

Difficulties in the work-from-home setting, coping mechanisms and work performance among elementary teachers in Subic district

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ABSTRACT

This study involved 228 teachers assigned to public elementary schools in the Division of Zambales, Subic District, Philippines, during the SY 2020 - 2021 and focused on the profile, experiences in the work-from-home setting as encountered by teachers, their coping mechanisms, as well as their work performance. The methodology of the study employed a descriptive correlation design. Statistical treatment includes frequency, percentage, mean, Analysis of Variance, and Pearson r. Findings revealed that teachers have highly experienced difficulties in the work-from-home setting, have very highly drawn coping mechanisms to overcome difficulties, and have a very satisfactory teaching performance. It is recommended that school administrators update teachers' profiles, motivate teachers to undergo professional development through enrolling in graduate schools, help teachers with difficulties encountered in the work-from-home setting in the new normal through peer mentoring, motivate teachers to practice coping mechanisms and re-evaluate the work performance of teachers. Finally, teachers should learn to cope up with the challenges and difficulties in the work-from-home settings to have an outstanding work performance.

1. Introduction

Numerous repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic's worldwide spread could have an impact on people's general health. On the one hand, the virus itself produces settings in which human emotions like fear, concern, panic, anxiety, or sadness associated with depression might manifest more frequently in people in addition to the symptoms of the disease, as explained by Pedrosa et al. (2020). Stress and despair have increased as a result of this pandemic disease's psychological effects on the general populace.

There are many obstacles in the world that we work and live in. A person's ability to overcome obstacles might improve their quality of life since it is energizing and invigorating. However, when someone responds poorly to difficulties, stress can build up and jeopardize their performance and well-being (Mingoa, 2017).

As the nation continues to struggle with the coronavirus epidemic, the Department of Education has established alternative work arrangements for its staff, including instructors employed in public schools. Additionally, the Department of Education (DepEd) has given staff

members at offices, schools, and other establishments a menu of Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA) to choose from. It is not always the case that every employee must physically report to the office or worksite in order for there to be optimal or full operational capacity.

Teachers saw changes in technology and job demands as “high” work-related factors creating stress, and service as a “high” organizational component. Additionally, it was discovered that educators believed their roles to be “high” work-related stressors and the physical environment to be a “high” organizational influence. As a result, serving the community and fulfilling their role as teachers becomes stressful because of planning parent and student meetings, extracurricular activities, community partnerships that enhance student learning, and school-related activities. Teachers find it difficult to adjust to the hefty responsibilities that come with working from home.

With these pressing issues, the researcher decided to investigate the difficulties, coping strategies, and work output of elementary school teachers in the Subic District who were working from home under the new normal. The results of the study would give policymaker to develop training programs for teachers to help them with their issues and difficulties. This could aid educators in acclimating to the new normal.

This study examined the challenges faced by teachers assigned in public elementary schools in the Division of Zambales, Subic District, Philippines, during the SY 2020 - 2021, as well as their coping strategies and work performance in a work-from-home environment. In addition, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties experienced by public elementary school teachers in the work-from-home setting, and how do they differ when grouped according to profile variables?
2. What are the coping mechanisms used by teachers to overcome difficulties, and how do they differ when grouped according to profile variables?
3. What is the performance ratings of teachers as evaluated on their Individual Performance Commitment, and how do they differ when grouped according to profile variables?

2. Theoretical basis

This section indicates a summary of theories and empirical literature that served as the basis of this research.

Randall and Elizebeth (1994) define occupational stress as the interaction of the work conditions with the characteristics of the worker, such that the demands of work exceed the ability of the worker to cope with them. Warr (2007) explored the way in which work leaves us feeling happy or unhappy and that individual differences play a part in the work-happiness equation.

Wok-from-home setting is becoming popular. It is estimated that 01 in 04 Americans, which is over 26% of the American workforce, is expected to work remotely through 2021 (Apollo Technical, 2021). However, Kraft (2020) suggests that the sudden move to remote teaching has created substantial difficulties for teachers' work and limited the degree to which students can engage in learning.

The covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the shift from face-to-face classes to different learning modalities, which confronted teachers with different challenges. Hidalgo-Andrade, Hermosa-Bosano, and Paz (2021) indicate that most teachers used more than one coping strategy, and the three most frequently reported strategies were social support, physical activity (exercise), and leisure activities.

