Teachers Carrying a School: The Lived Experiences of Teachers-in-Charge of Small Public Elementary Schools

A basic research proposal · Basic Education Research Fund 2026

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A sample with invented details, for teaching: nash.com.ph/blog

Introduction and rationale: a school on a teacher's item

18,576

public schools with no principal item, relying on teachers-in-charge, SY 2024–2025

EDCOM II, 2026, p. 390

2024

the year DepEd relieved TICs of teaching, except in the exigency of service

DO 005, s. 2024, Sec. V.A.1

None

allowance for the designation; a TIC is paid monthly like non-teaching personnel

DO 013, s. 2024, Sec. V.B.3



TICs run schools on a teacher's item. Studies elsewhere describe their divided day; none has asked this division's TICs, or how the 2024 rule is lived in schools of three to six teachers.

Literature review: what is known, and what is not

TICs who teach, in the Philippines

Time was their "biggest battle"; learners were left with seatwork while reports were sent (Torrino & Naparan, 2024). TICs felt "neither fully teacher nor fully administrator" (Nival & Orbista, 2026).

Teaching principals abroad

Learners "pay the price" when the principal leaves class (Newton & Wallin, 2013); untrained and isolated, with family time compromised (Taole, 2022).

Colaizzi's method

Seven steps from significant statements to a fundamental structure, which the participants verify (Morrow et al., 2015); 410 statements, 14 clusters, 4 themes in one study (Shosha, 2012).

So: the divided day is known; the designation itself, the 2024 rule in small schools, and why TICs stay are not.

Research questions: one central, four guiding

What is the lived experience of serving as the teacher-in-charge of a small public elementary school?

1. How do TICs describe the daily work of running a school while holding a teacher's position?
2. What do they find hardest in the designation, and how do they deal with it?
3. How did they learn the work, and what support do they draw on or ask for?
4. What meaning do they find in the experience?

No hypotheses: a descriptive phenomenological study describes an experience as those who live it describe it; it does not test a relationship stated in advance.

Scope and limitation

Scope

- TICs of public elementary schools in the division with no principal item and six or fewer teachers
- At least one full school year as TIC by June 2026
- One interview each, July to August 2026; a review of the findings in September

Limitations

- One division: readers judge whether the findings fit their setting
- One interview per participant
- The lead researcher was a TIC: her assumptions are bracketed
- Experiences of the rules, not an audit of records

Research design: descriptive phenomenology

Descriptive phenomenology (chosen)

Describes the experience the TICs share, its essential structure, close to their words. Colaizzi's seven steps keep every finding traceable to a statement.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis

Interprets how each person makes sense of an experience, case by case: a double hermeneutic. Suited to fewer, deeper cases.

Thematic analysis

Finds patterns across any qualitative data, often for a practical question; does not aim at the essence of an experience.

Case study or survey

A case study describes one school or district; a survey counts what TICs do, not what it means to them.

Sampling: criterion and maximum variation

31 TICs on the division's list who meet all four criteria

14 invited, for variety in sex, years as TIC, teaching load and distance

10–14 interviews planned; stop when two in a row add no new meaning

Who is eligible

- Designated TIC by the SDS; school with no principal item
- Six or fewer teachers, the TIC included
- At least one full school year as TIC
- Not supervised by any of the researchers

Saturation took 9 to 17 interviews in empirical tests with homogeneous groups and narrow aims (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Data collection: one interview with each TIC

Interview guide

Seven open questions with probes, in English and Filipino; tried out with two principals who were once TICs.

One interview each

At the TIC's school after classes, about an hour, audio-recorded with separate consent; field notes after each.

Transcription and translation

By the researchers, word for word, in the language spoken; Filipino passages translated into English and checked by a second bilingual researcher.

Trustworthiness: four criteria, and how each is met

Credibility

Two readers on the first transcripts; peer debriefing; the fundamental structure returned to every participant.

Transferability

Thick description of the schools and participants, in bands that protect them.

Dependability

An audit trail of every decision; an external audit.

Confirmability

Bracketing: the lead researcher's expectations written before the first interview; a reflexive journal.

Ethical issues: consent, pressure, privacy, review

Consent, three times

Separate consent to take part, to be recorded, and to be quoted under a code; withdraw at any time without penalty.

No pressure from above

Invited directly, not through district supervisors; the division is not told who agreed or declined.

Privacy

Codes and labels in the transcripts; the key kept apart; coded data are still personal data under the Data Privacy Act.

