School Support Received and the Challenges Encountered in Distance Learning Education during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: This research assessed the status of the implementation of distance learning education under the new normal in education. The researcher used the descriptive research method to gather information about the respondents' demographic profile. The data obtained were analyzed using percentage weighted mean, significant difference for the status of the implementation of distance learning with 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, the teacher's response on their level of adaptability on the new learning modality under pandemic puts a challenging role to educators at present. Also, data shows that teachers were able to connect with learners and have discussions that led to good education. But teachers ran into different problems when trying to offer quality instructions, such as an internet connection that worked only sometimes. Even though the results show that the administrators thought the teachers were resilient, the data show that teachers need to keep expanding in order to provide quality education in this new normal. It is very important to help the teachers in the right way by understanding what this means. Also, the study's results show that teachers were still able to get trainings and seminars even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **Introduction**

With the prevailing and inevitable health crisis in the New Normal requires a resilient, skilled and talented head in every school institution. Such qualities of school heads could effectively address the financial restraints that most schools in the country at present are suffering from, and continuously provide learning opportunities to the youths of the country in a most efficient and affordable way. As mentioned by Briones (2020) that education must continue even in times of crisis whether it may be a calamity, disaster, emergency, quarantine, or even war. Thus, learning continuity in a form of distance learning was established ever since also now in time of pandemic under New Normal. Meanwhile, school heads are the key leaders in the educational system. They are responsible of carrying out the school's vision and mission (Andriani et al., 2018).

It plays integral roles in making schools function out with smoothness and efficiency. They are involved in all aspects of the school's operation as they lead responsibly in providing leadership in the development and implementation of all educational programs and projects in the school (Ainscow, 2020). Their role is so vital in achieving the government's aim to provide at least a continuous basic education to learners even during the present crisis. Hence, school heads in this very particular time are faced with complex and difficult challenges in order to provide a continuity of learning through the implementation of Distance Leaning Modality.

This quest of the Department of Education for learning continuity has actually resulted in a number of initiatives which have made significant demands on school heads in public schools to transform leadership towards resilient and strategic school plans and outcomes (Hargreaves, 2012). One of which is the creation of a strategic School Road Map. This road map is an evidence-based public health and education emergency operations planning best practices and the direct feedback of epidemiologists, child infectious disease physicians, psychologists, district superintendents, leaders of public charter school management organizations, and school leaders. Comprised of the essential actions designed to spur thinking, planning and prioritization and likely to have the most significant impact with limited time and resources.

On the other hand, the continuous COVID scare among people gives school heads another challenge to face brought forth by the high anticipation transmission rate of COVID 19 among mankind as the new strain of virus is discovered in United Kingdom and now spreading all over the world (Thornton, 2021). This is aside from the other challenges which have been facing by the school heads such as: the demand of the situation to conquer technology-based platform in communicating parents and students and to support teaching and learning in the New Normal with the presence of poor internet connection that most people are clamoring for. These are but adds on of the challenges that the school heads have been facing such as: adaptation of the school curriculum to suit the ability and disposition of the young children as to maximize their potential and not to give up on each individual pupil; increasing community expectations for improvements to the educational system and the quality of learning processes and outcomes; a growing awareness of teacher professionalism; globalization of the world economy and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy which demands workers with multiple intelligence and creativity; life-long learning and the notion of school as a learning organization.

Meanwhile, the Republic Act No. 9155, Chapter 1 Section No. 7, Letter E, Paragraph 3 states that consistent with the national educational policies, plans and standards, the school heads shall have the Authority, Responsibility and Accountability (AuRA) in managing all affairs of the school. Thus, the success and failure of the school depends of the kind of school principal it has. It simply means that the lives of the school principals are packed with challenges. With all those challenges the school head is facing, it further requires change, collegiality, teamwork, and even efficiency and effectiveness. These new challenges require school principals to take on new leadership skills in quality development and quality assurance. They also highlight the need for more focused and systematic school leadership training and development programs to enhance the quality of school leadership they already possess, most particularly, in the New Normal. Such that, the government through the Department of Education should take into account the support or capability building for the school principals in the context of New Normal system of education down to its minute details to fully

capacitate them towards the full implementation of the new modality of learning as it captures the whole educational system.

