

# Leading and Teaching in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme: A Phenomenological Study

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**Abstract:** *The existence of teacher administrators, particularly in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), has been prevalent in the current educational landscape. Their overlapping roles as teachers and school administrators must be put into perspective considering the complexity of the program that they implement. The current study explored the lived experiences of teacher administrators in the IBDP employing a qualitative approach, specifically a phenomenological research design. Eight teacher administrators served as the key informants in this study who were purposively chosen and satisfied three inclusion criteria. Through semi-structured interviews, data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed utilizing Colaizzi's steps. Five emergent themes were generated, namely: (1) Shared Responsibility; (2) Growth Mindset; (3) Time Limitations; (4) Work Resilience; and (5) Neutral Perspective. Findings unveiled the benefits and constraints of being a teacher administrator as well as coping mechanisms and the essence of their presence in the implementation of the IBDP. Results could potentially guide emerging teacher administrators and enlighten schools to provide support systems for these professionals.*

**Keywords:** teacher administrators, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, qualitative approach, phenomenological research design, Colaizzi's steps

## 1. Introduction

Schools have been plagued by overwhelming expectations from society with regard to leadership practices implemented by school administrators as well as instructional activities that teachers afford to their students. Both of these roles are equally important and are interdependent to each other in attaining the needs and interests of all stakeholders in the academic community. With this premise, there are teachers who take the role of a school administrator simultaneously; thus, having administrative duties.

One of the prominent curricula recognized by different universities in the international arena is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) which is deemed to be challenging by most educators and school administrators. Since 1968, this program has been offered to senior high school students by recognized IB world schools across the globe according to the International Baccalaureate Organization's (2023) website. Lee et al.'s (2022) comparative study among Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, and the United States of America in terms of implementing this curriculum disclosed the heavy workload that both teachers and school administrators experience in IB programmes such as the IBDP.

Leading and teaching in the IBDP entail a great deal of time and effort for teacher administrators. Relative to instructional responsibilities, Taylor (2018) divulged IBDP teachers' experiences pertaining to the amount of workload that they have in providing quality education to their students. Teachers in the IBDP are equally pressured about their students' external examinations which serve as their terminal assessment at the end of the program (Lai et al.,

2014). With regard to school administrators, Sieve (2018) articulated the expectations that these educational professionals must do in order to properly monitor their teachers in the implementation of a meaningful teaching and learning encounter in the IBDP. Hence, this gap poses a problem for IBDP schools should they decide to provide an administrative role or responsibility to their regular teachers.

According to *Law Insider*, teacher administrators are those who perform their jobs as teachers (i.e., to teach) and as school administrators (i.e., to lead). This study operationally defines teacher administrators as professional teachers who also take the role of a school administrator. As teachers, they prepare lessons and deliver them to their students. As school administrators, their roles are diverse including but not limited to overseeing teachers' performance, conducting classroom observations, facilitating meetings with teachers in their respective subject groups, or organizing school events and professional development programs. Feng and Chen (2019) explained how regular school administrators look into teachers' and students' performance through supervision. However, in the case of teacher administrators, they do not only focus on attaining their deliverables based on the institution's goals and objectives as school administrators but also on preparing varied activities for their respective classes as teachers. Hence, there is a need to shed light on teacher administrators' perspectives in terms of their overlapping roles in a school community.

In Taiwan, teacher administrators do exist in schools implementing the IBDP where teachers do have formal positions in the school administration. Oracion (2017) mentioned that teacher administrators who have formal obligations are expected to uphold their roles and responsibilities by producing significant outcomes, thereby leading them to be burdened. Although Oracion also articulated that teacher leadership can make do even without

official titles but having such would not be as strenuous as what formal teacher administrators do.

The study by Kim (2019) pertaining to teacher administrators, unearthed the detrimental effects of their administrative workloads, thereby sacrificing their time in the formulation of teaching activities. In the IBDP particularly, teachers find this curriculum rigorous which would take much of their time in preparing their lessons as manifested by many studies in their findings (Cook, 2017; Lee et al., 2022; Taylor, 2018;). In the context of teacher administrators who are holding administrative positions in the IBDP, this study would help better understand their situations considering that there is a scarcity of related studies about this predicament. With this, it is fitting to understand teacher administrators' perspectives about their administrative workload and teaching load to meet the demands of the academe, the society, and its community, especially in the IBDP.

Given these factors, this prompted the conduct and put forward the aim of this study to make meaning of the lived experiences of senior high school teachers having administrative roles in the IBDP in Taiwan. It seeks to find out teacher administrators' perspectives on balancing administrative roles vis-à-vis instructional time. The results of this study could magnify the lens of IBDP schools in scaffolding teacher administrators.

### Domain of Inquiry

This study explored the lived experiences of teacher administrators who performed the roles of teacher and school administrator while implementing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in Taiwan. Specifically, this study sought to describe the benefits and constraints that teacher administrators experienced, explain their way of coping with the challenges that they experienced, and the importance of their role in the implementation of the IBDP in Taiwan.

