



School Climate and Work from Home Challenges of Teachers during the COVID 19 Pandemic in Secondary Schools in the Division of Zambales, Philippines

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Authors' contributions

This study was completed thru the collaboration of the two authors. Author AMM conceptualized the problem, prepared the proposal before data gathering, did the data gathering and data analysis and wrote the first draft of the manuscript while the author ENF was involved in data interpretation and finalization of the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine the school climate and work from home challenges among Secondary School teachers in selected secondary schools in Schools Division Zambales. The study made use of descriptive research design with the aid of questionnaires as the main instrument in gathering the data. The respondents were the two hundred eighty public secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in Schools Division of Zambales. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis and statistical treatment of data. The findings of the study indicate that under pandemic, the school climate such as school and community engagement, teacher connections, structure of learning, physical environment, student peer relations and parental involvement and work from home were found challenging. On the other hand, the work from home arrangements which include job related items and work responsibilities, professional development and promotional opportunities, recognition and work achievement,

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organizational policy and administration and technical supervision, working relations and compensation benefits, and physical working conditions and health issues were also found challenging. Significant differences were found on the challenges on school climate and work from home arrangements.

Keywords: School climate; work from home; challenges; instructional techniques; learning mode.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Corona Virus Disease- 2019 (CoViD-19) pandemic is first and foremost a global health crisis with a lasting effect on education. Many countries decided to close schools while others decided to shift online and make Work From Home (WFH) arrangements. The crisis crystallizes the dilemma policymakers and school administrators are facing between closing schools (reducing contact and saving lives) and keeping them open (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). The severe short-term disruption is felt by many around the world: working from home is not only a massive shock to teachers' productivity but also to social life and learning. Teaching is moving online on an untested and unprecedented scale. Going to school is the best public policy tool available to raise skills. While school time can be fun and can raise social skills and social awareness, from an economic point of view the primary point of being in school is that it increases ability. Even a short time missed decreases skills growth and CoViD-19 has interrupted learning [1].

As some schools face closures, educators and families scramble in responding to a situation that is uncertain and without precedent, the rapid imposition of social distancing took many by surprise and each school and every teacher contend with unique challenges as they grapple with the crisis. The move online is one best approach to continue classes and entails change in format in curriculum [2]. The school climate will determine work practice towards visible characteristics of schools. It would have an influence on determining teachers' behavior and attitude. Designing effective distance learning programs requires planning and targeted professional development. Teachers who did not expect to teach online were caught understandably unprepared. Some schools have the support systems in place that will make the transition easier while many others have students who do not have reliable internet access. Classes will not continue seamlessly and lessons will have to be refigured to work within

the constraints of time and technology. School leaders can best serve their schools and districts by prioritizing mental health over curricular efficiency [2]. The anxiety produced by the evolving crisis is compounded with teachers who may now work at home and manage online platform resources to comply with social distancing measures. Teachers should try to maintain personal connections with their students which can be challenge when mitigated by the internet [2] But strong student-teacher relationships positively affect school engagement and achievement, and meaningful connections are particularly important for students in particular [2]. Online learning can feel isolating and lacks the warmth of a busy classroom; however, teachers who transition from face-to-face classes must continue with online learning. The sudden shift to online education will undoubtedly pose a challenge for many, including teachers. Teachers should learn to manage life at home while doing school work [2]. Online learning and work from home set-up is providing challenges for teachers given the circumstances and despite some early predictions. On the other hand, school institutions are bounded to thinking of alternatives to ease the pressure.

Undoubtedly, when school institutions started sending students and teachers home due to COVID-19, more than few academics opined on social media that this would be a boon for research productivity: the idea presumably was that isolation breeds creativity [3]. Schools appear to be listening to problems and challenges encountered by teachers in WFH arrangements. Some are looking at different ways of supporting teachers on and off the tenure track who are struggling with the logistical and emotional tolls of pandemic [3]. Likewise, school climate provides useful information in building healthy relations in schools [3]. This will serve innovative ways of improving school environment and effective work for teachers.

In some educational institutions, school climate may be transformed. That may help address the

challenges encountered by teachers in WFH arrangement; thus, this study is to be conducted.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed descriptive research with documentary and survey analysis. According to [4] descriptive research is used to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of the phenomenon.

2.2 Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents involved in the study were the two hundred eighty (280) teachers of selected Secondary Schools in Schools Division of Zambales. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the teacher-respondents.

A probability sampling was used in the selection of respondents. As such, the researcher utilized random selection in identifying respondents from selected secondary schools in Schools Division of Zambales.

2.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in 16 secondary schools in the province of Zambales, Philippines. Fig. 1 shows the location of the secondary schools in Zambales. Olongapo is no longer part

of the province because it is already a City and they have their own Schools Division.