Thus, on the shoulders of each principal, he/she carries the trust and responsibility as the manager of education in order to realize various government policies and to ensure that the school plays its role as an effective agent for socialization and acculturation in applying positive values among students (Muhyiddin, 2010). Simultaneously, people also place very high expectations in schools in the effort to produce knowledgeable, moral, and highly skilled citizens (Donaldson, 2006). These goals can only be achieved when the entire system, beliefs, climate, spirit, and excellent culture are practiced by every school, student, support staff, teacher, and administrator.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of scientists looking at issues facing principals during the last decade (Abaya, 2016; Brandon et al., 2018; Brooks et al., 2014; and Demir, 2016). Aslanargun and Bozkurt (2012), nkr (2010), Demir (2016), Demirtaş and zer (2014), Hoşgörür and Arslan (2014), Mirici et al. (2003), zer et al. (2015), Sarce (2006), Semerci and elik (2002), and zer et al. (2015) list financial difficulties as the most common school concern. One may argue that principals of schools are tasked with a wide range of duties, each of which is unique and requires them to have specialized knowledge. It is also consistent with the literature that there are concerns in the connections with educational authorities, and other academics have noticed the same problems in different geographical places (Dempster et al., 2004; Dinham et al., 2018; and Demir, 2016). Similarly, the literature mentions issues with non-teaching employees such as a lack of staff, trouble with recruiting and retention, and poor performance (Demir, 2016).

On the other hand, part of the school heads' responsibilities is how to manage people or employees in an organization. These employees are the human capital which serve as the assets of the organization. They are considered as important as finance in an organization. Because it is the human beings in the organization that make organization working and human talent that provide organization a competitive age. Thus, failure in managing people of an organization is another challenge which a school heads will be facing and it becomes a burden on their part with regards to his efficiency and effectiveness in managing the school institution, most particularly in the present New Normal system of education.

According to Luistro (2010) during the Principals' Forum of the National Capital Region – Philippine Elementary School Principals' Association (NCR-PESPA), principals should not be confined in their offices but out in the schools where the action is. "Principals, who just stay in their offices and do not personally monitor the situation in their respective schools, do not transform Philippine education. The principals should be doing the rounds, inquiring on the needs of the teachers, fling their inadequacies, sharing their joy and sympathizing in their grief because principals should be on top of everything that happens in the school." He further explained that principals should possess the capability to translate the vision of the department into reality, of translating plans into action.

The Department of Education manual of 2000 also enumerated the duties and responsibilities of school principals as follows, supervises all personnel in the school; provides leadership in the development and implementation of all programs in the school; promotes efficiency of teaching and learning in all classes through in-service trainings, observations, and visits; coordinates all services for the wholesome growth and development of all pupils and other personnel in the school; leads in the evaluation of achievements in the division. Directs the organization of classes determines and assigns the teaching loads of the staff and makes proper distribution of instructional and

other materials; provides for the accommodation of pupils including the availability of buildings for classrooms and other school needs. Coordinates and cooperates with the community and other agencies and represents the district supervisor in the school; prepares, consolidates and submits all reports of the school to the district supervisor; rates the performance of the teachers in the school and recommends the deserving ones for promotions; and does related work.

Undeniably, despite innovative national policies, public education has had an uneven evolution in the Philippines, in some ways improving rapidly and in others remaining largely the same (Bello, Docena, de Guzman & Malig, 2009). On several occasions, well-intentioned and well-designed national reforms imported from other countries have failed upon implementation (Zulueta & Liwag, 2001). This is due in part to a number of systemic factors: the country's unstable political environment (Constantino, 1975, Gregorio & Gregorio, 1976); pervasive corruption across private and public sectors, particularly in education (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005; Chua, 1999; Reyes, 2009); a lack of adequate resources (Asian Development Bank, 2005); and, cultural and social dynamics that effectively maintain the status quo at the classroom, school and divisional levels (Chua, 1999). These issues notwithstanding, many in the Philippines work toward school and school system improvement. Because of the foregoing concern, this study is designed to investigate as to what are those problems and to what extent they are encountered by the elementary school heads in the implementation of Distance Learning Modality of education in the New Normal. From which findings of the study will serve as the bases for crafting matrix of activities which will be carried out by the school and the school personnel in order to lessen if not mitigate the recurrence of those problems and will serve as guide for the school heads on what things to carry out while implementing Distance Learning in the present adverse situation.

