

Rooted Elsewhere: Understanding the Personal and Professional Journeys of Assigned Public Elementary Teachers in Boracay Island

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Abstract— This study looked into the stories of non-resident elementary teachers assigned to teach at Boracay Island in the District of Malay, Aklan, and how their experiences shaped them as individuals and as educators. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, five teachers shared their journeys from how they began teaching on the island, to the daily realities of living away from home, and the people who helped them adjust along the way. Their accounts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that teaching on the island brings both challenges and growth. Teachers deal with long travels, high expenses, and the emotional weight of being away from family. These situations often lead to stress and fatigue, yet they also build patience, independence, and resilience. Their financial realities shape how they manage their time, budget their resources, and make daily decisions. Despite the hardships, many of them find meaning in their work, especially when they see their learners improve or when they feel the support of their colleagues, families, and the island community. Overall, the study highlights that the commitment of non-resident teachers goes beyond simply reporting to work each day. Their experiences show how sacrifice, support, and a strong sense of purpose help them navigate the demands of teaching in a unique and challenging setting. These insights point to the need for stronger assistance from policy makers, school leaders, and local government units to help sustain the well-being and motivation of teachers who serve away from home.

Keywords— Boracay Island, Philippines, narrative inquiry, Non-resident elementary teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession encompasses a wide range of roles and responsibilities that facilitate meaningful learning and holistic development among learners. It is regarded as a purpose-driven profession because it carries the noble responsibility of shaping individuals who will contribute to society and nation-building. Teachers are expected not only to deliver instruction but also to serve as mentors, facilitators, counselors, and role models in the lives of their students (Fabrigas & Paglinawan, 2025). However, behind the dignity and nobility associated with the profession are the real-life struggles and unheard stories of educators who are assigned far from their place of residence. Among these are non-resident teachers who are deployed to schools in Boracay Island and who experience daily burdens associated with transportation, separation from family, adjustment to unfamiliar surroundings, and the demands of balancing personal and professional responsibilities while striving to improve

the quality of education in island schools (Sayo & Mosquera, 2025).

Despite these challenges, many non-resident educators in Boracay Island remain committed to their profession, driven by their passion for teaching, dedication to learners, and desire to gain meaningful experiences in diverse educational settings. Living away from their families and adapting to an unfamiliar environment requires emotional resilience, flexibility, and perseverance. These teachers often encounter difficulties related to financial constraints, homesickness, limited access to resources, and adjustment to the island's social, cultural, and environmental conditions (Galut, 2025). Nevertheless, they continue to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as educators, demonstrating commitment to the delivery of quality education. Studies revealed that teachers assigned to geographically isolated and

disadvantaged areas often develop coping mechanisms and resilience strategies to overcome professional isolation and environmental barriers. Exploring the lived experiences of non-resident teachers provides valuable insights into the realities faced by educators assigned in geographically isolated and tourism-centered communities. Research shows that teachers in far-flung and coastal schools commonly encounter challenges related to difficult travel conditions, inadequate resources, cultural adjustment, and time management struggles, yet they continue to sustain their commitment to teaching (Pangilinan, 2025; Randwick Research, 2025). Furthermore, understanding these experiences may contribute to the improvement of teachers' welfare through responsive Human Resource Management programs and policies that address the needs of non-resident teachers assigned far from their homes (Fabrigas & Paglinawan, 2025).

Hence, this study aimed to understand the challenges encountered by non-resident educators who have been assigned to teach in Boracay Island. The study was aligned with the goals of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education, which emphasizes the vital role of teachers in ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners, regardless of geographical location or environmental circumstances. In geographically challenging and tourism-oriented areas such as Boracay Island, teachers play a crucial role in sustaining educational quality despite limitations and adversities. Existing studies affirm that teachers assigned in remote and coastal communities continue to demonstrate dedication and professional commitment even under difficult working conditions (Mosquera, 2025; Pangilinan, 2025).

Additionally, the study relates to SDG 4 in terms of strengthening the teaching profession and understanding concerns associated with teacher deployment and welfare. Specifically, it explored how living away from home affects the personal, emotional, and professional well-being of teachers assigned outside their residence. The researcher was encouraged to give voice to these educators by examining how they adjust to the island's unique

social, cultural, and environmental conditions while fulfilling their professional responsibilities (Galut, 2025; Randwick Research, 2025).