Zambales is a province located in the Central part of Luzon that shows in Fig. 2.

2.4 Instruments

A survey questionnaire was used in gathering data of school climate and work from home challenges, school leadership behaviors in relation to work performance and organizational commitment of among selected secondary school teachers in Schools Division of Zambales.

The survey questionnaire has three (3) parts.

The first part of the questionnaire dealt with the School Climate towards school and community engagement, teacher connections, structure of learning, physical environment, student peer relations, and parental involvement. This part of the questionnaire is adopted from the study of [5].

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with WFH Challenges as to job related items and work responsibilities, professional development and promotional opportunities, recognition and work achievement, organizational policy and administration and technical supervision, working relations and compensation benefits, and physical working conditions and health issues. This part of the questionnaire was adopted and modified from the study of [6].

Table 1. Frequency and percent distribution of teacher-respondents in selected secondary schools in schools division of zambales

School	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Subic National High School	45	16.00
Castillejos National High School	26	9.00
San Guillermo National High School	19	7.00
San Antonio National High School	14	5.00
La Paz National High School	14	5.00
Gov. Manuel Barreto National High School	13	5.00
Cabangan National High School	14	5.00
Botolan National High School	17	6.00
Panan National High School	8	3.00
Zambales National High School	36	13.00
Amungan National High School	12	4.00
Rofulo M. Landa High School	14	5.00
Taltal National High School	14	5.00
Louis National High School	9	3.00
Lipay National High School	16	6.00
Sta. Cruz National High School	9	3.00
Total	280	100.00

To test for the reliability and validity of the instrument, the questions were pilot tested to 15 teachers who were not respondents of the study. After the data had been consolidated, it was subjected to Kronbach's analysis by a Statistician and the questions were found acceptable.

2.5 Data Collection

Subic National High School was the selected secondary school in Subic; Castillejos National High School was the selected secondary school in Castillejos; San Guillermo National High School was the selected secondary school in San Marcelino; San Antonio National High School was the selected secondary school in San Antonio; La Paz National High School was

the selected secondary school in San Narciso; Gov. Manuel Barreto National High School was the selected secondary school in San Felipe; Cabangan National High School was the selected secondary school in Cabangan; Botolan National High School and Panan National High School were the selected secondary schools in Botolan; Zambales National High School and Amungan National High School were the selected secondary schools in Iba; Rofulo M. Landa High School was the selected secondary school in Palauig; Taltal National High School was the selected secondary school in Masinloc; Luis National High School was the selected secondary school in Candelaria; and Lipay National High School and Sta. Cruz National High School were the selected secondary schools in Sta. Cruz.

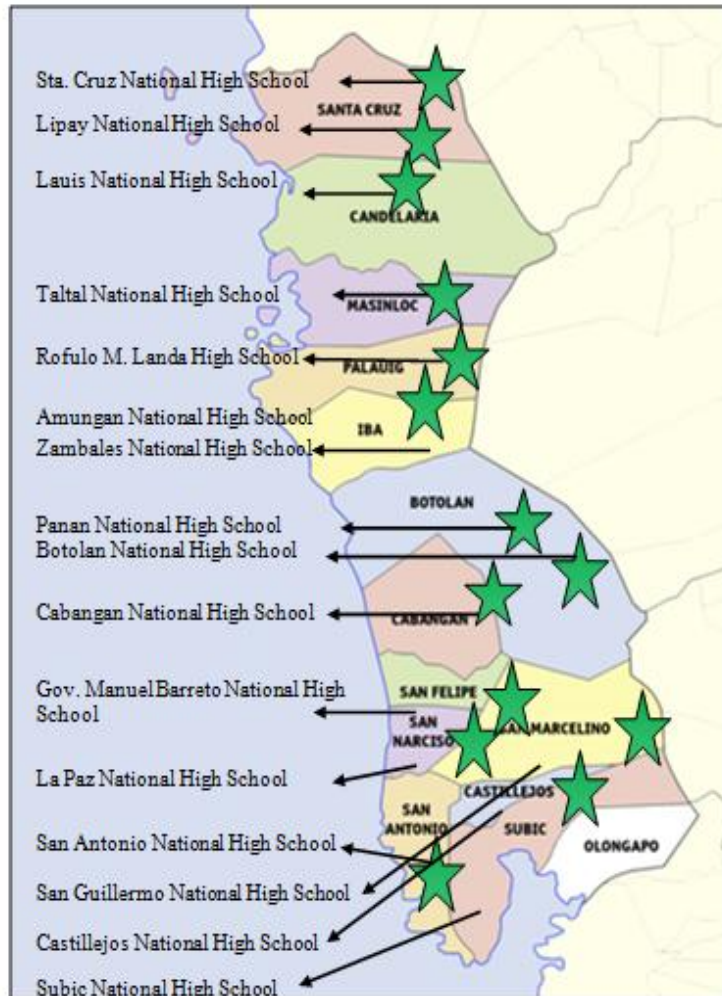


Fig. 1. Map of zambales where the secondary schools are located



Fig. 2. Map of the Philippines where the Central Luzon province of Zambales located