The work performance of teachers is based on KRA 04 and 05 of the revised IPCRF 2021 include reflection of one's practice and ongoing professional learning; including reflection on one's practice and ongoing professional learning and various related works/activities that contribute to the teaching-learning process. Arsenal, Nraciso, Rama, and Tabique (2021) revealed that no significant relationship existed between work stress and the performance of UM Tagum College Faculty.

The above studies are related to the present study since work performance will be correlated to difficulties encountered and coping mechanism of teachers.

This study described the difficulties experienced by teachers employed in public elementary schools in the Division of Zambales, Subic District, Philippines, during the SY 2020 - 2021 assigned in the work-from-home setting, their coping ability, and performance rating. For a closer examination of the study, the following null hypotheses below were tested:

1. There is no significant difference in the difficulties encountered by teachers assigned in the WFH setting in the new normal when grouped according to their profile variables.
2. There is no significant difference in the coping mechanisms of teachers when grouped according to the profile variables.
3. There is no significant difference in the work performance of teachers when grouped according to the profile variables.

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlation research design. The purpose of descriptive research, as discussed by McCombes (2020), is to precisely and methodically outline a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. In this study, the descriptive research aims to accurately portray the participants and to discuss and characterize the challenges and coping strategies in the work-from-home environment encountered by teachers. The data gathered was supported by questionnaires through Google Forms. By using this method, the researcher analyzed, interpreted, and reported the challenges and issues encountered by teachers in the modular approach. The respondents involved 228 teachers employed in public schools in the elementary department of District of Subic District, Division of Zambales during SY 2020 - 2021 and were selected by random sampling technique using Slovin's Formula.

The study utilized a researcher-made instrument on the difficulties encountered in the work-from-home setting in terms of teaching and learning, assessment, and feedback, monitoring and communication, collaboration with parents, and personal experiences. Whereas, the coping mechanisms of teachers include positive well-being, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring, and collaboration. The instrument contains indicators to be evaluated by the respondents utilizing the scale: 5 - Very High, 4 - Above Average, 3 - Average, 2 - Below Average, and 1 - Very Low. The last part of the instrument is the work performance of teachers in their IPCRF Score rating for SY 2020 - 2021. The researcher conducted a dry run or trial among twenty (20) available teachers from elementary schools in Subic District, which are not part of the target respondents for the validation to assure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument.

After the distribution and retrieval of the responses, the researcher organized, collated, tabulated, and analyzed them according to the following statistical tools using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. The statistical tools used in the analysis

and interpretation of gathered data are mentioned below. The inferential result was tested using a 0.05 Alpha level of significance. Percentage was used to determine what proportions of the respondents belong to a specific category, Weighted Mean (WM) was used to determine the assessment of difficulties and coping mechanisms of teachers in the work-from-home setting, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the differences in difficulties, coping mechanisms of teachers in the work-from-home setting and work performance when grouped according to profile variables.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Profile of teachers

Table 1

Profile of teachers

Profile of the Teachers		Frequency	Percentage
Age Mean = 35.50	21 - 30	72	32
	31 - 40	92	40
	41 - 50	51	22
	51 - 60	13	6
Sex	Male	55	24
	Female	173	76
Civil Status	Married	136	60
	Separated	2	1
	Single	88	39
	Widowed	2	1
Number Of Children Mean = 1.11	0	97	43
	1	58	25
	2	41	18
	3	20	9
	4	7	3
	5	5	2
Current Position	Teacher I	150	66
	Teacher II	26	11
	Teacher III	41	18
	Master Teacher I	6	3
	Master Teacher II	5	2

Profile of the Teachers		Frequency	Percentage
Number of Years in Teaching Mean = 8.29	01 - 10	166	73
	11 - 20	44	19
	21 - 30	18	8
Highest Educational Attainment	College Graduate	134	59
	Masters Units	52	23
	Masters Graduate	36	16
	Doctorate Units	3	1
	Doctorate Graduate	3	1
Average Monthly Family Income Mean = 28051.48	0 - 20,000	76	33
	20,001 - 40,000	124	54
	40,001 - 60,000	23	10
	60,001 - 80,000	5	2

Table 1 illustrates the profile variables of teachers according to age, sex, civil status, number of children, current position, number of years in teaching, highest educational attainment and monthly income. As reflected, the average age of teachers is 35.50 years old; most are married, childless, and classified as Teacher I with 01 - 10 years of teaching experience, have a college degree, and an average monthly income of 28,051.48 pesos. The findings are similar to the study conducted by Francisco (2020), wherein the majority of the teachers are Teacher I, and the majority of the teachers have an average year of teaching of 01 to 10 years respectively.

