



## Unraveling Struggles: The Lived Experiences of Full-Time Faculty Members with Role Overload

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### Abstract

This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of full-time faculty members at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao who face role overload, aiming to uncover its impact on their emotional well-being. Guided by William Goode's Role Strain Theory and Martin Seligman's PERMA Model, the research employs a phenomenological approach to analyze the interplay between role-related stress and emotional health. Semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants provided rich, nuanced insights into the challenges and coping strategies of professors managing extensive teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Thematic analysis revealed key themes, including role expectations, stress from conflicting demands, and strategies for balancing professional and personal roles. The findings highlight the significant emotional toll of role overload, underscoring the need for institutional interventions that promote work-life balance, emotional resilience, and job satisfaction. This study contributes to the understanding of role strain in academia and offers practical recommendations for enhancing faculty well-being within higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Role Strain, Role Overload, PERMA Model, Professors

### 1. Introduction

Role overload is a specific dimension of role strain that emerges when the sheer volume of tasks exceeds the capacity of an individual to manage them effectively. For professors, role overload is particularly acute, as they navigate not only the inherent complexities of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities but also external pressures stemming from institutional expectations and evolving educational paradigms. Saad *et al.* (2022) <sup>[10]</sup> indicated that challenges in fulfilling role requirements can lead to strain; when these challenges are compounded by excessive workload demands, the result is a heightened risk of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and reduced well-being. In academic institutions, the overlap of teaching, mentoring, research output expectations, and administrative duties often leads to conflicting demands on time and energy, exacerbating role strain and creating a clear pathway to role overload. For instance, Embalsado *et al.* (2023) <sup>[1]</sup> reported that the ambiguity of work demands, particularly in transitioning educational systems, intensifies strain as educators struggle to meet conflicting priorities without adequate guidance or support. This multifaceted pressure creates what Fan *et al.* (2019) <sup>[2]</sup> described as a "constellation of stressors," where educators in higher education settings must continuously balance the tension between professional and personal life. Moreover, role overload is not only an individual concern but also one with broader institutional implications. The International Labour Organization's (2023) findings on work-related injuries emphasize that unmanaged workplace strain can manifest in physical and mental health challenges. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.

For professors, the repercussions extend beyond personal well-being, affecting institutional performance, research quality, and student outcomes. Addressing role overload, therefore, requires strategic organizational interventions, such as prioritizing manageable workloads, clear communication, and targeted support systems, as suggested by Tran *et al.* (2020)<sup>[11]</sup>.

## 2. Methodology

### A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of full-time faculty members with role overload at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. This methodology is particularly effective for capturing the essence of individuals' perceptions and emotions, making it ideal for examining how professors navigate the complexities of their multiple responsibilities and how these experiences influence their overall well-being.

### B. Research Locale

This study is conducted at the University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao), a reputable public institution located at Limcaoco Street, Katapatan Subdivision, Barangay Banay-Banay, Cabuyao City, Laguna. This setting is ideal for investigating the lived experiences of full-time faculty members dealing with role overload, as the university has been operational since 2003. A face-to-face interview was conducted within the university premises or any location deemed comfortable and convenient for the participants, ensuring minimal disruption to their professional and personal schedules. This flexibility in the interview setting is intended to promote a relaxed and open atmosphere, encouraging professors to provide genuine and detailed insights into their experiences.

The interviews will take place during the 1st Semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, allowing for a thorough exploration of the professors' lived experiences with role overload during this specific period.

### C. Participants of the Study

The participants for this study were selected from the full-time professors at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao, which consists of 111 faculty members, representing a diverse range of disciplines and teaching experiences, out of this, a total of 19 or (17.12%) professors have a designation in academic year 2024-2025, first semester. This study specifically targets five (5) full-time professors who meet the following criteria: full-time teaching position, at least 3-5 years of teaching experience, with designation, a teaching load of 6 or more units per semester, high role overload score, and with teaching responsibilities exclusively at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. Participation will be voluntary, and participants will be required to provide informed consent, ensuring they are fully aware of their rights and the research objectives.