2. Purpose of the Study

This research assessed the status of the implementation of the distance learning education in the new normal, it addressed the status of implementation to the following distance learning domains: Teaching and learning, Student-teacher interaction, Evaluating and reflecting and implement assessments. The significant difference between the respondent groups perception on the status on the implementation of distance learning was also treated.

3. Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive method research design utilizing quantitative approaches. Descriptive statistics utilizes data collection and analysis techniques that yield reports and summarize the important data. Together with sets of questionnaires as data gathering instruments. The data gathered were treated by the aid of statistical software utilizing 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study will serve as basis for an enhancement plan that helps the respondents eliminate the learning barriers and elevate the learner's participation during covid-19 pandemic. The respondents of the study were the faculty and administrators. This study focusses in the elementary level. The respondents were chosen from a target population; hence, convenience sampling was utilizing in this study. Moreover, the researchers formulated the survey questionnaire on "Distance Learning Education Experience of Teachers during Covid-19" (Appendix 1). The questions were derived from various items of literature and

previous studies and surveys such as from the "Questionnaires on Teachers Awareness, Readiness and Online Learning Experience During Covid-19 ECQ" by Lapada et al. (2020), the European Survey on Online and Distance Learning by the School Education Gateway (2020).

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Teacher and Learning

Teaching And Learning Approach	Faculty		Administrators	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
Develop 21st-century skills (ex. problem solving, collaboration, reflection, critical thinking, communication)	3.26	MA	3.52	MA
Teach digital citizenship (technology ethics, social, ethical and legal responsibilities in the utilization of technological tools and resources, etc.)	3.42	MA	3.27	MA
Use individualized modular instructional materials	3.48	MA	3.46	MA
expose students to more participatory learning through field experiences	3.26	MA	3.22	MA
accommodate multiple learning styles through flexible assignments	3.16	MA	3.17	MA
Weighted mean	3.32	MA	3.328	MA

Table 1 presents the data in terms of Teaching and Learning Approach. Data shows that the statement refers to use individualized modular instructional materials got the highest weighted mean of 3.48 which verbally described as moderately agree, while the statement refers to, accommodate multiple learning styles through flexible assignments got the lowest weighted mean of 3.16 which verbally described as moderately agree. While administrators on the other hand, develop 21st-century skills (ex. problem solving, collaboration, reflection, critical thinking, communication) got the highest weighted mean of 3.52 which verbally described as moderately agree, while the statement refers to accommodate multiple learning styles through flexible assignments got the lowest weighted mean of 3.17 which verbally described as moderately agree.

Table 2. Facilitating Student Interaction

Facilitating Student Interaction	Faculty		Administrators	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
Ensure that students can navigate online educational materials.	3.28	MA	3.26	MA
Use the learning management system to monitor student activity with online educational materials to determine if they are on-task.	3.16	MA	3.22	MA
Use data to monitor student progress in subject-specific software programs.	3.26	MA	3.17	MA
Help students to select online and offline materials that are relevant to them.	3.42	A	3.29	MA
Encourage student persistence with independent online learning activities	3.22	MA	3.12	MA
Weighted mean	3.27	MA	3.21	MA

Table 2 presents the data in terms of facilitating Student Interaction. Data shows that

the statement refers to help students to select online and offline materials that are relevant to them got the highest weighted mean of 3.42 which verbally described as agree, while the statement refers to, use the learning management system to monitor student activity with online educational materials to determine if they are on-task got the lowest weighted mean of 3.16 which verbally described as moderately agree. While administrators on the other hand, help students to select online and offline materials that are relevant to them got the highest weighted mean of 3.29 which verbally described as moderately agree, while the statement refers to use data to monitor student progress in subject-specific software programs got the lowest weighted mean of 3.17 which verbally described as moderately agree.