4.2. Difficulties experienced by public elementary school teachers in the work-from-home setting

Table 2

Difficulties experienced by public elementary school teachers in the work-from-home setting

Difficulties Experienced by Public Elementary School Teachers in the Work-From-Home Setting	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Teaching and Learning	3.06	Above Average	3
Assessment and Feedback	3.00	Above Average	5
Monitoring and Communication	3.01	Above Average	4
Collaboration with the Parents	3.07	Above Average	2
Personal Experiences	3.14	Above Average	1
Average Weighted Mean	3.06	Above Average	

Table 2 reveals the summary of difficulties experienced by public elementary school teachers in the work-from-home setting, which include teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, monitoring and communication, collaboration with parents, and personal experiences. As revealed, teachers experienced above-average difficulties in the work-from-home setting in

terms of teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, monitoring and communication, collaboration with parents, and personal experiences with a mean of 3.06. Kraft (2020) suggests that the abrupt shift to remote teaching has created significant challenges for teachers' work and limited the extent to which students can engage in learning. Whereas Bubb and Jones (2020) discovered that adaptation occurred quickly and that home-schooling was well received by students and parents. There was more creative learning, better progress, more useful feedback, and increased student autonomy.

4.3. Coping mechanisms drawn by teachers to overcome difficulties

Table 3

Coping mechanisms drawn by teachers to overcome difficulties

Coping Mechanisms Drawn by Teachers to Overcome Difficulties	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Positive Well-Being	3.29	Very High	4
Time Management	3.26	Very High	5
Openness To Change	3.34	Very High	2
Peer Mentoring	3.37	Very High	1
Collaboration	3.31	Very High	3
Average Weighted Mean	3.31	Very High	

As exposed in Table 3, the summary of coping mechanisms drawn by teachers to overcome difficulties namely positive well-being, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring and collaboration, recorded very highly drawn coping mechanisms to overcome difficulties with a mean of 3.31. It implies that teachers are doing their very best to cope up with challenges, and difficulties in the work-from-home settings. This means that even when teachers face challenges that impede their work, they are able to cope with the new normal and complete their tasks. Higher offices and school authorities should collaborate with teachers before implementing distance learning to address their resource and training needs in order to effectively facilitate the delivery of quality education to students (De Villa & Manalo, 2020).

4.4. Work performance of teachers based on their IPCRF 2021 under the Key Results Area (KRA) 03 and 04

Table 4

Work performance of teachers based on their IPCRF 2021 under the KRA 03 and 04

Work Performance	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
1. Selected, developed, organized, and used appropriate teaching and learning resources including ICT, to address learning goals.	4.35	Very Satisfactory	5
2. Built relationships with parents/guardians and the wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process.	4.45	Very Satisfactory	1

Work Performance	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating	Rank
3. Set achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with learning competencies.	4.40	Very Satisfactory	3
4. Participated in professional networks to share knowledge and enhance practice.	4.39	Very Satisfactory	4
5. Developed a personal improvement plan based on reflection of one's practice and ongoing professional learning.	4.32	Very Satisfactory	6
6. Performed various related works/activities that contribute to the teaching-learning process.	4.41	Very Satisfactory	2
Average Weighted Mean	4.38	Very Satisfactory	

Table 4 provides the work performance of teachers based on their IPCRF 2021 under the KRA 03 and 04. As shown, teachers have a very satisfactory work performance based on their IPCRF 2021 under the KRA 03 and 04 with regards to building relationships with parents/guardians and the wider school community to facilitate involvement in the educative process with a mean equal to 4.45. Likewise, indicator 6, developing a personal improvement plan based on reflection of one's practice and ongoing professional learning, obtained the lowest mean, equal to 4.32, with a descriptive rating of satisfactory. In summary, teachers have a very satisfactory performance based on their IPCRF 2021 under the KRA 03 and 04 with a mean of 4.38. The finding is similar to the study of Francisco (2020), wherein teachers have Very Satisfactory Performance as they get a mean rating of 4.18.