## 2. Literature Review

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) described teachers as one of the most indispensable and critical factors for educational equity, access, and quality, as well as vital to long-term global development. Considering that they primarily serve as driving forces in educational institutions, their education, recruitment undertaking, retention, status, and working conditions are of prime concern.

Yusuf et al. (2016) emphasized that the competence of educational professionals is critical to the development of educational institutions. This implies that professionals who work in the academe, such as teachers or administrators, should give importance to developing their competence in contributing to the aims and goals of the educational institution. Given these spheres of interest, educational institutions should adhere to the needs of their teacher administrators in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education by 2030. It is inevitable that there are teachers in many schools where their status is complicated and do not align with the social norms. Specifically, teachers

whose duties and responsibilities are belonging to administration and teaching instruction. Thus, these teachers must be given a considerable amount of attention as they serve as avenues for attaining sustainable global development.

Teacher administrators are also educators who have other responsibilities on top of their teaching roles. Kim (2019) stressed that teachers who are given administrative workloads hamper their time for classroom preparation. This implies that the burden of juggling two responsibilities i.e., leading and teaching, could lead to weariness due to time constraints as postulated by the study of Perrone et al. (2019).

The existence of teacher administrators is common among schools all over the world. One of the reasons for this type of working condition is that some educational institutions are more prone to hire beginners to avoid overcrowding and to fill openings quickly due to a lack of time to recruit (Matias et al., 2018). With this, the unmatched skills of an educational professional to his or her job description are more likely to happen. For instance, senior high school teachers who are expected to mainly teach classes are offered an administrative role to fulfill the lacking position. Therefore, honing their competence is no longer their priority because their attention is focused on fulfilling their current role or position. This kind of challenge among teacher administrators, mainly senior high school teachers, is one of the primary concerns of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as reflected in the *Education 2030 Framework of Action* and in the *Incheon Declaration*.

In Nigeria, a study conducted by Ayeni (2020) revealed that one of the crucial limitations of teaching preparation is the amount of administrative workload that seemed to be unreasonable among teacher administrators. Notwithstanding that they have to significantly carry out their deliverables as school administrators, they also need to fulfill their roles as primary movers of quality education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Albright, 2015). Hence, consistent and constant evaluation or supervision of their performance as school administrators and teachers must be done as recommended by Ayeni (2020) in the findings of their study.

In Korea, teachers expressed how their administrative workloads restrict them from taking the time to perform their regular responsibilities as teachers such as planning their lessons, designing learning activities, and preparing assessment materials (Kim, 2019). Not only that, the additional responsibilities of their administrative duties hindered them from effectively teaching their lessons which adversely affected students' performance. This is due to the fact that they have time constraints in designing classroom instruction and even providing constructive feedback to their students' outputs. This type of situation was proven and concurred by a study conducted in one of the schools in China by Sun and Zhou (2022) entitled, "The effect of teacher's concurrent administrative position on students' academic outcomes: Evidence and mechanisms". One of the emphases of this study was that teachers who have been juggling administrative duties and teaching responsibilities

generally produce lower academic performances among their students. Concerning this plausible scenario, schools having teachers with administrative functions must look into providing a roadmap or scaffolding mechanism for them. If this is the case, this poses an academic threat to students' achievement most especially in the context of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

Cook (2017) posited that IBDP teachers should be able to deliver quality instruction to their students for them to ace their external assessments which is a prerequisite for students to be awarded with an IB diploma. This is their ticket to universities abroad after their immersion in the entire program of the IBDP (Lee et al., 2012). Based on this premise, it is essential to note that teachers in the IBDP have huge responsibilities in helping their students achieve their academic pursuits. This implies that in the case of teacher administrators, it is more challenging for them given their pressing situation as school administrators and teachers. Therefore, Kim (2019) reiterated the necessity to lessen the amount of administrative workload for teacher administrators in order for them not to compromise the quality of instruction that their students deserve. This suggestion is a good manifestation in solving the findings of Lee et al. (2022) regarding teachers' excessive workload, especially in the IBDP.

Situations, where teachers carry out administrative positions, have been recurrent in many schools across the globe. A number of reasons are behind this type of arrangement like recruitment urgencies, lack of appropriate working professionals, promotional reasons, and administrative discretions among others. Although the main point will support the school's administrative body, the entire situation may not necessarily help the main stakeholders of the school – the students. Therefore, it can be inferred that one particular decision such as giving administrative roles to teachers, may help the general structure of an educational institution, but may also deter the primary goal which is to provide quality education among students.

### 3. Methodology

#### Research Design

This paper followed a qualitative research method, prominently used in research studies, particularly a descriptive phenomenological design which is a philosophy and a method of inquiry that is used to understand the lived realities of human beings with sensible understanding. It is not confined to an approach to knowledge, but rather to an intellectual involvement in interpretations and meaning formation (Qutoshi, 2018). It aimed to encapsulate the common phenomenon that the key informants experienced first-hand as teacher administrators implementing the IBDP in Taiwan.

#### Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is indispensable in elucidating the lived experiences of the key informants of this study. It is the researcher's responsibility to explain the details of the study as well as acquire consent from the key informants. The collection of important data was done voluntarily and no form of coercion was exercised throughout the conduct

of the interview. Responses of the key informants were treated with utmost anonymity and confidentiality, in order to preserve the sanctity of the data, gathered.

#### Key Informants

Eight (8) key informants were purposively chosen and involved based on the nature of this study. This number is in consonance with Subedi's (2021) suggestion of having single to twenty participants pertaining to sample sizes in qualitative research, specifically in a phenomenological design. Three criteria were satisfied by these key informants, to wit: (1) teaching any subject in the IBDP for at least one school year; (2) holding any administrative role in the IBDP for at least one school year; and (3) teaching and leading in the IBDP simultaneously for at least one school year.

Key informants were also afforded consent forms prior to participating in this study. Moreover, they were given a sufficient amount of time to fully understand the purpose, procedures, and duration of this study as well as their rights and access to the results of the study. Finally, the researcher provided opportunities for them to ask questions and made clear about the confidentiality of the study.

#### Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection utilized a semi-structured interview guide to elicit rich descriptive data from the key informants based on their experiences as teacher administrators implementing the IBDP in Taiwan. Each informant's interview session lasted around 30minutes. Interviews were conducted according to the informant's preferred date, time, and venue. Questions during the interview were validated by experts focusing on unveiling teacher administrators' lived experiences in carrying out the IBDP in Taiwan.

Interviews were held face-to-face. The entirety of the interview session for each key informant was audio recorded with the consent of each interviewee. Additionally, interview notes were taken down by the researcher per key informant. Minutes of the session recorded significant responses from the key informants relevant to their experiences as teacher administrators.

#### Data Analysis

This study made use of Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method in analyzing the responses collected by the researcher from the key informants. Firstly, familiarization of the data was done where transcriptions were repeatedly read to have an overall outlook of the statements. Secondly, pertinent statements were identified based on the responses. Thirdly, notable remarks were determined in order to formulate meanings. Fourthly, theme clusters emerged from the constructed meanings leading to the generation of themes common to all informants' transcripts. Fifthly, results were clustered together in a comprehensive explication of the phenomenon. Sixthly, descriptions and themes were combined in a succinct and dense statement that highlighted the crucial features of the phenomenon. Seventhly, the researcher went back to the key informants and sought their affirmation concerning the results of the analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

The responses to the interview were done anonymously. Respondents did not say nor recorded any identifying information. Hence, they were given codenames in order to protect their identities. All audio recordings were permanently deleted after being transcribed. For the purposes of this research study, the responses were done voluntarily and were held with utmost confidentiality. Finally, the key informants or their representatives were informed once the data and results were made available.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Teacher administrators (TA) implementing the IBDP in Taiwan shared their own experiences pertaining to their roles and responsibilities as teachers and school administrators. They comprehensively discussed the benefits and constraints that they experienced as teacher administrators. Moreover, they also expressed their coping mechanisms and the essence of their roles.

**Table 1: Key Informants' Profile**

Codenames	Number of Year/s as Teacher Administrators	Subject/s Taught	Administrative Role/s
TA 1	3	Theory of Knowledge	Section Chief of the Academic Affairs/ Extended Essay (EE) Coordinator
TA 2	1	Chinese A: Language and Literature	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)
TA 3	2	English B: Language Acquisition Theory of Knowledge	Theory of Knowledge (TOK) Coordinator
TA 4	1	Psychology	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)
TA 5	1	Chinese A: Language and Literature Chinese B: Language Acquisition	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)
TA 6	1	Biology	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)
TA 7	1	Sports, Exercise and Health Science (SEHS)	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)
TA 8	1	English B: Language Acquisition	Pedagogical Leader (Subject Group Coordinator)

Table 1 above displayed the eight (8) key informants' profiles as teacher administrators (TA) implementing the IBDP in Taiwan. Teacher administrators' number of years ranged from 1-3 handling an administrative or leadership role while simultaneously teaching IBDP subject/s.

Interviews conducted captured the lived experiences of teacher administrators implementing the IBDP in Taiwan

and generated five (5) themes, to wit: (1) Shared Responsibility; (2) Growth Mindset; (3) Time Limitations; (4) Work Resilience; and (5) Neutral Perspective. These themes encapsulate and represent the viewpoints of teacher administrators in the IBDP in Taiwan. A summary of the clustered themes and generated themes are presented in Table 2 and more information from the emergent themes is elucidated in the next parts.