### D. Sampling Design

To achieve a comprehensive and targeted analysis, purposive sampling will be employed, specifically utilizing criterion sampling. This method is ideal for selecting participants who meet predetermined criteria directly related to the research focus. Criterion sampling ensures that the participants possess the relevant characteristics to provide rich, contextually relevant data, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the influence of role overload on their

emotional well-being.

### E. Research Instrumentation

This study utilized a self-constructed interview questionnaire consisting of ten (10) open-ended questions, specifically designed to gather comprehensive qualitative data on the lived experiences of full-time faculty members at Pamantasan ng Cabuyao facing role overload. The questions will be crafted to capture detailed insights of the lived experiences of Professors facing role overload and their emotional well-being. Each question will encourage participants to share their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives freely, providing a deeper understanding of the unique challenges they experience.

To ensure the validity and appropriateness of the interview question, it will undergo a thorough review by qualitative research experts and faculty members with experience in higher education. This review process will ensure that the questions are clear, relevant, culturally sensitive, and aligned with the study's objectives. Feedback from experts will be incorporated to refine the guide, removing any potential biases or ambiguities, and improving the quality of the data collection instrument.

The interviews will follow a semi-structured protocol, allowing for flexibility to ask follow-up questions and explore important points that emerge during the conversation. This approach will maintain consistency across interviews while enabling the researchers to probe deeper into participants' responses. Researchers will actively listen and use neutral prompts to encourage participants to elaborate on their answers when necessary, ensuring that all relevant details are captured.

The data collection process will involve face-to-face interviews conducted at locations chosen by the participants, ensuring comfort and convenience. With the participants' consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded for accurate documentation and transcribed verbatim. Additionally, researchers will take field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual observations, which will further enrich the data analysis.

### F. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process for this study will be conducted in a systematic manner to ensure the collection of high-quality, reliable, and valid data that aligns with the research objectives. The first step involves validating the research instrument to confirm its appropriateness and alignment with the study's goals. To test the clarity and effectiveness of the interview guide, a pilot interview will be conducted with a small group of full-time professors who meet the inclusion criteria for the study. This pilot phase allows the researchers to identify any issues with the questions or the interview structure. Feedback from the pilot interviews will be analyzed and used to refine the instrument and interview procedures, ensuring smooth data collection for the main study.

Once the pilot interview is completed and the instrument is refined, the main data collection will begin. The process will start by obtaining informed consent from the participants. The researchers will ensure that each participant fully understands the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and any potential risks or benefits. Participants will be given an informed consent form that clearly outlines the study's details, expected duration, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw at any time without repercussions.

Participants will have the opportunity to review the document thoroughly and sign it, indicating their voluntary agreement to participate in the study.

Building rapport is essential to creating a comfortable and open environment. Researchers will engage participant's in brief introductory conversations, showing genuine interest in their perspectives and experiences to foster trust and ease any initial apprehensions.

The data collection is conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews designed to elicit detailed accounts of the participants' experiences with role overload. The interviews will be guided by open-ended questions, allowing professors to share their thoughts, emotions, and reflections regarding their experiences with role overload. This approach aligns with the qualitative nature of the study, enabling the researchers to capture rich, nuanced data. To facilitate this process, researchers will use active listening techniques and neutral prompts, encouraging participants to elaborate on their responses where necessary.

During the interviews, data will be documented through a combination of note-taking and audio recording (with the participants' consent). This dual approach ensures the accurate capture of both verbal and non-verbal cues, enriching the data. The interviews will be conducted in private and comfortable settings within the university or other suitable locations chosen by the participants, ensuring a conducive environment for open discussion.

After data collection, the recorded interviews will be transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and significant concepts within the data. This analytical approach allows the researchers to categorize and interpret the participants' experiences, uncovering key insights related to the role overload and their emotional well-being. Through thematic analysis, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the professors' lived experiences with role overload, contributing valuable insights that could inform the development of targeted support programs.

