

Navigating Dual Responsibilities: A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Physical Education Teacher-Coaches

Gesryll Sol N. Limangan^{1*}, Maria Ruzzel J. Rogel¹, Lizette Anne G. Forbes¹

¹ College of Education, University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author: limangan.gesryllsol11@gmail.com

Received: 18 October 2025 | Accepted: 17 December 2025 | Published: 31 December 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ijares.2025.7.6.58>

Abstract: *Physical Education (P.E.) teachers occupy a dual professional role as both educators and coaches, shaping students' physical, social, and academic development. Beyond athletic performance, they instill core values such as discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills essential for lifelong success. However, managing these overlapping responsibilities often results in role strain, particularly in the Philippine context where teachers face institutional expectations, limited resources, and heavy workloads. This study explored the lived experiences of P.E. teacher-coaches to understand how they balance these dual roles and how these experiences shape their teaching and coaching practices. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design, the research was conducted at the Sisters of Mary of Banneux Inc. Campus. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with at least one year of teaching and coaching experience. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings within their shared experiences. Findings revealed that teacher-coaches often prioritized coaching responsibilities over classroom instruction, particularly during sports seasons when athletic demands and institutional pressure intensified. This imbalance contributed to fatigue, stress, and reduced instructional focus. Despite these challenges, participants expressed deep fulfillment in witnessing students achieve both academic and athletic success. Their motivation stemmed from observing students' growth in discipline, perseverance, and confidence, suggesting that coaching complemented their broader teaching mission. In Luzon, where competitive sports programs are prominent, teacher-coaches encountered heightened pressure to prepare athletes for regional and national competitions. With limited institutional support, they adopted coping strategies such as time management, goal-setting, and the use of digital tools to sustain student engagement. The study concludes that while P.E. teacher-coaches demonstrate adaptability and dedication, institutional reforms promoting balanced workloads, recognition, and professional development are essential. Strengthening support systems can enable teacher-coaches to better foster holistic student development in academics, athletics, and character formation.*

Keywords: Physical Education; Teacher-Coach Role; Dual Roles; Coaching; Role Conflict

1. Introduction

Physical Education (P.E.) teachers hold an essential position in the overall development of learners. Beyond promoting physical fitness, they help shape students' values by encouraging

discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and leadership. Their influence often reaches outside the classroom as many P.E. teachers simultaneously take on coaching responsibilities in school sports programs. In this dual capacity, they guide student-athletes not only in building athletic skills but also in developing character, perseverance, and respect for others. Although the role of teacher-coaches is widely recognized in many countries, the lived experiences of individuals who balance these two demanding responsibilities remain insufficiently examined. Gaining deeper insight into their daily realities can provide a clearer understanding of effective coaching practices, communication approaches, and motivational strategies that are suitable for school settings.

Internationally, teacher-coaches are seen as key contributors to holistic education. Educational systems in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada emphasize that P.E. teachers who also coach play a major part in nurturing both physical ability and essential life competencies. As sports become more integrated into school curricula, these educators are expected to combine pedagogical theory with the practical demands of athletic training. Their work supports students' growth in several dimensions academic, physical, social, and emotional. Coaches also help cultivate environments where perseverance, leadership, and cooperation can flourish. Emerging research further highlights the advantages of applying principles of positive psychology in coaching, as it can improve athletes' confidence, motivation, and well-being (Cantor et al., 2023).

In the Philippines, the responsibilities of P.E. teachers have broadened in response to educational reforms and the growing promotion of active lifestyles. The Department of Education (DepEd) continues to encourage the integration of physical education as a vital component of student development, aligning local practices with international trends (Pangilinan, 2017). Because schools are increasing their participation in district, regional, and national competitions, P.E. teachers frequently serve as coaches for various sports. This dual role allows them to play a central part in shaping the next generation of Filipino student-athletes.