**Table 2: Thematic analysis of the lived experiences of teacher administrators implementing the IBDP in Taiwan**

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Collaboration among colleagues Delegation of tasks Teachers' willingness to help each other Established communication among teachers and school administrators	Shared Responsibility
Consideration of other people's perspectives Critical analysis of problems Openness to learn something new Diversity of skills learned	Growth Mindset
Insufficient time for class preparation Overlapping roles and responsibilities Heavy workload Pressure to meet deadlines and attend meetings	Time Limitations
Encouragement from other school leaders Prioritization of tasks Availability of collegial support Streamlined processes and activities Constant communication with peers	Work Resilience
Disparities in their roles Wider understanding of realities Bridge or communicator to teachers and school administrators	Neutral Perspective

#### Theme 1: Shared Responsibility

Teacher administrators in the IBDP acknowledged the importance of shared responsibility in order to carry out their duties and responsibilities meaningfully. Collaboration among colleagues, delegation of tasks, teachers' willingness to help each other, and established communication among

teachers and school administrators were evident in their journey as teacher administrators.

Lee et al. (2022) described programs in the International Baccalaureate (IB) such as the IBDP as rigorous and challenging. Due to its complexity, Wei (2021) recommended that teachers and school administrators in the



IB must work closely together in order to achieve their goals and produce significant results. This notion was concurred by the study of Taylor (2018) where all of the study participants stressed that collaboration and learning from others were essential to their comprehension and application of the IBDP. Apparently, the value of collaboration was also true to this study's key informants in the fulfillment of their roles as teacher administrators in the IBDP as they articulated, to wit:

*"As teacher administrators, we should cooperate with others and notice the problems between my members in my subject group." (TA2)*

*"I think there should be a connection between me and other school leaders. We have to be in a harmony. We have to work together for the same goal. There should be collaboration." (TA3)*

*"In facilitating the meetings, we cooperate with each other and share about teaching stuff like students' progress." (TA7)*

Additionally, it appeared that this study's teacher administrators entrusted and inculcated responsibilities toward their colleagues by delegating tasks during their professional engagements. It is important to emphasize that teachers who are afforded obligations positively react by putting out their best effort because they feel accountable for the tasks given to them (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Moreover, it should be noted that when teachers and school administrators sense a shared set of values, obligations, routines, and participation in decision-making, the school atmosphere becomes pleasant (Lee et al., 2022). Hence, shared responsibility is manifested by teacher administrators in the IBDP by dividing their tasks and working together efficiently and effectively.

*"I can get the information directly from the school head and it will not lose because I will share it with my members in our subject group. I assign some parts of the meeting with other members of the group. I do not work alone." (TA5)*

*"At the end of our session, we will have the meeting minutes and will share the duty. There is an agreement among teachers that it is not only the pedagogical leader who will do it." (TA7)*

Undeniably, teacher administrators in the IBDP witnessed their peers' willingness in order to help them fulfill their roles and responsibilities as a teacher and as school administrators or leaders. Schleicher (2012) indicated that there are many forms of help offered to teachers and leaders in the teaching profession across the globe. In other words, they are not alone in their journey as teacher administrators. In the IBDP, they shared that:

*"There are some problems and of course I cannot solve them but I can collect some opinions from my co-teachers." (TA2)*

*"I think a lot of people helped me along the way. I have to ask for help and I think a lot of people are just willing to give us a hand when necessary. Don't think that your job is just your own responsibility." (TA1)*

Most importantly, teacher administrators in the IBDP unveiled that the establishment of communication among teachers and school administrators significantly contributed to the essence of shared responsibility as an emergent theme. In the field of school leadership, Eze et al. (2023) regarded open communication as a vital tool for school administrators to increase teachers' work satisfaction as well as to promote peace and discipline in their respective school communities. Establishing constant communication could lead to a harmonious relationship among different stakeholders. One of the key informants in this study mentioned that:

*"Cooperating or communicating with colleagues is so much different from working with students." (TA4)*

*"I just do communication. Sometimes, I feel so stressful and I will be honest with my colleagues." (TA7)*

Indeed, fulfilling their roles as teacher administrators is not an easy process. Having the shared responsibility as an emergent theme scaffolded teacher administrators in their quest towards teaching and leading in the IBDP. Collaborating, developing, and growing professionally is the foundation of teacher leadership, a leadership approach that aims to improve learning (Kasapoglu & Karaca, 2021). After all, a professional learning community, where academic stakeholders work together is a vital instrument towards the attainment of any program's goals and objectives.

## Theme 2: Growth Mindset

In this study, teacher administrators put forward their realizations and takeaways pertaining to how they have grown their ways of thinking as professionals, namely: consideration of other people's perspectives, critical analysis of problems, openness to learn something new, and diversity of skills learned.