After a thorough review of the instrument to found it suited for the study, the researcher asked permission from Schools Division Superintendent to allow him to administer the instrument to teacher-respondents. The assistance of school heads was tapped to ensure smooth administration and successful retrieval. The objectives and purposes of the study were explained clearly to the respondents to enable respondents gain better understanding of the direction of the study. The willingness of the respondents to participate in the study was taken into consideration.

The questionnaires were being distributed personally by the researcher observing proper physical distancing that in every school there was a certain room/ area for distribution to the respective teacher-respondents and other “New Normal” protocols and guidelines through the assistance of some colleagues. The researcher

also used social media platforms to follow-up the schools if the questionnaires are ready for retrieval since other teacher-respondents are on their Work from Home schedules. During the retrieval process, the researcher checked each instrument to ensure all items were answered by the respondents. Thus, the researcher personally requested teacher-respondents to complete their answers. The researcher allotted 15-20 school days in the distribution of the instrument and ensure one hundred percent of the retrieval.

2.6 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software and MS Excel were used for the computations and interpretations of data. The statistical tools in the analysis and interpretation of data and hypotheses testing include the following.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 School Climate

The data on the school climate as perceived by teacher-respondents are presented in Table 2. There are six (6) School Climate dimensions as to School and Community Engagement, Teacher Connections, Structure of Learning, Physical Environment, Student Peer Relations and Parental Involvement.

The average rating 3.40 by the teacher respondents indicate that under pandemic the school climate was perceived as always a challenge. The six (6) dimensions of school climate was perceived by teacher-respondents as “Always” manifested in: Teacher Connections (3.57, rank 1); School and Community Engagement (3.55, rank 2); Structure of Learning (3.53, rank 3); Physical Environment (3.47, rank 4); and Student Peer Relations and Parental Involvement, respectively (3.30, rank 5.5). Overall, the teacher-respondents perceived that their school “Always” engage on school climate with a mean rating of 3.40.

This supports the fact that the school was able to equally demonstrate same level of extent on the six (6) areas of school climate.

Effective teaching and learning is the result of complex group and psychological processes. However, the precise organizational factors and psychological mechanisms behind these processes are still under investigation. Identifying the means to improve students' learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness and performance remain the subject of continuous academic inquiry and a key objective of government and international bodies. As a result of this interest, an immense body of work center on the construct of “school climate” has emerged. School climate identifies the social characteristics of a school in terms of

relationships among students and teachers, learning and teaching emphasis, values and norms, and shared approaches and practices as to school community engagement, structure of learning, physical environment, student peer relations and parental involvement. Among other factors, empirical evidence has confirmed that school climate is powerful in affecting students' learning and teacher's effectiveness. However, the extent to which area of school climate largely influence teacher's effectiveness is less clear [7].

3.2 Work from Home Challenges

With an average rating of 3.41, the teachers agree that they experience challenges in working at home during the period of pandemic. These challenges included job related items and work responsibilities, professional development and promotional opportunities, recognition and work achievement, organizational policy and administration and technical supervision, working relations and compensation benefits, and physical working conditions and health issues. The finding of [8] revealed that the sudden shift from face to face to virtual learning resulted to substantial challenges for teachers' work and limited pupils' learning. However, with a rating of 3.49, teachers found organizational policy and administration and technical supervision as slightly more challenging. [9] indicated in their study that the administrators were faced with problems on emergency management and continuity plan for their institutions.

The findings clearly demonstrate that teacher-respondents agree on the six (6) areas of challenges on a work from home arrangement.

Reference to [10], the status quo on work arrangements for officials, teaching and non-teaching personnel in the entire DepEd nationwide is extended. All teachers in DepEd schools nationwide shall continue to

Table 2. Perceived school climate in public secondary schools in schools division of zambales

Dimensions	AWM	DE	Rank
1 School and Community Engagement	3.55	Always	2
2 Teacher Connections	3.57	Always	1
3 Structure of Learning	3.53	Always	3
4 Physical Environment	3.47	Always	4
5 Student Peer Relations	3.30	Always	5.5
6 Parental Involvement	3.30	Always	5.5
Grand Mean	3.40	Always	

AWM- Average weighted mean, DE - Descriptive evaluation

work from home, except those authorized by the Regional Directors to render work in field or school in light of the ongoing enrollment, subject to strict observance of COVID-19 health and safety precautions.