Despite the significance of their work, P.E. teacher-coaches in the Philippines encounter challenges that affect their teaching and coaching duties. Limited access to equipment, inadequate facilities, heavy workloads, and limited training opportunities are common issues, particularly in less resourced areas. These concerns echo observations in broader educational settings where teachers report mental stress related to workload, performance expectations, and personal demands (Yao & Sagubo, 2023).

Luzon, the country's largest and most populated island, presents a distinct context for understanding the teacher-coach experience. Schools in Metro Manila and surrounding provinces often place high value on athletic achievements, expanding opportunities for participation in competitive sports. With this emphasis comes greater pressure for P.E. teachers to manage after-school practices, attend weekend competitions, and prepare athletes physically and mentally. Balancing these duties with academic instruction can be overwhelming, and teacher-coaches may struggle to divide their time and focus between classroom requirements and sports commitments. Recent studies suggest that adopting digital tools such as resource-sharing platforms, performance tracking applications, and online management systems may help streamline tasks and ease the workload associated with both teaching and coaching (Wang et al., 2022).

Other research also underscores the importance of institutional support in helping teachers navigate complex roles. Song and Agnawa (2023) found that educators in blended learning environments often face similar challenges related to workload, adaptability, and insufficient support systems. Their findings highlight the value of continuous professional development, strengthened digital literacy, and supportive school administrations all of which are equally relevant to P.E. teacher-coaches in the Philippines.

Coaching practices are shaped by multiple factors, including a teacher's philosophy, experiences, and awareness of learners' needs. Educators who prioritize character development may design training approaches that emphasize resilience, collaboration, and leadership. Others who focus on performance may direct their efforts toward refining technical proficiency and competitive readiness. Because Filipino students differ in skill level, motivation, and socio-emotional needs, teacher-coaches must be flexible and adjust their methods accordingly.

Motivation also remains a crucial element in sports coaching. Effective teacher-coaches sustain athletes' interest through goal-setting, positive reinforcement, and the creation of a supportive learning atmosphere. In the Philippines, where competition is often intense, these strategies are essential for helping student-athletes stay engaged and develop confidence while pursuing both athletic excellence and personal growth.

While the dual role offers meaningful rewards, it also introduces considerable strain. P.E. teacher-coaches often struggle with time management and emotional exhaustion, particularly during sports seasons when competition schedules become demanding (Richards, 2013). Balancing the expectations of the classroom and the sports field can lead to role conflict and burnout.

Nonetheless, many teacher-coaches describe the experience as deeply fulfilling. They witness students' transformation over time not only in terms of athletic competence, but also in developing resilience, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. Through strong teacher-athlete relationships, P.E. teachers contribute to positive student development that extends far beyond school grounds.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach to gain a deeper understanding of the shared experiences of Physical Education (P.E.) teachers who also function as sports coaches at the Sisters of Mary of Banneux Inc. Campus. This method is appropriate for uncovering how individuals interpret and make meaning of their lived experiences, especially when navigating two interconnected professional roles. Through phenomenology, the study aims to capture the essence of how teacher-coaches balance classroom teaching with coaching duties and how these responsibilities shape their instructional practices, communication styles, and overall coaching philosophy. By exploring their personal accounts, the research seeks to reveal patterns and insights that cannot be fully captured through quantitative measures.

3. Research Design

A purely qualitative research design will guide the conduct of the study. This design allows for a detailed and context-based examination of the participants' perspectives and work environments. Since the focus is on understanding real-life experiences directly from the individuals involved, qualitative research provides the flexibility needed to explore subtle and

complex aspects of their dual roles. The phenomenological design, in particular, emphasizes the subjective interpretation of experiences, enabling the researcher to identify recurring themes, meanings, and emotions expressed by P.E. teachers who simultaneously serve as coaches. This approach ensures that the findings authentically represent the participants' viewpoints and personal narratives.