4.5. Difference on the difficulties experienced by teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to profile variables

Table 5

ANOVA on the difficulties experienced by teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to profile variables

Teacher's Profile	Source of Variation	SS	Df	F	P-value	F crit	Decision/ Interpretation
Age	treatment	1.3582	3	2.0665	0.1055	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	49.0737	224				
	total	50.4318	227				
Sex	treatment	0.0032	1	0.0144	0.9046	3.883	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	50.4286	226				
	total	50.4318	227				
Civil Status	treatment	0.7442	3	1.1183	0.3425	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	49.6877	224				

Teacher's Profile	Source of Variation	SS	Df	F	P-value	F crit	Decision/ Interpretation
	total	50.4318	227				
Number of Children	treatment	2.5415	5	2.3563	0.0414	2.255	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	47.8903	222				
	total	50.4318	227				
Current Position	treatment	1.4402	4	1.6389	0.1654	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	48.9916	223				
	total	50.4318	227				
Number of Years in Teaching	treatment	1.7251	2	3.9846	0.0199	3.036	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	48.7067	225				
	total	50.4318	227				
Highest Educational Attainment	treatment	1.7548	4	2.0098	0.0941	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	48.6770	223				
	total	50.4318	227				
Average Monthly Family Income	treatment	0.0733	3	0.1086	0.9550	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	50.3586	224				
	total	50.4318	227				

As exhibited in Table 5, the results of the analysis of variance on the difficulties of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to profile variables. Data shows no significant difference in the difficulties of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, current position, highest educational attainment, and average monthly family income. Since the computed F-values are lesser than the critical F-value, the hypotheses are accepted. This shows that the difficulties of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal are not dependent on these variables.

In contrast, it was found that there is a significant difference in the difficulties of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to number of children with a computed f value of 2.3563 greater than the tabular f value of 2.255 and number of years in teaching with a computed f value of 3.9846 greater than the tabular f value of 3.036 respectively. Therefore, hypotheses are rejected.

The findings do not conform with the study of Bayzan (2021) that female teachers were more likely to be afflicted by a lack of IT skills. Teachers over the age of 41, who are members of Generation X, also have more problems due to a lack of IT skills than their younger counterparts. Furthermore, issues such as internet and infrastructure inadequacies in rural areas, low participation rate of students in online courses, indifference of parents, and failure of teachers to be sufficiently active in the system were identified as problems by the teachers, and solutions were proposed accordingly.

4.6. Difference in the teachers' coping mechanisms when grouped according to profile variables

Table 6

Analysis of Variance on the teachers' coping mechanisms when grouped according to profile variables

Teacher's Profile	Source of Variation	SS	Df	F	P-value	F crit	Decision/ Interpretation
Age	treatment	1.9757	3	3.2765	0.0219	2.645	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	45.0227	224				
	total	46.9984	227				
Sex	treatment	0.0255	1	0.1227	0.7265	3.883	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	46.9729	226				
	total	46.9984	227				
Civil Status	treatment	0.5296	3	0.8509	0.4674	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	46.4688	224				
	total	46.9984	227				
Number of Children	treatment	4.4872	5	4.6866	0.0004	2.255	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	42.5112	222				
	total	46.9984	227				
Current Position	treatment	1.7902	4	2.2076	0.0691	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	45.2082	223				
	total	46.9984	227				
Number of Years in Teaching	treatment	0.9229	2	2.2533	0.1074	3.036	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	46.0755	225				
	total	46.9984	227				
Highest Educational Attainment	treatment	1.1302	4	1.3737	0.2439	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	45.8681	223				
	total	46.9984	227				
Average Monthly Family Income	treatment	0.4163	3	0.6673	0.5729	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	46.5820	224				
	total	46.9984	227				

Table 6 displays the results of ANOVA on the difference on the teachers' coping mechanisms when grouped according to profile variables. Data reveals no significant difference in the coping mechanisms drawn by teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to sex, civil status, current position, number of years in teaching, highest

educational attainment, and average monthly income. However, it was found that there is a significant difference in the drawn coping mechanisms of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal when grouped according to age with a computed f value of 3.2765 greater than the tabular f value of 2.645 and number of children with a computed f value of 4.6866 greater than the tabular f value of 2.255, respectively.