Review, and no AI on the data

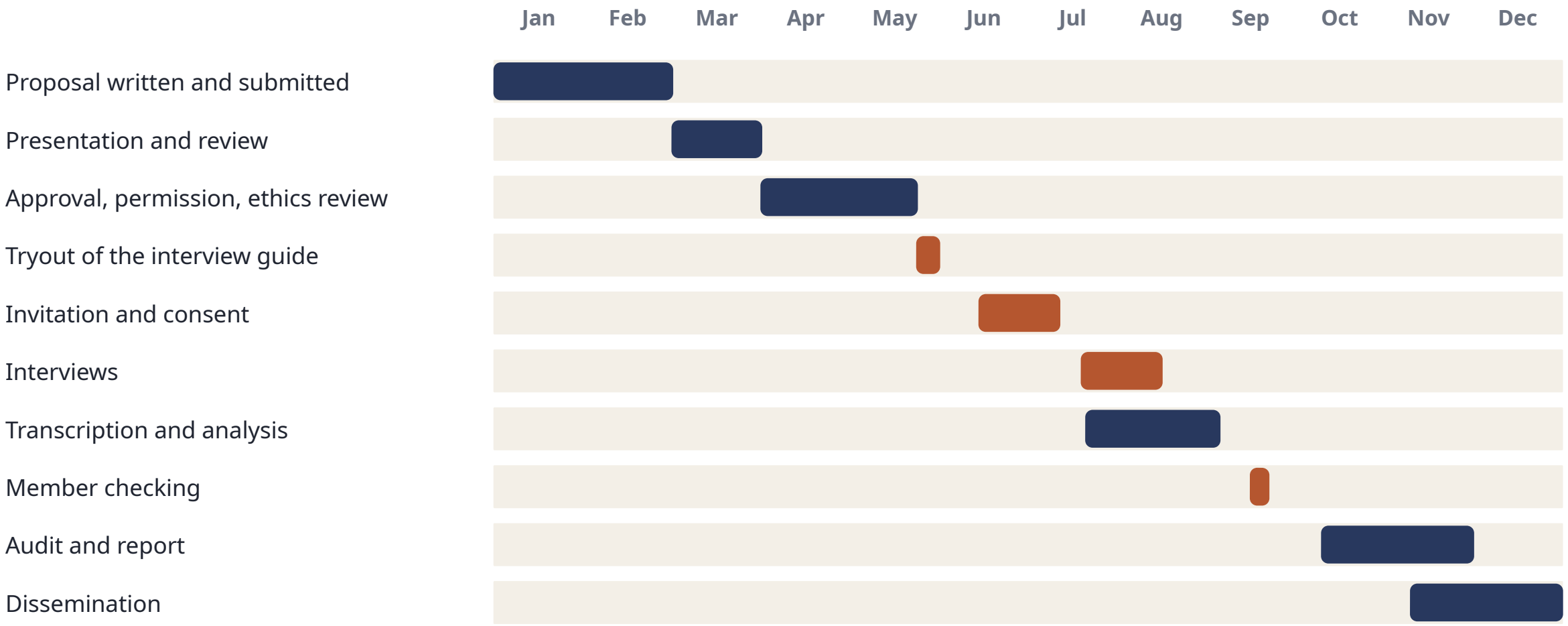
A PHREB-accredited ethics committee reviews the protocol; no recording or transcript goes into an AI tool.

Plan for data analysis: Colaizzi's seven steps

Step 1	Familiarization: read every transcript three times, once with the recording
Step 2	Significant statements: copy each with its lines; two readers on the first two transcripts
Step 3	Formulated meanings: one meaning per statement, close to the words
Step 4	Clusters and themes: each meaning in one cluster, clusters into themes
Step 5	Exhaustive description: a full description of the experience
Step 6	Fundamental structure: the essence in a short statement
Step 7	Verification: the structure returned to every participant

Tools: a spreadsheet workbook (Excel or LibreOffice) holds every line, statement, meaning, cluster and theme; free software such as Taguette or QualCoder, run offline, would also serve.

Timetable: January to December 2026



Rust: work with participants. Interviews fall on class days of Term 1 of SY 2026–2027, after classes.

Cost estimates: PhP 25,000 in eligible items

Item	Particulars	Amount (PhP)
Transportation	Fares to 10 schools, a boat crossing, member checks	10,600.00
Food	Snacks at interviews, debriefing and audit	4,400.00
Communication	Mobile data and load, three researchers, six months	4,500.00
Supplies	Encrypted drive, lockable box, folders	2,500.00
Reproduction	Consent forms, guides, member-check summaries	1,500.00
Dissemination	Policy brief, 60 copies	1,500.00
Total		**25,000.00**

Not charged to the grant

- Transcription service: the researchers transcribe
- Software: a spreadsheet already on hand
- Payment to participants: snacks only
- Equipment: the researchers' phones record

Dissemination and advocacy: the participants first

The 10 participants

A copy of the report and a meeting

November 2026

SDS and HR office

Management committee; a two-page policy brief

December 2026

District supervisors and TICs

Supervisors' meeting; the division TICs' conference

January to February 2027

Researchers in the region

Regional research congress; the division's journal

March to June 2027

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Thank you

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