Participants

The participants will be composed of P.E. teachers from the Sisters of Mary of Banneux Inc. Campus who also handle coaching responsibilities for school sports programs. Selection will be guided by the following inclusion criteria:

- a) **Professional Role** – Participants must currently teach Physical Education and actively serve as a coach for at least one sports team within the school.
- b) **Experience Requirement** – A minimum of one year in both teaching and coaching roles is required so that participants have sufficient insights and experiences to share.
- c) **Willingness to Participate** – Participation is strictly voluntary. Teachers will be informed of their rights, including the freedom to decline or withdraw at any point in the study.

A purposive sampling technique will be used to identify individuals who directly meet the criteria and can provide meaningful information relevant to the research objectives. This sampling method aligns with phenomenological research, as it prioritizes participants who have firsthand experience with the phenomenon being investigated. By selecting those who actively juggle both teaching and coaching roles, the study aims to gather rich, detailed accounts that can illuminate how these educators navigate challenges, manage responsibilities, and find balance within their institutional and cultural context.

Data Collection

This study will primarily employ in-depth semi-structured interviews as the key method for gathering data. This approach allows participants to share their experiences openly while still ensuring that the discussion remains aligned with the study's objectives. A semi-structured format also enables the researcher to probe deeper into important points that may arise during the conversation. An interview guide will be prepared to explore three main areas:

a) Shared Experiences

- How participants manage their dual workload as P.E. teachers and coaches
- The challenges they commonly encounter
- Their perspectives on shaping students' athletic, personal, and academic development

b) Coaching Methods and Strategies

- Techniques they apply when training student-athletes
- Adjustments made depending on the sport, age group, or skill level
- Approaches they use to address differences in students' abilities or motivation

c) Communication and Motivation

- How they communicate expectations, instructions, and feedback
- Ways they motivate and encourage their athletes
- Relationship-building strategies to develop trust and cooperation

Sample Interview Questions

Questions will be open-ended to encourage detailed reflection. Examples include:

- "Walk me through your typical day handling both teaching and coaching duties."
- "What techniques do you use to motivate athletes, and how do these differ from what you use in the classroom?"

- “How do you communicate expectations to athletes, and what impact does this have on their performance?”
- “What challenges do you experience in balancing these roles, and how do you manage them?”
- “Can you describe a moment when your teaching approach influenced your coaching, or the other way around?”

Interviews may be held face-to-face or via online platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet), depending on the participant’s preference. All interviews will be audio-recorded with permission and transcribed word-for-word for analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected interview data will be examined using thematic analysis, a flexible qualitative method that allows the researcher to identify and interpret recurring ideas and patterns across participants’ narratives.

The analysis will follow these steps:

- a) **Familiarization** – The researcher will read and review the transcripts multiple times to immerse in the data and gain a strong initial understanding.
- b) **Initial Coding** – Relevant or meaningful statements will be highlighted and assigned concise codes to capture their significance.
- c) **Theme Generation** – Codes will be grouped according to similarities or shared meanings, forming preliminary themes related to the research questions.
- d) **Theme Review** – The themes will be checked against the transcripts to ensure they accurately reflect the data and are consistent across participants.
- e) **Defining and Naming Themes** – Each theme will be refined, clearly described, and given a name that reflects its core idea.
- f) **Reporting** – The final analysis will combine the themes with supporting participant quotations to illustrate the findings and provide evidence for the interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

The study will strictly follow ethical standards to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants will receive an explanation of the study’s purpose, procedures, and their role. They will sign a consent form before participating.
- **Confidentiality:** All identifying information will be removed from transcripts. Pseudonyms will be used in all reports and publications.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Participants may discontinue their involvement at any stage without penalty.
- **Data Protection:** Audio files, transcripts, and other data will be stored securely and will only be accessed by the researcher.

Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations:

- a) **Sample Size** – The number of participants will be limited, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Nonetheless, qualitative research emphasizes depth and richness over numerical representation.
- b) **Context-Bound** – The research is focused solely on P.E. teacher-coaches from the Sisters of Mary of Banneux Inc. Campus. While this setting provides valuable insights, the findings may not fully reflect experiences of teacher-coaches in different schools or regions.