Considering that they are comforted by the thought of having a community of professionals whom they can lean on, they also recognized how they have grown their mindset as teacher administrators in the IBDP. Lin et al. (2022) postulated that having a growth mindset provides a more open outlook on things, thus encouraging educational professionals i.e., teachers and school administrators to perform their roles better. In the IBDP, practices regarding classroom observations among peers have been prevalent which led to the openness among colleagues in sharing their best practices (Porta & Todd, 2022). Firstly, key informants of this study unearthed that as teacher administrators, they become more open to different opinions and perspectives during professional encounters, to wit:

*"I realized that I should consider my members' perspectives and not just say what I want." (TA2)*

*"We share our experiences during meetings and it is good to understand the situation and how they are doing in their teaching. For example, my student might be doing fine in my class and in the other teacher's class, the student might not be performing well and we discuss how to deal with this kind of situation. We may have different views but it helps." (TA7)*

*"Personally, I like the growth that I'm experiencing. The cultural knowledge, open-mindedness, maturity, emotional growth, things like that." (TA3)*

*"I tend to think of problems from different perspectives, and I think this is something great." (TA1)*

Realizations relative to how teacher administrators in the IBDP critically analyze problems that they encounter were also found to be significant factors. Critical thinking is necessary for problem-solving, decision-making, and analyzing one's actions among other tasks as it is the capacity to effectively organize one's thoughts (Purba et al., 2022). This way of thinking was in consonance with Taylor's (2018) study where IBDP teachers regarded the curriculum as an avenue to exercising a critical mindset. With this, teacher administrators in this study affirmed this element as part of their growth mindset.

*"It makes me more neutral. I can analyze the problem with everyone and not just be driven by my emotions." (TA2)*

*"Professionally, since I teach TOK, critical thinking, it's a skill that is the focus of the course. I think I'm more aware of the importance of thinking and how to make thinking feasible. In the administrative part, when we try to think of solutions to some problems, there might be different ways of doing that." (TA1)*

Having a growth mindset is attributed to one's capability to achieve a goal (Lin et al., 2022). When an individual seeks to grow professionally, the opportunity and willingness to learn something new is relatively important. Similarly, teacher administrators in the IBDP found meaning in their roles because of their openness to juggle both roles as teachers and school administrators. Cook (2017) reiterated that teaching alone in the IB is challenging especially since the dynamics of the curriculum are quite complicated and must be modified accordingly more so with leading and managing teachers in the program. Hence, being open to learning something is what makes their experience worthwhile.

*"Okay, but I don't really see myself as a very professional leader, but I try my best to learn. Through our meetings, I can understand what is going on with other subjects and understand teachers' needs and their situations with their students." (TA8)*

*"As a leader, I need to assign tasks to others and it is not my personality. I try to learn." (TA6)*

Clearly, the opportunity as a teacher administrator paved the way for the key informants to learn various skills while

exercising two roles or responsibilities. Kasapoglu and Karaca (2021) recommended that teacher leaders must be afforded relevant professional development endeavors in order for them to sustainably carry out their roles in teaching and leading. Teacher administrators in the IBDP disclosed their cognizance of some skills they learned throughout their journey. But it is worth noting that the mobilization of professional development undertakings through a common goal must be implemented in enabling these stakeholders (Wei, 2021). As regards skills learned, teacher administrators divulged:

*"I think I learned more about leadership and communication skills." (TA6)*

*"I think I learned a skill that I should not try to attempt to fulfill or do everything very well, like have a high standard. I think I should lower my standard for so much workload." (TA4)*

*"We try to live up to the IB principles. I have to encourage others to do it and maybe by doing it myself first can be a good way to ask other teachers to follow." (TA1)*

With a growth mindset, teacher administrators in the IBDP braved themselves towards their goal of balancing the role of a teacher and a school administrator or leader. Their receptivity towards the positive aspects of their roles as teacher administrators in the IBDP can help the school community to provide opportunities with regard to pursuits for professional growth in order to achieve their main goal (Schenk, 2023). Thus, this emergent theme can serve as a springboard for IBDP schools to take the necessary steps in capacitating their teacher administrators.

### Theme 3: Time Limitations

Insufficient time for class preparation, overlapping roles and responsibilities, heavy workload, and pressure to meet deadlines and schedules were the challenges that occurred to teacher administrators in the IBDP which led to the generation of an overarching theme regarding time limitations.

This study exposed teacher administrators' difficulty in balancing their roles and responsibilities concerning time constraints. One of the participants in the study of Porta and Todd (2022) described how a lack of time for classroom preparation and instruction can deter quality learning among students. One of the challenges that teachers experience in upholding their teaching profession is the provision of ancillary tasks such as leading a group of subject teachers (Albarracin & Cadosales, 2018). Additionally, the results of Lee et al.'s (2022) study into how teachers used their time revealed that IB instructors spent a greater percentage of class time on administrative functions. Clearly, teacher administrators struggled to manage their time because of their job responsibilities. To wit, they mentioned:

*"I have some time issues in class preparation because I still have to attend a meeting with the DPC together*

*with all pedagogical leaders and then conduct another meeting with my subject groups.” (TA8)*

*“I cannot prepare courses at school. I have to do it at home because I cannot focus on my own preparation work without any interruption.” (TA1)*

Taylor (2018) revealed the same struggle among IBDP teachers pertaining to time restrictions. In his study, one of the participants had to invest a lot of time in learning, unlearning, and relearning her subject as well as in planning courses for her students. She concentrated more on content than approach due to time issues.