Theoretical and Epistemological Perspectives

The constructivist–interpretivist epistemology is the basis of the study, it focus on understanding on how non-elementary resident teachers interpret their lived experiences in connection to their work environment. Creswell and Poth (2024) asserts that knowledge is subjectively constructed rather than discovered as objective or universal truth. This is through the lived experiences, perceptions, and social interactions of individuals. In this framework, understanding comes from the interpretation of human experience. This makes it particularly suitable for this study. As it explore complex social phenomena in context like the experiences of non-resident teachers assigned to teach in island settings.

In a clearer understanding Creswell and Poth (2024), constructivist seek to understand the world from the participants' perspectives. This means that each person constructs meaning based on personal and social contexts. By applying Creswell's epistemological perspectives to the experiences of non-resident teachers which gives us deeper understanding that these are contextually situated and multi-dimensional. Meaning each teacher's perception of their challenges, coping mechanisms, and professional identity is unique and meaningful. Shaped by the island environment, community relationships, and their personal histories. Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2024) emphasizes that the researcher is an instrument of data collection and interpretation, interacting with participants to co-construct knowledge. In this study, the researcher engages in in-depth interviews and reflective analysis to understand teachers' lived experiences, thereby ensuring that the findings emerge from the participants' perspectives rather than imposing external assumptions. In summary, Creswell's epistemology supports this study by: Validating lived experiences as a legitimate source of knowledge. Highlighting the interpretive nature of professional identity in specific socio-economic contexts. Emphasizing the role of social interactions and

informal networks as sources of understanding and resilience. Framing the researcher as a co-creator of knowledge rather than a detached observer.

Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of non-resident elementary teachers pre-empts challenges living away from home assigned to teach in Boracay Island. Thus, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do non-resident teachers navigate the physical and psychological toll of the inter-island experiences?
2. How do educators reconcile their professional identity with the socio-economic status of being non-residents in the island?
3. How do non-resident teachers utilize informal social capital to sustain their stay on the island?

II. METHODS

This study used narrative inquiry, a qualitative research design that focuses on understanding and interpreting individuals’ lived experiences through their stories. According to Creswell and Poth (2024), narrative research examines the chronological

sequence of events and the meaning participants ascribe to their experiences, emphasizing the context and personal perspective of the storyteller. Hence, narrative inquiry allows the researcher to explore the physical, emotional, and psychological realities of inter-island travel and teaching. As it allows the study to access, interpret, and represent the lived experiences of non-resident teachers, capture their personal and professional meaning-making, and understand how social relationships support their resilience in island contexts, which aligns seamlessly with the constructivist–interpretivist epistemology guiding this study.

Participants of the Study

In this study, the participants were the selected public elementary non-resident teachers assigned to teach in the island of Boracay. All participants should be a non-residents of Boracay district of Malay division of Aklan and teaching in the island as regular permanent for almost 2-7 years. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to conduct this study. Thus, researchers had (5) purposively selected non-resident elementary teachers as the key participants in this research study.

Table 1: Profile of the Teacher Participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Sex	No. Years of Teaching	Socio-Economic Status
Teacher Arn	34	Male	6	Average Class
Teacher Bern	31	Male	7	Average Class
Teacher Carl	34	Male	5	Average Class
Teacher Ana	37	Female	7	Average Class
Teacher Jela	31	Female	3	Average Class

Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher used an interview guide questionnaires as instruments in this study. The researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with the use of audio recording to record the data and administer open-ended questions made by the researchers on the non-resident elementary teachers assigned to teach at Boracay Island specifically at Balabag Elementary School within the District of Malay, Division of Aklan.

To test the validity of the content of the questionnaires, researchers asked for the technical assistance of 3 research experts on field that served as the validators who were the Dean of the University, University Grammarian and DepEd Assistant Schools Division Superintendent. During the interview process the questions were written and asked in English; however, participants used different languages that they were comfortable with in order to express themselves with a kind of language barrier. To gain information and further understand the lived experiences of non-

resident public elementary teachers assigned in Boracay Island

Data Gathering Procedure

As a primary procedure, the researchers requested permission from the Division Office of Aklan to conduct the study and permit the researchers to request the cooperation of the participants. Researcher observe the key informants in a face-to-face interview that leave several questions to be asked, this gain specific responses where other participants cannot supply with. This study can gain benefits from the 5 identified participants as they can give general knowledge in the perspective of the lived experience of non-resident teachers, they were helpful as they can provide information of their experiences to further elaborate their challenges and struggles faced. Within the groups of participants, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to gain an understanding of the participants; to develop a more precise and authentic information, an interview was made as required in this study. The interview guide questions were semi-structured. Thus, the researcher provided a chain of questions that was ready to be discussed. Each question was explained for further understanding. Then the data gathered were presented in a textual form.

Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze the data, the researchers used thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify, analyze, and report patterns on the gathered data. This includes the following process: (1) Familiarizing with the Data, the researcher immersed themselves in the data to obtain a deeper understanding of the context. (2) Coding, the researcher then breaks the data into chunks and categorized into pieces that were given a specific code. (3) Searching for Themes, the researcher then combined the related codes into a theme. (4) Reviewing Themes, the researcher then refined the themes, ensuring that the data were aligned with the theme. (5) Defining and Naming Themes, the researchers then clearly defined each theme and gave it a concise name. (6) Writing up, researchers then synthesized the data and prepared to present the compelling narrative perspective of the participants.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical and Psychological Toll of the Inter-Island Experience

The narratives of the non-resident teachers revealed the significant physical and psychological toll of inter-island teaching assignments in Boracay Island. Through thematic analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) long commuting hours and travel challenges, (2) high cost of living and financial strain, (3) emotional strain and homesickness, and (4) the development of resilience and adaptability.

Long Commuting Hours and Travel Challenges

The narratives of the non-resident teachers revealed one important theme. Connecting to a long commuting hours and challenging travel. The teachers' narratives revealed that their assignment to the island required frequent travel. This emerged as a major factor affecting non-resident teachers. Contributing to both physical fatigue and mental stress. As Teacher Arn described how he was assigned to the island and his journey to the island, I was assigned to Balabag ES through the division-wide hiring. I accepted the opportunity hoping that someday I might transfer. I am happy and content with my co-teachers and the school which is why I continue to stay while also applying for a transfer. Every Monday I travel two hours from Kalibo to Boracay to report to school. During the work, I teach my students check their work and prepare lessons. The most challenging part is the travel and expenses. Every Friday afternoon, I travel back home to Kalibo. Even though it is tiring my students makes it worth it. Teacher Arn's response gives us the idea that the initial decision to accept a non-resident assignment is actually opportunities tied to career, highlighting that the weekly commuting remains a major challenge. Teacher Jela strengthens this by telling that the difficulty of travel is compounded by environmental conditions. Teacher Jela recounted her on to how she started teaching in the island, After five years in private school I applied for a teaching position in public school. Travelling back home to the island where in you have to cross open water specifically during unfavorable weather conditions. In connection with that the fare that was spent during those travel that you need to budget to cater it. Leaving alone by yourself, Doing things like preparing my basic needs

as well as my things that I need in school are the most challenging.

Their logistical challenges are not only time-consuming but also potentially dangerous, particularly during bad weather. Furthermore, the demands of commuting affect classroom preparation and performance. They must allocate additional time for travel in order for them to meet their instructional responsibilities. Teacher Carl emphasized, I began my career as a non-resident teacher on the island seven years ago as a private teacher to permanent teacher in the public. Motivated by the goal of providing high quality instruction to undeserved learners. The key turning point in my journey was the transition from being a visitor (non-resident) to a long-term teacher in the school is success. I have remained focused on primary level remediation, finding deep professional fulfillment in the progress of my learners and the strong relationships with my colleagues and local community.

Despite the physical demands of commuting non-resident teachers still persist in providing quality instruction. Finally, to endure travel challenges teachers combine both intrinsic motivation and dedication in order to stay committed in teaching students. As Teacher Arn reiterated the value of their commitment, “Even though it is tiring my students makes it worth it.” These are consistent with (Flores, 2023; Lopez, Martinez, & Santos, 2025) on teacher resilience. Suggesting that strong professional commitment and passion for student learning decreases the negative effects of commuting and logistical difficulties

High Cost of Living and Financial Strain

Another important theme emerges as teacher shared their experiences. In this case the high cost of living was consistently reported as a significant challenge by non-resident teachers. Just as Teacher Arn highlighted his experiences of paying for boarding and daily needs, straining him, “Living and working on the island is expensive, since I pay for boarding house and daily needs, using almost half of my salary. Despite this it motivate me to work hard and stay committed.” It is evident that non-resident teachers

must carefully allocate their limited income. This will them cover both basic necessities and transportation costs. The financial burden also informs professional decisions despite higher expenses. Teachers reported that working on the island was actually strategically chosen. This help them gain experience and advance their careers. Teacher Jela stated, Private schools in the island pays better compare to the private school in our place that’s why I take the path as an island teacher in private school to gain experience. After five years in private school I applied for a teaching position in public school. This reality shows that economic viability and professional growth that teachers must maintain.