4. Results and Discussion

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of Physical Education (P.E.) teachers at the Sisters of Mary of Banneux, Inc. Campus who simultaneously perform coaching duties. The findings reveal a complex interaction between their dual roles, highlighting both enabling and constraining experiences as they navigate teaching responsibilities, athletic commitments, and professional expectations. Overall, participants described meaningful professional growth, yet acknowledged persistent challenges that influence their instructional practices, coaching methods, and communication strategies.

Section 1. Shared Experiences

Participants consistently acknowledged that occupying the dual role of teacher and coach shaped their professional identity in meaningful ways. As supported by Ali et al. (2020) and Kim (2014), leadership rooted in coaching principles can enhance performance, foster motivation, and encourage positive workplace attitudes. In this study, teacher-coaches reported increased confidence, improved classroom management, and enhanced clarity in their communication as benefits of their coaching role. They also described developing greater creativity when designing both lessons and training sessions, as well as a heightened sense of composure when handling pressure. Despite these positive developments, participants also described moments where teaching and coaching demands directly competed. For example, some teachers shortened lectures during game seasons or relied on pre-recorded materials to compensate for limited preparation time. Others shifted from traditional lectures to collaborative problem-solving tasks to accommodate tournament schedules, extended practices, or travel for competitions, often resulting in fatigue or reduced instructional planning.

These findings align with Liu and Austria (2024), who emphasized that the effective integration of digital tools in sports teaching depends greatly on the teacher's preparedness and willingness to engage with instructional technologies. The use of digital lesson delivery, resource-sharing platforms, and recorded content allowed participants to manage competing demands, though some acknowledged that these adjustments occasionally led to underdeveloped lessons. Overall, the data suggest that during periods of constrained time and energy, teacher-coaches tend to prioritize coaching responsibilities over teaching, consistent with the patterns noted by Saffici (2015). As a result, instructional adjustments such as shifting assessments, rescheduling labs, shortening contact hours, or designating substitute activities were common strategies used to accommodate athletic obligations.

Coaching responsibilities also shaped training routines. Participants described delegating warm-ups to senior athletes to save time for teaching preparations, designing shorter yet high-intensity practices, emphasizing fundamental skill development, or adopting low-contact sessions such as walk-throughs and micro-blocks. These practices allowed them to remain effective coaches while managing teaching duties within limited schedules.

Section 2. Teacher Role Stressors (TRSS)

The dual responsibilities of teaching and coaching introduced several stressors consistent with the findings of Richards (2013), who noted that teachers with extracurricular duties are more susceptible to burnout. Participants in this study reported frequent role conflicts arising from competing expectations among students, school administrators, athletic departments, and parents. For instance, teachers often granted extended deadlines to student-athletes who returned from away games, despite institutional expectations to maintain academic rigor. Likewise, school requirements for professional development sessions were occasionally incompatible with athletic schedules. Several respondents also described the pressure to maintain visibility in school events, even when these overlapped with training or competitions.

Parents were frequently cited as sources of stress due to requests for increased playing time, heightened involvement, or concerns about their children's performance. To manage these pressures, some teacher-coaches protected designated "no-meeting blocks" to prepare lessons or conduct uninterrupted classes. Unclear institutional priorities further contributed to stress. One participant reported submitting a written request for a clear list of school priorities and non-negotiable commitments for both academic and athletic programs. Others mentioned uncertainties regarding injury protocols, communication channels, and practice schedules during weather disruptions, prompting them to create flowcharts, contingency plans, and "Plan B" procedures. Concerns about overlapping roles such as inconsistencies in disciplinary rules between athletic and academic departments emerged as a recurring issue, as did challenges in ensuring adequate locker-room supervision.

Section 3. Personal Accomplishment Subscale

Despite the challenges, teacher-coaches expressed strong feelings of personal fulfillment, which were rooted primarily in student growth and achievement. Their accomplishments were described not in terms of personal recognition but through observable student outcomes, such as improved GPA scores, increased volunteerism, scholarship opportunities, successful college interviews, and growing respect for female leaders in sports.