Wong (2019) has a similar result on the existence of statistically significant interactions between the coping strategies and the profile variable such as age.

4.7. Difference in teachers' work performance when grouped according to profile variables

Table 7

Analysis of Variance on teachers' work performance when grouped according to profile variables

Teacher's Profile	Source of Variation	SS	Df	F	P-value	F crit	Decision/ Interpretation
Age	treatment	5.3078	3	4.7948	0.0029	2.645	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	82.6551	224				
	total	87.9630	227				
Sex	treatment	0.6959	1	1.8021	0.1808	3.883	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	87.2671	226				
	total	87.9630	227				
Civil Status	treatment	2.7668	3	2.4249	0.0665	2.645	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	85.1962	224				
	total	87.9630	227				
Number of Children	treatment	5.0841	5	2.7237	0.0207	2.255	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	82.8788	222				
	total	87.9630	227				
Current Position	treatment	2.4610	4	1.6046	0.1741	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	85.5020	223				
	total	87.9630	227				
Number of Years in Teaching	treatment	3.7384	2	4.9934	0.0076	3.036	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	84.2246	225				
	total	87.9630	227				
Highest Educational Attainment	treatment	2.0637	4	1.3394	0.2562	2.412	Accept Ho, Not Significant
	error	85.8993	223				
	total	87.9630	227				
Average Monthly Family Income	treatment	5.1723	3	4.6648	0.0035	2.645	Reject Ho, Significant
	error	82.7906	224				
	total	87.9630	227				

Table 7 highlights the summary of ANOVA on the difference on teachers' work performance when grouped according to profile variables. Data shows no significant difference in the work performance of teachers when grouped according to sex, civil status, current position, and highest educational attainment. Since the computed F-values are lesser than the critical F-value, the hypotheses are not rejected. This implies that the work performance of teachers in the work-from-home setting in the new normal is not dependent on these variables.

However, it was found that there is a significant difference in the work performance of teachers when grouped according to age, number of children, number of years in teaching, and average monthly income. This means that teachers' teaching performance does not necessarily differ based on their educational attainment, length of service, or salary grade. They are equipped with the essential competencies and standards that are expected of public school teachers under the DepEd banner (Pa-alisbo, 2017).

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The majority of the respondents are 31 - 40 years old, female, married, do not have children, Teacher I, with 01 - 10 years of teaching experience, college graduate, and with an average monthly income of 28,051 pesos. The difficulties experienced by teachers in the work-from-home setting are above average, and there is sufficient evidence to conclude that teachers with a higher number of years in teaching faced fewer difficulties during the pandemic.

Moreover, teachers have very highly drawn coping mechanisms to overcome difficulties in terms of positive well-being, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring, and collaboration. Profile variables such as age and number of children are predictors of coping mechanisms. This implies that as teachers get older and have children, their coping mechanisms tend to improve.

Finally, based on the results of IPCRF 2021 under the KRA 03 and 04, teachers recorded a very satisfactory performance and significantly differed according to age, number of children, number of years in teaching, and average monthly income.

5.2. Recommendation

School administrators must update teachers' profiles. They should motivate teachers to undergo professional development through enrolling in graduate schools, help those who are new to the profession to adjust and cope in the work-from-home setting in the new normal through peer mentoring, and re-evaluate teachers' work performance.

Teachers, on the other hand, must organize activities into logical stages to fulfill the objectives of the lesson, communicate with students via phone calls and home visits as needed, create engaging content, and assign projects and papers appropriate for online classes and modular classes, teach parent the activities to do with students at home to reinforce good behavior at school. They must also spend time for a stress-free holiday and learn to cope with the challenges and difficulties in the work-from-home settings to have an outstanding work performance.

Future researchers may conduct a parallel or similar study with a broader and more in-depth scope to validate the study's findings and implement the above recommendations to reduce difficulties, develop coping mechanisms, and improve work performance.

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