were the reason for working. Teacher-mothers advised taking any opportunity to stabilize and settle. They also suggested reducing teacher paperwork and emphasized that school heads should be supportive. Lall and Sahay (2024) added that creating a supportive organizational culture that valued and promoted work-life balance was crucial for the well-being of women teachers. Lastly, teacher-mothers encouraged others to keep going and remain strong. They recommended having faith in God and maintaining a good relationship with their husbands. Nourishing relationships with spouses/partners involved communicating honestly and regularly, and spending time together was another strategy for balancing work and life (Caringal-Go & Hechanova, 2022). They also suggested having exclusive leave for mothers with dependent young children, aside from sick leave. Oludayo et al. (2015) highlighted that benefits such as parental leave, maternity leave, medical leave, annual leave, holiday leave, and other forms of leave played a key role in fostering employee loyalty and commitment to the organization.

Conclusion and Recommendation
This study looked at what teacher-mothers, women who care for their kids at home and teach them in school at the same time, really go through. They offered heartfelt experiences about how hard it is to balance their work and personal life. Their stories revealed how being a teacher and a mother at the same time affects their health, teaching, and family life. They showed quiet strength, emotional weakness, and a strong sense of purpose. When this balance isn't right, it affects a lot of things. Teacher-mothers talked of stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout—things that made them less effective in the classroom over time and made it harder for them to be fully present for their families. The most interesting thing was that a lot of these women had never talked about their concerns before. They quietly carried the weight of these two occupations, putting on a brave face every day and doing their best at home and at school. The researchers were particularly moved by how honest these stories were, with the tears, laughter, and courage that came through. People often think of these women as powerful, but their stories showed us that being strong doesn't mean you can't be beaten. They are always in need of understanding, empathy, and support, which is why they care so much about their students and children. These results highlight how vital it is for school leaders and administrators to understand the issues that mothers who are also teachers have. They need more than just praise for their good work; they need real aid. Part of this is establishing schools where teacher-mothers can do well, not just get by. Regular meetings with guidance

counselors, access to mental health professionals, and breaks for mental health every three months are all small things that can have a major impact. People can also learn about and assist in establishing a culture of kindness by going to yearly workshops on self-care and balancing work and life. When teacher-moms feel supported, they get their energy and passion back, which is beneficial for their kids and their families. Not only is work-life balance a personal issue, but it's also a problem with the overall system that affects the health of the learning community and the quality of education. These thoughts led to a lot of good ideas. Most people think it's natural to be both a teacher and a mother, yet it can cause problems that influence your job enjoyment, health, and the quality of your teaching. Both teachers and kids will have to deal with the problems that come from not having organized aid. Schools and the rest of the education system need to develop policies that assist people in balancing their professional and personal lives. A Work-Life Balance Policy could include flexible work hours, stress management training, and wellness initiatives to help people avoid getting burned out. Working hours should be flexible, especially for moms who are breastfeeding or raising children on their own. There should also be options for on-site daycare or help with childcare. The report also mentioned a sad trend: some teacher-mothers had to take sick leave to take care of their kids because there weren't any other good options. People who make judgments regarding schools should think about granting extra leave benefits to single parents and nursing moms to solve this. People were worried about their mental health. Teacher-moms definitely need therapy, stress management training, and emotional support systems that are easy to access. Adding mental health sessions to In-Service Training (INSET) or starting programs like "Wellness Fridays" could benefit immediately and in the long run. It's just as important to make the school a kind and welcoming place. School administrators need to understand and support the unique problems that teacher-mothers face. Schools can make things easier for teacher-mothers by giving support staff non-teaching administrative tasks. This allows them to do what they do best: teach and take care of kids. These proposals are aimed at helping not only individual teachers but also the entire educational community.

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