Finally, in other perspective managing financial challenges appears to build resilience and resourcefulness. As, Teacher Carl noted that despite high living costs, his commitment to students and the school remained, “I have remained focused on primary level remediation, finding deep professional fulfilment in the progress of my learners and the strong relationships with my colleagues and local community.” This aligns with literature suggesting that economic pressures can enhance teachers’ organizational skills and perseverance (Coletto and Plaza, 2025). This also strengthens the claims of (Doe and Smith, 2021) stating that despite the struggles and challenges teachers experiences shape their commitment and professional identity. Which leads to the next theme as it emerged on the non-resident on emotional strain and homesickness.

Emotional Strain and Homesickness

This emotional strain and homesickness emerged as a critical theme for non-resident teachers. A harsh reality that they had as they encountered separation from their family. As, Teacher Carl reflected on the challenges of being separated from family, A specific instance of this occur during classroom awarding every quarter, while I enjoy participating and giving awards with my students. I often feel a sharp sense of longing for my daughter. Wishing I can attend as a parent and receive her awards. A real scenario that non-residents experience sacrifices their professional responsibilities. This means how professional responsibilities can coincide with personal sacrifices,

particularly for teachers with children. Teacher Jela also highlighted the stress as she navigate family responsibilities alongside her work obligations, “Yes I have, especially when my son is sick during week days and also when there is bad weather where all the trips are cancelled and have to wait for another week.” These challenges contribute to teachers emotional fatigue highlighting the psychological toll of being assigned in an inter-island teaching. Teacher Ana reflected on the broader emotional challenges stating that, Every day is a challenging day. It takes an effort, perseverance and patience. As long as you are happy with your job, I think this is not a problem. The rest are part of your daily routine and I already get used to it. Their emotional strain becomes normal a over time, however continuous coping is required to maintain well-being. This connect to Fabrigas and Paglinawan (2025) that requires teachers personal coping strategies and community support. This ensures learners outcomes and manage stress effectively when facing challenges. Moreover, the ability to find fulfilment in teaching mitigates homesickness. Teacher Arn shared, “Even though it is tiring my students makes it worth it.” This aligns with Morales and Santiago (2025) and Flores (2023), as they emphasized that emotional resilience among teachers is reinforced when intrinsic satisfaction from student growth outweighs personal stressors. This then connects to the last theme as it emerged on the teachers narratives.

Development of Resilience and Adaptability

The theme, the development of resilience and adaptability emerged as a significant outcome of non-resident teaching. When Teacher Arn explained that, “Living and working away from home has made me independent, more patient and adaptable. As a teacher, it helped me become more understanding and dedicated.” This shows that enduring physical, financial, and emotional challenges develop both the personal and professional growth of the non-resident teachers. Teacher Bern similarly highlighted his perseverance on his teaching journey: Because of my experience (the struggle that I encountered) I have become stronger and more determined in my work. Even though it is tiring to travel every day and stressful because of the high expenses in the island, I still

continue to persevere and do my best to endure everything. Thus, these challenges become opportunities in order to develop a resilience and professional maturity. While, Teacher Ana added that independence and self-confidence were her key gains as she took her journey, I can also give a moment to think while you are travelling going to your station. Where you can relax while enjoying the beauty and the people of this island. A reflective and adaptive practice of non-resident teachers as the go through their physical journey. These narratives collectively show that non-resident experiences strengthen adaptability, perseverance, and professional identity, consistent with research indicating that resilience is developed through navigating sustained challenges (Day & Gu, 2022; Flores, 2023).

Professional Identity and Socio-economic Status of being Non-resident in the Island

The narratives of the non-resident teachers revealed that their experiences of working and living in Boracay Island significantly shaped both their professional identity and socio-economic realities. Through thematic analysis, two major themes emerged: (1) influence on teacher identity and (2) socio-economic considerations in daily decisions.