### G. Ethical Consideration

The researchers kindly requested the participants' cooperation in dedicating their time and effort to complete the interview. This contribution is invaluable in facilitating the collection of essential data for our research. The confidentiality and privacy of the participants and the data collected from them will be strictly maintained within the purview of the research team.

**Informed Consent.** A form was given to the participants permitting the researchers they be willing to give their time and effort to the online interview that was conducted. They were given a set of terms and conditions as well as what the interview was about to proceed with the data collection.

**Confidentiality.** The identities of the participants and all information provided to the researchers are kept strictly confidential. To ensure this, pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity throughout the research process. Instead of their real names, participants were referred to as "Professor 1," "Professor 2," and so on. This method minimizes any potential risks to their privacy. Additionally, participants were allowed to review their responses and suggest corrections, ensuring they maintained control over their personal data until the set submission time expired. Under no circumstances will the participants' information be disclosed to the public, as privacy and confidentiality are of utmost

importance.

**Anonymity.** Participants retained the right to remain anonymous, which is crucial to safeguarding their identities and personal well-being. The research team ensured that no personally identifiable information was linked to the data. To reinforce this, participants' identities were masked using pseudonyms, such as "Professor 1" and "Professor 2," further protecting their privacy. The researchers did not have access to any information that could directly identify the participants, thus eliminating any potential breach of confidentiality.

**Gaining permission to proceed.** The Informed Consent forms to the participants, these forms were submitted to us and their answers will depend on how the interview will be conducted. Once permitted to proceed the researchers will conduct the data gathering.

**Adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012.** The research strictly adheres to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring the protection of personal data of participants. All data collected is securely stored and managed according to legal standards to prevent unauthorized access, alteration, or disclosure. The research team is committed to upholding the principles outlined in the Data Privacy Act, including transparency, accountability, and the rights of the data subjects. The protection of participants in all research studies requires the use of appropriate ethical principles. Ethical issues must be considered at all stages of the project to preserve the balance between the potential risks of research and the projected benefits of the study.

### 3. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the study's findings and discusses key themes and patterns, offering insights into full-time faculty members' experiences with role overload. It examines how these experiences impact their professional and personal lives, highlighting challenges and coping strategies

**Table 1:** Role Expectations and Demands

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Role Expectations and Demands	High Expectations
	Multiple Roles
	Limited Support
	Perceived Pressure to Excel

The findings reveal that professors commonly experience heavy workloads encompassing teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. This aligns with previous studies indicating that academic staff often face excessive work demands, which can lead to stress and job dissatisfaction (Xu & Wang, 2023) <sup>[13]</sup>. The high expectations placed on professors further intensify the challenges of their profession. As mentors and educators, they are expected to excel in multiple domains, echoing Jiandong, Fan, and Haitian's (2022) <sup>[2]</sup> findings that heightened performance expectations contribute significantly to stress and work overload. In addition to workload and expectations, professors also navigate multiple roles, from research commitments to institutional service, leading to role strain. This multitasking nature of academia has been linked to work fatigue and burnout (Jiandong *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[5]</sup>. Another key challenge is limited support from institutions, which amplifies the emotional burden of their responsibilities. Malik (2022) <sup>[9]</sup> emphasizes that collegial and supervisory support is crucial in mitigating role overload and its negative

consequences, including burnout. Finally, the perceived pressure to excel remains a critical stressor for professors. Tran (2022) <sup>[12]</sup> notes that excessive professional demands often result in feelings of inadequacy and burnout, affecting not only job satisfaction but also work-family balance. The combination of these factors underscores the demanding nature of the academic profession and highlights the urgent need for institutional interventions to support faculty well-being.

