
Challenges, Opportunities, and Performance of Elementary Teachers in Times of Pandemic

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Abstract — It is no secret that education systems here and abroad have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. And while we sometimes hear about the difficulties of parents and students with online and modular learning, teachers often have a fair share of challenges. Teachers must ensure that the quality of learning remains, even with the absence of face-to-face experiences, from planning lesson plans to conducting classes and distributing assignments. This study aimed to determine the significant relationship between the challenges, opportunities, and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational research design employing the quantitative data for an in-depth analysis of the study, the researcher used the researcher-made survey questionnaire which determine the extent of challenges and opportunities of elementary teachers in times of pandemic and the Monitoring and Supervision Tool prescribed by DepEd Regional Office (RM No. 466, s. 2020). Simple Percentage, Weighted Mean, and Pearson r were the statistical tools used. The researcher found out that the extent of challenges and opportunities of elementary teachers in times of pandemic is high while their level of performance is very satisfactory. A significant relationship was revealed between the challenges and performance of elementary teachers and opportunities and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. Thus, elementary teachers make every challenge an opportunity to excel in his/her chosen field, become innovative and resilient in dealing with circumstances to improve their performance.

Keywords — *Challenges, Opportunities, Performance, Elementary Teachers, In Times of Pandemic*

I. Introduction

The fight against the threats to COVID-19 pandemic suffered profound effects and impacts on almost all sectors in humans. These have resulted in the widespread disruption such as travel restrictions (Chinazzi et al., 2020), closure of schools (Viner et al., 2020), global economic recession (Fernandes, 2020), political conflicts (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), racism (Habibi et al., 2020), and misinformation and controversies (Enitan et al., 2020), to name a few. One of the most

affected is the educational sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic is still existent today, and there are no specific vaccines or medicines to eradicate this disease. We need to live to the new normal; if not contained, we need to live with the disease as viruses are constantly evolving (Denworth, 2020). However, scientists are still on their way in studying and developing vaccines and presently in clinical trials (Cortegiani et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2020; Gautret et al., 2020).

For almost a year of pandemic, all schools in the public and private are still close. Face-to-face classes is limited to some colleges and universities, but the basic education, learning at home is still happening. Blended and/or modular distance learning modalities are the learning modality adopted by all schools in the country. However, the implementation of this new normal learning modality poses different risks, problems, and challenges to both the teachers and pupils (Bao, 2020).

According to Canonizado (2020), the circumstances that arise can be a challenge or an opportunity. A situation is called a challenge when it is seen as an issue in an organization. Typically, this is the problem teachers are trying to overcome to make it easier, but this is a fact in life that everyone faces as they move on.

The country's health crisis raises difficulties in teaching where teachers are part of the current normal education system. These problems influence their success in the preparation of modules. There are times where teachers are stressed from time to time because of a lot of things to do. As a result, they are also withdrawing from group talks with their friends.

Teachers face difficulties under the current normal education system. These problems include teaching the learners where it is difficult for teachers to reach out to all the learners at home, even the teachers are using different forms of communication. It is therefore quite difficult for them to develop the learners' skills because the learners remain at home while learning the lessons. Not all parents have the desire and ability to support their children in their studies. Some parents cannot comprehend the handwritten details written on the modules. DepEd constantly implements multiple systems that have culminated in the loss of the teachers. In this phase of the pandemic, it is difficult to gather everybody to carry out the various DepEd services.

Challenges are part of a life that cannot be erased. Individuals need to consider these obstacles to realize that they are living spices. In addition, they need to have a positive temperament in their lives so that they can cope with the difficulties they face in carrying out their everyday tasks at school.

On the other hand, this pandemic also brought many opportunities to teachers. With the implementation of modular distance learning modality, most of the teachers can craft innovative projects to assist their pupils in learning. financially, teachers were given moratorium from the private and public lending institutions; they have less expenses in going to school due to the implementation of working from home and many more opportunities.