Aside from that, teacher administrators admitted that the overlapping roles and responsibilities gave them a hard time in the implementation of the IBDP. Content alone in the IBDP is overwhelming for teachers because there are a lot of things to cover (Sieve, 2018). Horn and Veermans (2019) explained that in the IBDP, all subject teachers are expected to be able to integrate TOK (Theory of Knowledge) in their classes, thus being a TOK teacher as well. This is concomitant with these teacher administrators’ experiences where their job is not solely teaching nor only paperwork but a combination of both. Concerning this matter, they stressed that:

*“Having two roles will somehow interrupt my course preparation. My time is divided because of these two roles.” (TA5)*

*“As an IBDP teacher alone, it is a busy role already. Now, I also have a leadership role, it is so challenging to manage my time well.” (TA6)*

*“Balancing my roles is not easy and can take much of my time since I am still a teacher and doing the role of a pedagogical leader.” (TA7)*

In terms of heavy workload, this element negatively impacted how teacher administrators manage their time. The existence of a huge workload as a teacher alone in the IBDP limited the key informants’ time all the more that they have to perform their functions as school administrators. Erfurth and Ridge (2020) reported that teachers in IB schools engage themselves in administrative tasks (e.g., school meetings) on top of their role as teachers since they spend so much time crafting as well as delivering lessons to their students. Obviously, heavy strain is placed on teachers by other administrative and supervisory endeavors that are outside the scope of their core academic duties (Pantzos, 2019). Regarding workload issues that led to time constraints, teacher administrators articulated:

*“It does add up extra workload. I was not able to manage my time well.” (TA4)*

*“It consumes some of my time especially that I belong to the language group and I need to translate the agenda from this language to that language so that all teachers can understand.” (TA5)*

Lin et al. (2018) disclosed that teachers can barely meet their schedules together due to their heavy teaching loads. This limits them to do other administrative activities (e.g., classroom observations, subject group meetings, etc.). In this study’s context, a teacher administrator confessed that:

*“Some teachers cannot attend our vertical meetings because they do not have the time. They prefer to prepare for their classes.” (TA5)*

Moreover, since they have dilemmas regarding their time, teacher administrators in the IBDP are somehow pressured to meet deadlines and keep on track of their topics’ timelines. To wit, they uttered:

*“There were instances that I failed to submit the meeting minutes on time because I had to prepare for my class for the next day right after the meeting.” (TA2)*

*“We don’t have sufficient time always. Sometimes we have to stick to the schedule, I mean in terms of teaching. It turns out we are always behind schedule.” (TA1)*

Generally, teacher administrators in the IBDP experienced severe time restrictions due to their overlapping tasks as teachers and school administrators as well as the heavy workload that they have. The provision of an ample amount of time for teachers to organize their lessons and activities as well as discern what went well or what went wrong is crucial (Jarvis et al., 2016). Thus, Lee et al. (2022) recommended to schools implementing any IB program consider decreasing their teaching loads or other non-academic duties because this not only contributes to stress and other negative emotions but also drops their level of career enjoyment and happiness.

#### **Theme 4: Work Resilience**

Interestingly, teacher administrators in the IBDP try to put up with the constraints that they experience by being resilient at work. They discovered different coping strategies in order to adapt to the demands of their work such as encouragement from other school leaders, prioritization of tasks, availability of collegial support, streamlined processes and activities, and constant communication with peers.

Resilience among members of an organization is best manifested through combatting unfavorable happenings at work which could be detrimental to the entire group (Hartwig et al., 2020). Similarly, in the IBDP, figuring out how to implement the curriculum, teachers were able to develop various skills in order to thrive such as creative and critical thinking skills as well as the tenets of resiliency (Taylor, 2018).

In light of this, teacher administrators in the IBDP were able to sustain their roles and responsibilities due to the encouragement that they received from other school administrators or leaders (e.g., Principal, Diploma Program Coordinator, Pedagogical Leaders, etc.) which strengthened their grit and perseverance. With this, narratives of these teacher administrators uncovered that:



*"I think the support that I mostly receive from my school leaders is mental support because when I encounter difficulties, if I talk to them, they will try to help me and figure that out together. I really appreciate that because they are quite busy themselves." (TA1)*

*"I receive help from other pedagogical leaders as well." (TA5)*

*"The DPC is really supportive. I always ask her if I have clarifications and she will try her best to attend to my needs." (TA4)*

The ability to prioritize their tasks as teacher administrators were also exercised by the key informants of this study. Individually, some of them managed to find solutions to cope with their overlapping roles as teacher administrators in order to handle the entire team meaningfully. This behavior is in conjunction with the idea that resilience practiced single-handedly can positively influence the entire team's tenacity (Hartwig et al., 2020). By arranging their tasks well, somehow these teacher administrators managed to fulfill their roles in the IBDP.

*"I try to organize which should I do first so that I will have a clear mind and goal. Otherwise, it will be confusing to me." (TA4)*

*"Sometimes I postpone the course preparation once I am done with my pedagogical leadership responsibilities." (TA5)*

To Rigby and Ryan (2018), having a strong support system in an organization could bolster high motivation among employees and members of the team. In an educational setting, it is recommended that school administrators and teachers work hand in hand to foster a positive and pleasant school climate (Corkin et al., 2018). Supporting this notion is revealed in the study of Power and Goodnough (2018) where teachers naturally help each other in overcoming struggles at work. These studies are in consonance with Lee et al.'s (2022) recommendation to the IB organization and to IB schools where teachers must be scaffolded by their peers. After all, the teacher administrators of this study play both roles and were able to acquire collegial support.