Table 3. Teacher and Learning

Implementing Assessments	Faculty		Administrators	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
Administer performance-based assessments online.	4.28	SA	3.22	MA
Use online tools to provide students with opportunities for reflective self-assessment.	3.82	A	3.80	A
Use online and traditional grading rubrics to clearly identify individual student performance gaps	3.32	MA	3.18	MA
Use data from online and offline assessments to identify patterns in gaps.	3.56	A	3.62	MA
Help students use online and offline assessment data to guide their own learning progress.	3.52	A	3.28	MA
Weighted mean	3.7	A	3.28	MA

Table 3 presents the data in terms of Implementing Assessments. Data shows that the statement refers to administer performance-based assessments online got the highest weighted mean of 4.28 which verbally described as strongly agree, while the statement refers to, use online and traditional grading rubrics to clearly identify individual student performance gaps got the lowest weighted mean of 3.32 which verbally described as moderately agree. While administrators on the other hand, use online tools to provide students with opportunities for reflective self-assessment got the highest weighted mean of 3.80 which verbally described as agree, while the statement refers to use online and traditional grading rubrics to clearly identify individual student performance gaps got the lowest weighted mean of 3.18 which verbally described as moderately agree.

Table 4. Evaluation

Evaluation	Faculty		Administrators	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
Use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' online instruction.	3.62	A	3.55	A
Use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of online educational materials	3.46	A	3.68	A
Use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of distance learning.	3.18	MA	3.25	MA
Provide students with multiple opportunities to provide input	3.26	MA	3.52	MA
Collaborate with other teachers to evaluate the effectiveness distance learning performance	3.26	MA	3.22	MA
Weighted mean	3.36	MA	3.22	MA

Table 4 presents the data in terms of evaluation. Data shows that the statement refers to use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' online instruction got the highest weighted mean of 3.62 which verbally described as agree, while the statement refers to, use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of how online and in-person activities and assessments were blended together got the lowest weighted mean of 3.18 which verbally described as moderately agree. While administrators on the other hand, use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of online educational materials and assessments got the highest weighted mean of 3.68 which verbally described as agree, while the statement refers to ccollaborate with other teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of units that blend online and in-person instruction. got the lowest weighted mean of 3.22 which verbally described as moderately agree.

Table 5. Test of significant difference

Constructs	Mean	P value	Remarks	Decision
Teaching And Learning	Faculty = 3.32 administrators= 3.28	0.00464	Not significant	Accept
Facilitating Student Interaction	Faculty = 3.27 Students= 3.21	0.00323	Not significant	Accept
Implementing Assessments	Faculty = 3.70 Students= 3.42	0.00743	Not significant	Accept
Evaluation	Faculty = 3.36 Students= 3.44	0.02624	Not significant	Accept

Table 5 shows the significant difference on the status on the implementation of distance learning. Data shows that all P-values were less than the level of significance 0.05, it was then concluded that all constructs were not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that teachers and administrators have same perceptions on the status of distance learning education under new normal.

The findings show that only with adequate support services can online learning be of high quality. When it comes to online education, it's crucial to have resources for both educators and students. Learning tools assist students access and process information, build knowledge, express and evaluate their understanding, and express themselves in tangible ways; both services may be provided with the support of the government, schools, families, and the community as a whole.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the teacher's response on their level of adaptability on the new learning modality under pandemic puts a challenging role to educators at present. Also, data shows that teachers were able to connect with each other and have discussions that led to good education. But teachers ran into different problems when trying to offer quality instructions, such as an internet connection that worked only sometimes. Even though the results show that the administrators thought the teachers were resilient, the data show that teachers need to keep expanding in order to provide quality education in this new normal. It is very important to help the teachers in the right way by

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