In this premise, the researcher decided to conduct this study to determine the significant relationship between the challenges, opportunities, and performance of elementary teachers in

times of pandemic. A proposed intervention plan will be formulated based on the findings of the study.

It is in the rationale that the researcher who is currently teaching in the above mentioned local, would like to delve worthy research undertaking that will benefit the school she is currently teaching and that of her Graduate Program.

This study determined the significant relationship between elementary teachers' challenges, opportunities, and performance in times of pandemic in Margen and San Vicente Elementary School, Ormoc District IX, Ormoc City Division. A proposed intervention plan was formulated based on the findings of the study.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perceived extent of challenges met by the teachers in times of pandemic?
2. What is the perceived extent of opportunities of teachers in times of pandemic?
3. What is the level of performance of teachers in terms of the following:
 - 3.1 content knowledge and pedagogy;
 - 3.2 learning environment and diversity of learners;
 - 3.3 curriculum and planning;
 - 3.4 assessment and reporting; and
 - 3.5 plus factor?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges and performance of teachers amid COVID-19 pandemic?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the opportunities and performance of teachers amid COVID-19 pandemic?
6. What intervention plan can be proposed based on the findings of this study?

II. Methodology

Design. This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design employing the quantitative data to determine the extent of challenges, opportunities and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. Margen and San Vicente Elementary School, Ormoc District 9, Ormoc City Division are the main locale of the study. The 33 elementary teachers teaching in the said locale are the main respondents of the study. A researcher-made survey questionnaire that determines the extent of challenges and opportunities of elementary teachers in times of pandemic was used. Moreover, the researcher will utilize the Monitoring and Supervision Tool prescribed by DepEd Regional Office (RM No. 466, s. 2020) was also used. This research is focused on determining the extent of challenges, opportunities, and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic and its relationship. A Proposed Intervention Plan based on the findings of the study is the output.

Sampling. There are 33 elementary teachers involved in this study. The research instruments were distributed personally with consent from the Local IATF and strictly following the prescribed Health Protocol during the distribution and retrieval of the modules.

Research Procedure. The researcher prepared the research design and tools to be utilized in the study. Approval and recommendation from the Panel of Examiner of the Graduate Studies was sought. A letter request to conduct this study was forwarded to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, permission from the District Supervisor and School Head was secured before the actual gathering of data. Validation of the instruments through the School Head and District Supervisor was sought. Orientation of the participants was done through face-to-face. Permission from the Barangay and Local IATF was secured. Administering of the survey followed. After accomplishing the survey, the researcher collected. Data were tallied and submitted for statistical treatment. Analysis and Interpretation of Data. Making of Proposed Intervention Plan followed.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division, District Supervisor of the District, and school principal. Orientation of the respondents was done using face to face modality. In the orientation, issues and concerns were addressed, and consent to be included in the study were signed.

Treatment of Data. The Simple Percentage and Weighted Mean was employed to determine the extent of challenges, opportunities, and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. Pearson r was used to determine the significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Challenges of Elementary Teachers in Times of Pandemic (N=33)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
CHALLENGES			
Unstable internet connectivity.	4.82	Strongly Agree	Very High
Lack of materials and equipment for the reproduction of learning resources.	2.32	Disagree	Low
Unable to deliver the lesson to the pupils on face-to-face classroom.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High

Unsure of the lessons conveyed is mastered by the pupils.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Increase number of non-readers and non-numerates in the class.	4.78	Strongly Agree	Very High
Enhancing the skills of the learners.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Parents support in the learning of the pupils.	1.22	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
There are certain parents who lack the desire and ability to teach their children the substance of the lessons.	4.65	Strongly Agree	Very High
Some parents never provide guidance and assistance to their children's studies.	4.72	Strongly Agree	Very High
Teachers are affected by this DepEd intervention.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Some of the time is used in the implementation of the DepEd program	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Teachers continue to work overtime only to comply with all of these undertakings.	4.65	Strongly Agree	Very High
Lack of training to craft video lessons.	4.12	Agree	High
Teachers are still under stress in the execution of their roles and obligations.	4.18	Agree	High
Grand Mean	4.32	Agree	High