*"As a pedagogical leader, I feel supported by my colleagues because I do not feel the burden of doing it alone. Since I assign them some tasks, they understand why I am doing it and they helped me a lot." (TA7)*

*"I think I just try to survive and ask help from teachers." (TA4)*

*"For the IB Department, I feel really supported together with my TOK partners. We talk about courses. We kind of design courses together. I feel really safe to try something different because they will encourage me and I am not afraid of being different." (TA1)*

One of the ways that teacher administrators did in the name of work resiliency is by streamlining processes or activities that they need to do in teaching and leading in the IBDP.

Zaar and Andersson (2020) mentioned the importance of streamlining processes among stakeholders in an institution for the purposes of time management. This idea is critical in solving the issues of time as well as the overlapping roles and responsibilities that teachers in any IB curriculum grapple with (Wei, 2021). This study exposed how teacher administrators exercise initiatives in saving their time juggling both roles.

*"I make sure that whatever I share with the group during vertical meetings is relevant to our own context so we can speed up the process." (TA5)*

*"I would try my best to streamline the process in conducting our meetings with my subject group. For example, when we have the pedagogical leaders' meeting with the DPC, some of the things have little to do with our subject group. By doing so, I can make sure that our vertical meeting is done in an efficient way." (TA8)*

It was also found in this study that constant communication with peers contributes to teacher administrators' work resilience in the IBDP. Kanat-Maymon et al. (2020) contended that motivation toward work is reliant on how people communicate and interact with each other. Additionally, in order to boost employees' motivation, it is critical for organizational leaders to communicate well with their members by listening to their opinions and upholding a welcoming atmosphere (Rigby & Ryan, 2018). In the IBDP, Sieve's (2018) participants indicated that communication is an indispensable factor with regard to the nexus between teaching and leading in the program. Hence, teacher administrators in this study acknowledged the fact that constant communication could lead to a better understanding of their roles, thereby becoming more resilient toward work.

*"I just do communication. Sometimes, I feel so stressful and I will be honest with my colleagues." (TA6)*

*"Communication is the key to solve my problems regarding time management." (TA4)*

*"I have to know first their personalities. I talk to them. I communicate. If I know that someone is too sensitive, then I have to adapt to that. I am really open-minded though." (TA3)*

Given all these findings and utterances, it can be inferred that teacher administrators managed to put up with their dual roles in the IBDP through determination and perseverance. If they are new to the curriculum as teachers, they need to get used to it in order to fully understand and be acclimated to it (Taylor, 2018). By understanding what is going on with their subject teachers, as school administrators with leadership roles, Sieve (2018) recommended that supportive leadership should be manifested which was also proposed by Lee et al. (2022) with regard to positive working conditions that leaders in IB schools should promote.



**Theme 5: Neutral Perspective**

In accordance with the key informants' narratives, having a neutral perspective emerged as a theme in this study which explicated the presence of teacher administrators in the IBDP. It underpins their stance in handling two roles simultaneously. Disparities in their roles, wider understanding of realities, and bridge or communicator to teachers and school administrators were the significant aspects that encapsulated their impartiality as teacher administrators in the IBDP.

Maintaining a neutral perspective was one of the revelations that teacher administrators disclosed in this study. This was concurred by the study of Albarracin and Cadosales (2018) pertaining to teachers who climbed their way up to becoming a leader and that they must possess impartiality in addressing the struggles that they encountered as teacher-leaders. The disparities in their roles as teachers and school administrators made teacher administrators of this study practice neutrality in the formulation of decisions and professional encounters. Hence, Gerstenschlager and Barlow (2018) recommended that leadership programs in which these teachers must involve themselves ought to offer them a chance to ponder and rethink their roles as teachers as well as school administrators. The differences in these roles are highlighted by teacher administrators' articulations, especially in the context of the IBDP.

*"The pedagogical leader's role is very important because we transfer the information from the principal or DPC to our subject teachers. We understand our co-teachers because we also teach IBDP subjects. That is why our role is different from a regular teacher or a regular school administrator."* (TA6)

*"If you are a teacher only, you focus on your class only. Sometimes, we still need the pedagogical leaders since they can understand the situations across subject teachers and they act as good resources in delivering the teachers' needs and interests to the school."* (TA8)

*"Regular school administrators do not understand IB. If the role is given to a non-IB teacher, it is nearly impossible for them to take care of the affairs for the IB Department."* (TA1)

*"I think I can observe the system between teachers and administrators because I am a pedagogical leader."* (TA2)