Several respondents emphasized the importance of cultural change, particularly in encouraging leadership among young women. Arcenas et al. (2025) highlight that time management for P.E. teachers with coaching roles goes beyond standard lesson preparation, requiring a broader system of task organization. Consistent with this, participants reported using shared calendars, color-coded scheduling blocks, and thematic alignment between teaching and coaching tasks to maintain balance. Some monitored their emotional well-being through a personal "energy scale," rating their contentment from 1 to 5 to track fluctuations across the school year. They also noted that witnessing student persistence in class and sport contributed significantly to their own sense of accomplishment. Character development, both for students and for themselves, was frequently mentioned as a marker of success. Participants described becoming more patient, disciplined, and persistent traits they believed were cultivated through the demands of their dual roles.

Section 4. Coaching Strategies and Communication

Participants reported integrating several instructional strategies from their teaching experience into their coaching practices. Consistent with Holmes (2024), who asserts that coaching principles can enhance classroom instruction, respondents described using feedback ladders, structured questioning strategies, and exit-ticket style reflections during practice sessions. Scaffolding techniques progressing from demonstrations to guided repetitions and independent execution were widely used. Some also incorporated academic habits, such as precision and pattern recognition, into sports training.

Innovative instructional models also influenced their coaching. Studies by Wang et al. (2022) and Yang and Austria (2024) highlight the benefits of flipped classroom strategies in sports-related subjects. These findings correspond with participants' accounts of using pre-practice videos, asynchronous learning materials, and preparatory tasks to maximize active time during training sessions. Communication emerged as a critical element of effective coaching. Drawing on Simon Sinek's principle that "great leaders communicate and great communicators lead," participants described a variety of communication systems used to motivate athletes. These included:

- a) Clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused on effort, execution, and enthusiasm.
- b) Group messaging channels and bulletin boards for timely updates and goals.
- c) Data dashboards tracking practice metrics, attendance, and wellness.

d) Direct, evidence-based feedback offered in a supportive yet structured manner.

These methods demonstrate that teacher-coaches rely not only on verbal communication but also on visual, data-driven, and collaborative approaches to support athlete development. The evolution of these communication styles appears closely tied to their experiences within the classroom, reinforcing the reciprocal influence of teaching and coaching.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the multifaceted experiences of P.E. teachers who simultaneously serve as coaches, revealing both the enriching and challenging dimensions of their dual roles. Participants shared experiences that varied across their perceptions of professional responsibilities, sense of accomplishment, and communication strategies with students and athletes. When viewed collectively, the findings show that teaching and coaching inform each other in meaningful ways skills, strategies, and insights gained in one role often strengthen the other. However, the results also underscore persistent challenges. Participants repeatedly faced difficulties balancing overlapping commitments, managing time, and determining which responsibilities to prioritize during peak academic or athletic periods. These role conflicts often led teachers to compromise certain duties, revealing gaps in institutional support and limited opportunities for professional development tailored to dual-role educators. The findings therefore affirm the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique needs of teacher-coaches. Their flexibility, dedication, and commitment benefit both academic and athletic programs, yet their effectiveness is strongly influenced by the structures and support systems provided by their institutions. By acknowledging these shared experiences, schools may be better positioned to develop policies, workloads, and support mechanisms that sustain the well-being and professional growth of teacher-coaches ultimately benefiting both students and athletes.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to the administration and faculty of the Sisters of Mary of Banneux, Inc. for their invaluable support and cooperation throughout the conduct of this study. Sincere appreciation is also extended to the Physical Education teachers who participated as respondents, for generously sharing their time, insights, and experiences that made this research possible. The authors likewise extend their heartfelt thanks to the University of the Cordilleras for the academic guidance, encouragement, and institutional support that contributed significantly to the completion of this work. Finally, the authors acknowledge their mentors, peers, and families for their unwavering support and understanding throughout the research process.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. The research was conducted independently and did not receive financial support or sponsorship from any commercial or external organization.

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