Table 1 presents the challenges met by elementary teachers in times of pandemic. It was revealed on the table that the extent of challenges of elementary teachers in times of pandemic has a grand mean of 4.32, which is interpreted as high. This means that elementary teachers agree that they met challenges in this time of pandemic. This implies that having the new normal learning modality, it is expected that teachers are to meet challenges, especially in the crafting of learning materials that will help improve pupils' performance. This implies further that the situation presents a unique challenge to every educational leader's decision-making process within the new normal. Hence, to sustain the delivery of quality of instruction to every school, this study presents opportunities for responding to issues, problems, and trends that are arising and will arise in the future due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unable to deliver the lesson to the pupils on the face-to-face classroom, unsure of the lessons conveyed is mastered by the pupils, enhancing the skills of the learners, teachers are affected by this DepEd intervention and some of the time is used in the implementation of the DepEd program got the highest mean of 5.00 which is interpreted as very high. This means that these statements have very high extent of challenges that elementary teachers met. This implies that these challenges should be addressed to implement the modular learning and attain positive learning outcomes effectively.

The parents support in the learning of the pupils got the lowest mean of 1.22, which is interpreted as very low. This means that elementary teachers believe that parents are not involved in the learning of their children in this pandemic. This implies that based on the result of the accomplished modules, it is evident that only the pupils accomplish their modules.

Table 2
Opportunities of Elementary Teachers in Times of Pandemic (N=33)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
Opportunities			
Reduce learning competencies.	3.78	Agree	High
Work from home among teachers and other school personnel.	2.22	Disagree	Low
Providing moratorium on private and public lending institutions.	3.18	Moderately Agree	Moderate
Continued salary despite of pandemic.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Being innovative in the delivery of the lesson.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Improving curricula.	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Prioritizing opportunities for authentic learning.	1.22	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
Able to attend trainings through virtual and other online platforms.	4.65	Strongly Agree	Very High

Maximizing the use of learning outside the classroom.	4.72	Strongly Agree	Very High
Reduced class size or spaced-out student desks.	4.32	Agree	High
Opportunity to utilize your skills and talents	3.87	Agree	High
Opportunity to learn new skills	5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
Support for additional training and education	3.65	Agree	High
Acknowledgement of skills and abilities shown	4.12	Agree	High
Given due recognition for outstanding performance of skills and abilities	4.18	Agree	High
Variety of job responsibilities	4.56	Strongly Agree	Very High
Degree of independence associated with your work roles	4.52	Strongly Agree	Very High
Adequate opportunity for periodic changes in duties	4.55	Strongly Agree	Very High
Routinary performance of work	3.93	Agree	High
Conducive work place.	4.76	Strongly Agree	Very High
Grand Mean	4.11	Agree	High

Table 2 presents the extent of opportunities received by the elementary teachers in this time of pandemic. It was revealed on the table that the extent of opportunities of elementary teachers has a grand mean of 4.11, which is interpreted as high. This means that during this time of pandemic, there are opportunities that elementary teachers are acquired. This implies that there are benefits for the teachers brought about by this pandemic. These opportunities make teachers a strong, resilient and become more effective and efficient in instructional delivery. Aside from these, teachers are becoming innovative just to achieve the goals set.

The continued salary despite pandemic, being innovative in the delivery of the lesson, improving curricula, and learning new skills are the indicators rated very high by the elementary

teachers. This means that teacher's role has changed during this time of pandemic. This implies that teachers are resilient in dealing with the situations. They easily adapt the practices and become creative in keeping the pupils engaged in learning. The learning materials created by teachers helps in providing learning to the pupils.

Prioritizing authentic learning opportunities is an indicator that rated the lowest with a mean of 1.22, which is interpreted as very low. This means that there are other priorities that teachers had to attend to effectively implement this new normal learning modality. This implies that teachers are always looking for what is best to be given to the pupils.