Influence on Teacher Identity

The first theme which teacher identity development captures how being a non-resident shaped the way teachers perceive themselves professionally. Teacher Arn stated, It has influenced my identity as a teacher by teaching me how to adjust to different environment and community. Living away from home and teaching diverse pupils taught me to become more patient, adaptable, and independent. It helped me build stronger connections with my co-teachers and students. This shows that professional identity is strengthened through exposure to diverse students and working environments. Teacher Bern highlighted the long-term adaptation to the island community, saying, “After 25 years of living in Boracay and now that I also have a job here, I have already become accustomed to interacting and socializing with the people.” This adaptation by teacher Bern reflects how his repeated interactions with students, colleagues, and the local community

build a sense of belonging and professional confidence. On the other hand, Teacher Ana described personal growth which results from her professional independence, “I can tell that, being far from home, or you work from different places is a plus factor to have a self-reliance, being independent and a person who are not afraid to be alone.” All in all, these narratives support the idea that non-resident teaching experiences enhance adaptability, intercultural competence, and self-reliance (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2023). These also align with literature highlighting identity formation as influenced by teaching context as Fabrigas and Paglinawan (2025) that teachers identity develop in response to their environmental demands. Which then connects to the next theme of their narratives, the theme 2.

Socio-Economic Considerations in Daily Decisions

Another major theme on the teachers responses emerged was the impact of their socio-economic status on daily their decisions and routines. As, Teacher Arn narrate his sentiments, “Living and working on the island is expensive, since I pay for boarding house and daily needs, using almost half of my salary. Despite this it motivate me to work hard and stay committed.” This revealed that non-resident teachers carefully budget their salaries to balance work, housing, in order to meet their personal needs. In the same way Teacher Bern also shared his financial struggles, Nowadays, whether you are a resident or non-resident of Boracay Island the process of goods remain the same also the expenses of basic needs and wants was expensive. The only difference is if you have a permanent job or a business owner here in Boracay. Highlights how living on the island necessitates takes careful planning in managing both professional obligations and their personal financial responsibilities. Hence, Teacher Carl also shared his professional routines that is shaped by financial considerations, My financial situation requires careful planning as I must balance local living expenses with travel cost to visit my family and other home-based responsibilities while managing resources can be stressful, it also encourages a disciplined and organized lifestyle that carries over into my professional routines. These routines reflect time management, lesson preparation, and prioritization

which then show how socio-economic realities influence. Together, these narratives indicate that non-resident teachers’ socio-economic status directly affects their professional and personal decisions, consistent with studies showing economic factors as a determinant of teacher well-being and job performance (Day & Gu, 2022; Cruz & Mendoza, 2025).

Utilization of Informal Social Capital in Boracay Island

The narratives of the non-resident teachers revealed that social support systems play a vital role in helping them cope with the demands of teaching and living away from home on Boracay Island. Through thematic analysis, three major themes emerged: (1) support from co-teachers and family, (2) development and maintenance of professional relationships, and (3) motivating factors.

Support from Co-Teachers and Family

The first theme highlights the critical role of support from co-teachers and family in helping non-resident teachers adjust to the island. Teacher Arn described, My co-teachers and my family back home helped me adjust to teaching at the island. My co teachers became like family guiding and supporting me and I am lucky to be married to one of them which makes working here easier and more meaningful my family’s encouragement from home also keeps me motivated. Teacher Arn’s response demonstrates emotional, professional, and logistical support from colleagues and family. This is a key factor in coping with the challenges of being a non-resident teacher. Supporting the claims of Algonos et al. (2024) that colleagues and community support are crucial on teachers well being and professional continuity. While, Teacher Bern also recognized the influence of his mentors and inspiration from his previous teachers, “One of my inspirations who influenced me to become a teacher was my very own elementary school teachers and now they are my co-teachers.” This connection reflects how social networks within the professional community foster continuity, guidance, and encouragement. Thus, Teacher Carl emphasized peer support during practical challenges, “A colleague helped me navigate local transport and housing during

a storm which taught me importance of community support. Their guidance has influenced my teaching by showing more empathetic connections with my students and their families.” Teacher Carl’s ability to rely on peers during emergencies enhances both his emotional stability and professional performance. All in all, these responses confirm the idea of (Putnam, 2023; Flores, 2023) stating that informal social networks provide the scaffolding. And that it sustains non-resident teachers professionally and personally.

Development and Maintenance of Professional Relationships

Another important theme that emerged is the development and maintenance of professional relationships. These means that teachers build and sustain respectful teaching environment as, Teacher Arn explained, Working closely with my co-teachers everyday, sharing and helping each other made us feel like family. My family back home stayed in touch and always encouraged me, which helped me keep going. They help me stay focused, motivated and balanced as a teacher and as a person. The repeated collaboration with peers also nurtures trust, mentorship, and a sense of belonging. These are essential things that non-resident teachers do to continue on their journey. This highlights the interconnectedness of their personal and professional support systems. While, Teacher Carl pointed out that mutual respect and shared goals fostered relationships enables him to stay grounded and motivated, these relationships developed through mutual respect and shared professional goals. Today these connections are primary support systems, helping me stay motivated despite the challenges of distance. Such connections not only improve teachers work performance. But it also help teachers navigate their emotional and logistical challenges. As, Teacher Ana also affirmed the value of seeing colleagues as a family, “I can say that for my years of experience I see these people as a family and not just a co-worker. They are my motivator to do my job properly, confidently and in a competent manner.” According to (Flores, 2023; Putnam, 2023) the evidence suggests that informal social capital further strengthens resilience, job satisfaction, and professional identity among non-resident teachers.