3.3 Test of Difference on School Climate

Table 3 shows the test of difference in School Climate. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyzed the significant difference on the response of the teacher respondents. The computed F value of 8.03 is greater than (>) the F-critical Value of 2.60, using 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there was significant difference on the perception of the teacher respondents towards dimensions of school climate as to school and community engagement, teacher connections, structure of learning, physical environment, student peer relations and parental involvement.

The data further reveals that the teacher-respondents have to different perspectives

towards dimensions of school climate. Majority of the teachers indicate that teacher connections are their major challenge.

3.4 Test of Difference on the Challenges in Work from Home Arrangement

The test of difference on WFH arrangement is presented in Table 4.

The computed F value of 2.82 is greater than (>) the F-critical Value of 2.49, using 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there was significant difference on the perception of the teacher respondents towards challenges of work from home arrangement as to job related items and work responsibilities, professional development and promotional opportunities, recognition and work achievement, organizational policy and administration and technical supervision, working relations and compensation benefits, and physical working conditions and health issues.

Table 3. Perceived work from home challenges of secondary school teachers in schools division of zambales

Work From Home Challenges		AWM	DE	Rank
1	Job Related Items and Work Responsibilities	3.44	Agree	3
2	Professional Development and Promotional Opportunities	3.45	Agree	2
3	Recognition and Work Achievement	3.36	Agree	5
4	Organizational Policy and Administration and Technical Supervision	3.49	Agree	1
5	Working Relations and Compensation Benefits	3.42	Agree	4
6	Physical Working Conditions and Health Issues	3.27	Agree	6
Grand Mean		3.41	Agree	

AWM- Average weighted mean, DE- Descriptive evaluation

Table 4. Test of difference on school climate

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
School and Community Engagement	5	17.74	3.55	0.01		
Teacher Connections	5	17.86	3.57	0.01		
Structure of Learning	6	21.18	3.53	0.01		
Physical Environment	5	17.37	3.47	0.02		
Student Peer Relations	5	16.49	3.30	0.00		
Parental Involvement	5	16.51	3.30	0.01		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.39	5	0.08	8.03	0.00	2.60
Within Groups	0.24	25	0.01			
Total	0.63	30				

Decision: Reject Null Hypothesis (Significant)

Table 5. Test of difference on work from home arrangement

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Job Related Items and Work Responsibilities	8	27.48	3.44	0.02		
Professional Development and Promotional Opportunities	6	20.72	3.45	0.00		
Recognition and Work Achievement	6	20.17	3.36	0.01		
Organizational Policy and Administration and Technical Supervision	8	27.92	3.49	0.01		
Working Relations and Compensation Benefits	6	20.49	3.42	0.02		
Physical Working Conditions and Health Issues	6	19.64	3.27	0.01		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	0.19	5	0.04	2.82	0.03	2.49
Within Groups	0.47	34	0.01			
Total	0.66	39				

Decision: Reject Null Hypothesis (Significant)

The findings imply that the teacher-respondents to have different perspectives towards the challenges of work from home arrangement. More teachers found that management is more of a problem than other dimensions such as professional development recognition and achievement.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The teacher-respondents perceived that the school climate under pandemic are challenging during the pandemic period especially their relationships with their peer and students. The teacher-respondents agree that the WFH arrangement is challenging. There are significant differences as to challenges in school climate and working from home. Classroom teacher advisers to organize community groups (e.g. PTA, LGU) meet regularly through online if not possible in face to face to discuss school issues; remind teachers to exercise professional judgment; DepEd may consider designing their own Learning Management System (LMS) to create a platform addressing different level of students; to design guidelines on proper childcare to guide students during online learning; may consider reviewing employee manual / appraisal and incentives to provide fairness promotion opportunities among teachers based on their work performance; are encourage to provide provisions on work praise thru online; review workload and allocate schedule / time for communication with coworkers and school heads with the use of online medium accessible to all. Since there was significant difference towards dimensions of school climate, school head may consider in determining the importance of different dimensions towards structuring their school climate. Since there was significant

difference on the challenges of work from home arrangement, school needs to prepare their employees through training and guidance in order to be guided and navigate different challenges they are involved with.

To conduct a follow-up study with in-depth and wider in scope so as to validate the findings obtained in the study.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

The researchers sought approval from the University's Ethics committee before the commencement of the study. A permit from the Department of Education's Superintendent was sought before data gathering. Names of the respondents and school was not disclosed in the questionnaire to ensure confidentiality of the data. The results of the study will be available at the President Ramon Magsaysay State University and at the Division Office of the Department of Education. Findings may be presented in the internationally at conferences and published in research journals. As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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