Table 3
Performance of Elementary Teachers (N=33)

KEY RESULT AREAS	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND PEDAGOGY	4.23	Evident	Very Satisfactory
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND DIVERSITY	4.10	Evident	Very Satisfactory
CURRICULUM AND PLANNING	4.22	Evident	Very Satisfactory
REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT	4.27	Evident	Very Satisfactory
PLUS FACTOR	4.43	Evident	Very Satisfactory
GRAND MEAN	4.25	Evident	Very Satisfactory

Table 3 presents the performance of elementary teachers in this time of pandemic. It was revealed on the table that the performance of elementary teachers in this time of pandemic has a grand mean of 4.25, which is interpreted as very satisfactory. This means that it is evident that what the teachers are doing is in line with their roles and responsibilities. This implies that teachers are not affected with this new normal. They embrace it and make every undertaking an opportunity to move on and survive.

Table 4
Test of Relationship

Variables Correlated	r	Computed value or t	Table Value @.05	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
CHALLENGES AND PERFORMANCE	0.76	2.991	0.931	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship (High)
OPPORTUNITIES AND PERFORMANCE	0.71	3.128	0.931	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship (High)

Table 4 presents the test of the relationship between the extent of challenges, opportunities, and level of performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. It was revealed on the table that the computed value or t of 2.991 is greater than the tabular value of 0.931 at .05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between the extent of challenges and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. The r-value of 0.76 shows a high significant relationship. This implies that the challenges that elementary teachers encountered in this time of pandemic, they use it to improve their performance.

Moreover, this table also shows the test of relationship between the extent of opportunities and level of performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. It was revealed on the table that the computed value or t of 3.128 is greater than the tabular value of 0.931 at .05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between the extent of opportunities and performance of elementary teachers in times of pandemic. The r-value of 0.71 shows a high significant relationship. This implies that the benefits received by the teachers in this time of pandemic affects their performance. The opportunities are motivations by the teachers to effectively implement the new normal learning modality.

IV. Conclusion

The data revealed that there is a significant relationship between the extent of challenges and performance of elementary teachers in this time of pandemic. Moreover, this study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between the extent of opportunities and performance of elementary teachers in this time of pandemic. Thus, elementary teachers make every challenge an opportunity to excel in his/her chosen field, become innovative and resilient in dealing with circumstances to improve their performance.

V. Recommendations

1. The Proposed Intervention Plan formulated should be utilized;
2. Teachers should learn to overcome the challenges that came along their way;
3. Teachers should encourage their peers to work for the good of their clientele and to be more effective despite of this challenging world;
4. School Heads and teachers should make every day an opportunity to excel, strive and do more for the effective implementation of this learning modality;
5. School Heads should provide a harmonious relationship among all personnel in the school;
6. School Heads should make every day an opportunity to learn, re-learn and unlearn;
7. School Heads and teachers should provide an avenue where they can discuss their performance and that of the pupils; and
8. Future researchers should replicate this study to include different locale and include different variables aside from the mentioned in this study.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE**MRS. MALOU S. RAAGAS**

Malou Sudaria Raagas born on January 9, 1986 at Brgy. Margen, Ormoc City and the second of seven siblings in the family. She finished her elementary education at Margen Elementary School in 1999 and graduated at Margen National High School in 2003 for her secondary studies. She took up Bachelor of Elementary Education in Leyte State University, also known as VISCA at Baybay, Leyte, where she graduated and earned the degree in 2007. Now, she is still enrolled at Western Leyte College, finishing her Master's Degree - Master of Arts in Education major in *Administration and Supervision*.

Currently, Malou is teaching Grade 2 at Margen Elementary School part of District 9, Ormoc Division for twelve years, holding the position of Teacher III. She is well trained in handling lower grades pupils and a regional mentor in MTB-MLE.