**Table 2:** Stress from Conflicting Demands

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Stress from Conflicting Demands	Overlapping Deadlines
	High Urgency Tasks
	Balancing Priorities

The main theme shows that professors frequently encounter overlapping deadlines, which create significant stress as they manage grading, research, and administrative meetings simultaneously. This finding aligns with the study by Halat *et al.* (2023) <sup>[3]</sup>, which found that university faculty often struggle with time constraints due to competing demands, increasing overall stress levels. The sub-theme of High Urgency Tasks shows that professors face continuous pressure from tasks that all seem equally pressing. Student-related responsibilities and administrative duties often require immediate attention, leading to a constant sense of urgency. This ongoing demand for immediate responses contributes to work strain and affects overall efficiency. The sub-theme of Balancing Priorities shows the difficulties professors experience in managing their numerous responsibilities. With multiple tasks requiring attention, prioritization becomes a challenge, often resulting in stress and difficulties in time management. This theme reflects the broader issue of juggling competing demands in a high-stakes academic environment.

**Table 3:** Challenges in Roles Management

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Challenges in Roles Management	Work-Life Balance
	Increased Workload
	Role Conflicts

The sub-theme of Work-Life Balance highlights the challenge professors face in managing both professional and personal commitments. The increasing demands in both areas create stress as each feels equally important. The sub-theme of Increased Workload describes how piling and overlapping responsibilities make it difficult for professors to balance their duties, especially when unexpected tasks arise. The sub-theme of Role Conflicts explains how external obligations, such as departmental or administrative duties, interfere with professors' primary teaching responsibilities. This finding aligns with Malik's (2022) <sup>[9]</sup> study, which emphasizes that excessive demands contribute to burnout, particularly when there is insufficient supervisor and collegial support to help manage conflicting roles.

**Table 4:** Influence of Positive and Negative Experiences on Emotional Well-being

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Influence of Positive and Negative Experiences on Emotional Well-being	Positive Recognition
	Stress from Workload and Changes
	Student Engagement

Professors' emotional well-being is influenced by both positive and negative workplace experiences, as reflected in the themes of positive recognition, stress from workload and changes, and student engagement. Positive recognition and witnessing student success significantly enhance job satisfaction and emotional well-being. This aligns with Larson *et al.* (2019), who found that acknowledgment from leadership—whether through formal rewards, verbal affirmation, or career advancement—boosts educators' intrinsic motivation and resilience. Recognition reinforces professors' sense of purpose and commitment, helping them stay motivated even in challenging situations.

**Table 5:** Influence of Engagement on Work Satisfaction

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Influence of Engagement on Work Satisfaction	Positive Outcomes of Engagement
	Challenges of Engagement

The Positive Outcomes of Engagement subtheme highlights how faculty members experience increased motivation and overall job satisfaction through active participation in their roles. However, the analysis also identifies the Challenges of Engagement, emphasizing the potential negative effects of high involvement. While engagement can be deeply rewarding, it may also lead to exhaustion due to the continuous demands it entails.

**Table 6:** Relief Through Social Support

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Relief Through Social Support	Colleague Support
	Stress Relief from Relationship

This theme emphasizes the importance of positive interactions and a supportive environment in reducing stress. The Colleague Support subtheme highlights how relationships with colleagues provide emotional relief and foster camaraderie. Similarly, the Stress Relief from Relationships subtheme illustrates how emotional support from peers alleviates feelings of isolation and provides comfort during challenging times. These findings align with Larson *et al.* (2019), who emphasized that social and practical support from colleagues and leadership plays a crucial role in managing stress and enhancing faculty well-being by fostering a sense of belonging and mitigating work-related stress.

**Table 7:** Meaning and Fulfillment in Work

Main themes	Sub themes
Meaning and Fulfillment in Work	Student Influence
	Student Engagement and Feedback
	Professional Validation



The Student Influence theme highlights the satisfaction professors feel in contributing to students' personal and academic growth, reinforcing their sense of purpose. The Student Engagement and Feedback theme emphasizes how meaningful interactions and feedback from students enhance professors' job satisfaction. Lastly, the Professional Validation theme underscores the fulfillment professors experience when witnessing student progress, reinforcing the value and impact of their role as educators.