Motivating Factor

The theme of motivating factor emphasizes the role of immediate family in sustaining teacher morale and motivation. Through this motivating factor teachers sustain their stability. As Teacher Jela narrated her personal experience, “Luckily, I have a sister working in the island who gives all my needs from the time I applied here on the island until I got a regular position.” This demonstrates how family support lessen the stress of relocation. And eventually help teachers establish their stability in their new professional environments. Teacher Arn also noted the importance of family encouragement on his professional journey stating that, “My family’s encouragement from home also keeps me motivated.” Such encouragement aids feelings of isolation and strengthens their commitment to their students. As Teacher Bern emphasized the interplay of family, community, and professional networks, “The support of my family colleagues and community reminds me of my purpose and inspires me to continue working hard not only for myself but also for the pupils and the community it serves.” His statement shows that a support from family complements professional relationships. Eventually form a holistic support system. Similarly, Teacher Carl added, “Their guidance had influence my teaching by showing more empathetic connections with my students and their families.” Overall, family support motivates teachers to persist through challenges while reinforcing professional empathy and community engagement (Cruz & Mendoza, 2025; Flores, 2023).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of non-resident public elementary teachers assigned to teach on Boracay Island. It focuses on three key areas, first is the physical and Psychological Toll of Inter-Island Experiences, second is the professional Identity and Socio-Economic Status, and third is the use of Informal Social Capital.

The findings revealed that non-resident public elementary teachers faces physical, financial, and emotional challenges. As time goes by, they develop resilience, professional competence, and integration into the local school community. Participants also

shared their personal journey that commuting, long travel hours, and high living costs contribute to stress. And their financial strain affects their ability to meet family needs. This demonstrates the intersection of economic and emotional challenges. However, despite these difficulties, teachers shared meaningful experiences. One of these are forming strong relationships with co-teachers and students. Also, witnessing academic growth and increased confidence in learners. These results align with prior studies that highlight occupational stress and resilience as critical factors in teacher adaptation. Moreover, non-resident teachers described how living and teaching away from home strengthened their independence, adaptability, and professional identity. While socio-economic challenges influenced daily routines and teaching practices. They highlighted the high cost of living and that there is a need to plan finances carefully. These illustrate the impact of economic realities on professional focus and effectiveness. These findings are aligned with (Day & Gu, 2022; Cruz & Mendoza, 2025), which emphasizes the relationship between economic factors, teacher identity, and instructional performance. Additionally, their narratives revealed that support from family, co-teachers, and peers. These are essential that helps them adjust, be motivated, which lead to professional effectiveness. Supported by (Putnam, 2023; Flores, 2023, these were critical in helping teachers navigate challenges, sustain motivation, and integrate into the school community. Which confirm on the role of social capital in teacher resilience and adaptation.

Hence, teachers' personal growth, resilience, and professional fulfillment are also connected to student progress and engagement. These reflections indicate that non-resident public elementary teachers fosters holistic development. Both personally and professionally which underscores the importance of well-being and professional responsibilities

Implications

Based on the teacher's insightful narratives, the implications show that non-resident elementary teachers face a significant physical, emotional, and financial struggles. Not to mention the commuting, long travel hours, and high living costs. However, they

build resilience and professional fulfillment. Which lead to meaningful relationships with students, co-teachers, and the community. In addition, living and teaching away from home strengthens teachers' professional identity, fostering independence, adaptability, and cultural awareness. They are committed to deliver quality education despite their socio-economic constraints. Also, support from family, co-teachers, and peers helps non-resident elementary teachers as they navigate challenges. These help them maintain emotional well-being, and sustain motivation. These also highlight the critical role of informal social networks in professional effectiveness. These narratives aligns to Creswell and Poth (2024) constructivist-interpretivist epistemology which explains reality is based on how individuals experience and interpret their situations. In this view, non-resident elementary teachers as they construct meaning from their daily experiences. Therefore, knowledge is understood through their personal narratives rather fixed facts.

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