Apparently, handling both roles as teachers and school administrators magnified the lenses of the key informants as regards the realities of the IBDP system. They claimed that they possessed a wider understanding of the practices of the IBDP teachers as well as the reasons of school administrators regarding deliverables that they require from their teachers. Smith (2021) shared how administrative opportunities led teachers to have an extensive understanding of the various facets of school operations as well as the motivation to have a deeper connection with their students since they are still teachers. However, some voiced their reservations about their capacity to support their

colleagues' professional endeavors as one of the duties of a teacher administrator or leader (Vann, 2021). These are all significant realities that teacher administrators encountered. With this, it can be inferred that positioning one's self in two roles does provide a broad understanding of the teaching and learning process and the expectations in the field of school leadership and management. Thus, this study illuminated teacher administrators' experiences when they stated that:

*"I become more open-minded because I have to listen to different opinions and manage to remain a relatively neutral position."* (TA1)

*"I think it is so important to have teacher administrators because if you have experienced being a teacher, you would know how it feels being a teacher and you will not just give them rules to follow. In other words, you will be more empathetic if you have the role of a teacher and at the same time being an admin."* (TA3)

*"If the school administrator is not going through all the IBDP stuff, it would be difficult for them to understand. They are not marking or teaching."* (TA4)

Wieczorek and Lear (2018) concluded that teachers who have administrative functions such as in the field of leadership must be able to embody a sense of oneness between teachers and school administrators. This correlates with the current study's findings in relation to teacher administrators' role as a bridge or communicator for their colleagues. Since they understand the role of an IBDP teacher as well as a school administrator, they are able to empathize both parties and critically analyze messages or information in order to convey them fairly. Below are the transcripts of teacher administrators in the IBDP that support this notion.

*"For school administrators alone, they won't understand the teaching environment. I think being a pedagogical leader is kind of in a middle. You have to connect with the school administrators and also teachers. It actually plays as a bridge between both roles."* (TA7)

*"I think the administrative group they cannot understand what other subject teachers are doing. I think there is still a need for someone in a subject group to relay the problems to the administrative group. I think the pedagogical leader play as the communicator role, as the bridge to communicate with the subject teachers and the administrative group."* (TA5)

*"I will know the DPC's difficulties more and understand her problems in managing different subjects. If I am not a pedagogical leader, I would never know their side."* (TA4)

Overall, an impartial attitude is critical in the fulfillment of teacher administrators' roles and responsibilities in the IBDP. Moreover, having a neutral perspective is a logical reason why teacher administrators continue to perform their roles. Their capability to become objective as teacher administrators were revealed to be one of their coping mechanisms as also reflected in the study of Albarracin and

Cadosales (2018) regarding the journey of teacher-leaders. Therefore, neutrality is deemed to be a significant theme that emerged in this study.

## 5. Conclusion

In accordance with the results of this present study, teacher administrators in the IBDP found meaning in having shared responsibility. Clearly, they believed that they were not alone in figuring out their roles since their peers worked with them closely, the designation of responsibilities was evident, teachers were ready to lend a hand, and communication among colleagues was put in place. Another benefit that teacher administrators discovered in this study was being able to have a growth mindset. They were able to consider other people's viewpoints, analyze problems critically, learn different things open-mindedly, and acquire various skills.

Although they experienced some benefits, a drawback of becoming a teacher administrator in the IBDP is the shortage of time. In this study, they revealed that time was not enough for class preparation, tasks are on top of each other, workload was hefty, and there was pressure to meet due dates. Albeit time was challenging for them, they managed to grapple with this problem by being resilient at work. Empowerment by their school leaders, organization of tasks, availability of collegial support, efficient way of doing things, and connections with coworkers were their coping strategies. Furthermore, the existence of teacher administrators in the IBDP is attributed to having a neutral perspective because they can have a broader understanding as well as being able to establish linkage between regular teachers and regular school administrators.

It can be concluded that teaching and leading in the IBDP can be daunting and teacher administrators may have struggled so much but there are also favorable results of becoming one i.e., personally and professionally. This study provides a foundation for emerging teacher administrators in the IBDP who may have apprehensions or worries. It also magnified the lenses of both teachers and school administrators concerning teacher administrators' overwhelming job. Hence, it is hoped that this can illuminate schools implementing the IBDP in taking the necessary steps on what scaffolding mechanisms will they afford to teacher administrators in order to better fulfill their roles not only in Taiwan but also in other countries across the globe.

## 6. Future Scope

Results from this study were timely and distinctive considering that there were no prior studies regarding teacher administrators in the context of the IBDP to the best of the researcher's knowledge. This study unraveled the lived experiences of these individuals who have unique job responsibilities and worked hard in the implementation of the program. However, this study only included teacher administrators in the IBDP in Taiwan. While it is true that their experiences may have some commonalities with other schools, other curricula or programs may produce different results. Moreover, key informants of this study only

disclosed their experiences and do not necessarily reflect their performance as teachers or school administrators. Thus, it is suggested that future researchers may consider looking into the effectiveness of teacher administrators' instructional and leadership competence in the IBDP. Further, it is also proposed that comparative studies may be conducted about teacher administrators from other national or international curricula in order to determine similarities and differences.

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