**Table 8:** Empowerment Through Accomplishment

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Empowerment Through Accomplishment	Increased Confidence and Growth
	Enhanced Resilience
	Motivation for Future Challenges

The Increased Confidence and Growth theme highlights how achievements boost professors' self-assurance and professional development. Enhanced Resilience emphasizes how accomplishments strengthen their ability to face future challenges with determination. Renewed Energy and Drive describes how success reduces stress and reignites passion for teaching. Lastly, Motivation for Future Challenges illustrates how achievements inspire professors to take on greater responsibilities and new challenges.

**Table 9:** Balancing Professional and Personal Roles

Main themes	Sub themes
Balancing Professional and Personal Roles	Time Management Techniques
	Boundary Setting
	Stress Management

The Time Management Techniques theme highlights how professors use planning tools and task prioritization to balance work and personal responsibilities effectively. The Boundary Setting subtheme emphasizes the importance of maintaining clear distinctions between work and home life to preserve personal well-being and prevent burnout. Lastly, Stress Management Through Balance underscores the need to balance professional and personal roles to reduce stress and burnout. This aligns with Landolfi *et al.* (2020)<sup>[6]</sup>, who found that effective time management strategies help minimize role conflict and enhance overall life satisfaction.

**Table 10:** Effective Stress Management Strategies

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Effective Stress Management Strategies	Time Management
	Relaxation Techniques
	Support System

The Time Management subtheme highlights how professors prioritize and break down tasks to manage multiple responsibilities efficiently. Effective time management minimizes overwhelm, enhances focus, and helps prevent burnout. The Relaxation Techniques subtheme includes strategies like taking breaks and practicing mindfulness to alleviate stress. Lastly, the Support Systems subtheme underscores the importance of seeking support from colleagues and maintaining open communication, fostering emotional relief and solidarity. These findings align with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984)<sup>[8]</sup> Transactional Model of

Stress and Coping, where problem-focused coping includes time management and task prioritization, while emotion-focused coping involves relaxation techniques and social support to regulate emotional responses to stress.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study underscores the multifaceted nature of role overload experienced by professors, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities within their professional landscape. Professors navigate high role expectations, conflicting demands, and the challenge of balancing professional and personal responsibilities, which can lead to stress and emotional exhaustion if not adequately managed. However, the study also reveals that positive experiences, meaningful engagement, and social support are key factors that bolster emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the academic environment. By fostering a supportive culture that recognizes accomplishments, promotes work-life balance, and provides resources for effective stress management, they can mitigate the negative influences of role overload. Strategies such as time management training, peer support programs, and initiatives that prioritize meaningful engagement can empower professors to thrive in their roles. Ultimately, addressing the complexities of academic life through proactive interventions and creating a positive, collaborative atmosphere can contribute to the sustainability and well-being of educators, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities while maintaining their emotional health and professional satisfaction.

#### 5. Recommendation

**For Professors:** Utilizing structured programs can help manage role overload. By applying Insight, professors can set realistic goals and align priorities with personal values. Time management strategies aid in balancing conflicting demands, while Resilience initiatives, such as mindfulness, enhance emotional well-being. Empowerment through celebrating achievements and engaging in meaningful work fosters motivation.

**For Educational Institutions:** Faculty well-being can be improved by fostering Support networks, such as mentorship programs, to encourage collaboration and reduce isolation. Vitality initiatives focusing on physical and emotional wellness help prevent burnout, while Time-focused policies, including flexible schedules and streamlined workloads, create a more sustainable work environment. Recognizing faculty achievements through Empowerment programs further enhances morale and job satisfaction.

**For Administrators and Policymakers:** Simplifying administrative processes allows professors to focus on teaching and research. Investing in Resilience programs provides faculty with effective stress management tools, while enhanced recognition systems under Empowerment reinforce confidence and motivation.

**For Future Research:** Further studies should examine STRIVE's impact across diverse academic settings, validate its components through longitudinal research, and develop evidence-based interventions to address role overload.

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