

Instructional Engagement of Selected Elementary School Teachers in Isabela City, Basilan Province During the Pandemic

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Abstract— *The study primarily aimed to determine the instructional engagement of selected elementary school teachers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The findings revealed that instructional engagement in elementary school is high. This high level of engagement of teachers on instruction provides a primary basis for the division office to engage in other aspects rather than focusing on instruction.*

Keywords— *Instructional Engagement, COVID-19, Elementary School, Teachers, Isabela City, Basilan Province.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Some critical decisions are placed in the hands of academic implementers every day that will decide the future of their institutions. Additionally, schools are facing many challenges as a result of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, including new employees, increased student expectations, and more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the closure of schools across the country, highlighting the special role schools play. Due to the national educational objectives and the requirements of their teachers and students, teachers and students have been forced to adopt novel approaches to new leadership issues [10].

In these demanding and chaotic circumstances, pressure is relentless, options are limited, and sleepless nights are common. Face-to-face staff meetings and corridor conversations with colleagues that once characterized a school day have disappeared. In the past few years, those informal, critical opportunities for social connection and leadership have simply disappeared [7]. In the twilight of education, parents, students, and teachers either expect normal service to resume soon or hope for a new normal that will provide stability, continuity, and reassurance. Soon, neither is likely to happen.

Academic specialists found themselves in the unfavorable position of being the system's pinch point. As far as CoViD-19 responses, processes, procedures, and protocols are concerned, they rely on guidance from above. These parameters can vary rapidly, almost instantaneously, depending on how the virus evolves [1]. Simultaneously, school administrators are confronted with fluid and shifting staffing realities, requiring them to accomplish far more with very less. Staff and students are socially isolated, which creates additional work and pressure on those staff members who can return to work. As a result of each expectation, whether from above or below, the

school curriculum is placed under greater professional and personal strain.

Academic specialists, however, found themselves in the undesirable position of being the weak link in the system. Regarding CoViD-19 reactions, methods, procedures, and protocols, they rely on guidance from above. Depending on how the virus develops, these parameters can change quickly, nearly instantly [1]. School administrators must simultaneously accomplish far more with very little as a result of variable and shifting personnel realities. Social isolation among employees and students adds to the workload and pressure on those staff members who can resume their jobs. The demands of every expectation—whether they come from above or below—put more pressure on educators and students alike.

According to Netolicky [9], "curriculum implementors must respond swiftly and strategically in times of crisis, but also with proper respect for the options, implications, and unintended consequences of their decisions." This is unquestionably the case, but no one can predict the best course of action, the best course of action, or the unintended repercussions of any action taken during this crisis. Without a safety net, school instructors are balancing on a precarious cliff. There aren't any models or guides for managing schools during a pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is serious, it is unlikely to be the last crisis we encounter in our lifetimes, and this is not the first-time school leaders and teachers have been asked to lead during uncertain times, according to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in 2021. School administrators and instructors have had to deal with a variety of difficulties, from rebuilding after natural catastrophes to helping communities recover from financial, social, and emotional loss. School administrators and teachers have remained committed to achieving the best results for their students and school communities while providing clarity and direction, fostering resilience, and promoting hope throughout these trying times.

Leading change also requires a broad range of skills, such as non-behavioral, non-practice-related leadership and teaching competencies that have an impact on the character of behavior and practices. To respond to the scenario, good and effective instructors are flexible and use a variety of skills and strategies. Teachers must switch between many roles

throughout a typical school day, from an authority figure to a teammate, coach, and therapist, depending on what is required. Being able to modify and adapt teaching strategies in response to evolving situations is essential for becoming a successful curriculum implementor.

There aren't many studies on how instructors in schools are handling the epidemic, but a few discoveries in the CoViD-19 educational environment are important to note. For instance, the reading comprehension of the learners in elementary really affected during the pandemic [5].

According to Leithwood [8], COVID-19 has drastically and potentially permanently changed how school teachers conduct themselves in the classroom. Due to the epidemic, the school teachers' world has also turned on its axis and is unlikely to ever, if ever, return to "normal." Clear vision, helping others grow, and expanding ability are all characteristics of good teachers. Also, the evidence points to the crucial importance of context-responsive, indicating a change in recommended practices for schools as a result of CoViD-19.

In a similar vein, the bulk of preparation and training programs for teachers, district supervisors, school heads, and education program supervisors are probably out of date given the challenges that face education today. Existing preparation and training programs, as well as the teaching paradigms they advocate, frequently need to be significantly rethought and revised to remain useful for aspiring and working school teachers. Just rebranding or reconfiguring what applied before to CoViD-19 would be a mistake because much of this training and development may be out of date [8]. To handle the current and likely ongoing pandemic scenario, new programs will be needed that completely and appropriately address the leadership and teaching abilities, practices, and actions.

It is now a must for program implementers, school administrators, and most crucially teachers, to be able to handle change and crises. In difficult times, maintaining an effective school will require more than routine problem-solving and the occasional firefighting [7]. Instead, all school administrators and educators will need to be actively involved in crisis and change management, which calls for the cooperation and assistance of every member of staff. A high level of intellectual competence among school administrators will be necessary to ensure that issues be handled collectively as they arise given the remarkable pace of change in this epidemic.

Together with them, the academic competencies are crucial to the execution of the Department of Education's Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) (DepEd). DepEd has given schools the freedom to develop and contextualize the learning resources in the choice and implementation of the various remote learning modalities as a result. As a result, the academic administrator is crucial to the creation of the curriculum, the delivery of instruction, and other interconnected elements relating to the achievement of learning outcomes for the students based on the listed most essential learning skills (MELCs) in remote learning.

According to Strielkowski [11], academic leadership includes a variety of management roles, from administrative and strategic management positions to transformational and visionary roles. Teaching has a leadership component; a successful leader should motivate his teachers to be enthusiastic about learning and to make informed decisions about the educational process. Second, leadership is connected to a school's research component, underlining the responsibility that institutions have for producing meaningful knowledge. The third element of the paradigm is concerned with setting a course and promoting it. It is connected to strategy, vision, and networking. To achieve that goal, a competent leader must create a clear vision that will provide a set of expectations as well as intrinsic motivation.

Particularly, those in charge of implementing academic and curriculum changes are described as having the capacity to recognize the need for change, allocate resources for it, carry it out, keep track of it, and promote it [1]. The evolution of Classroom Management follows the rise in standards for academic success. To execute curriculum effectively and advance their schools to the cutting edge of transformation, teachers must have the flexibility to respond to the educational needs of their pupils. Effective teaching, whether it takes place online or in person, is a top priority for the educational system.

Christian [3] asserts that school leadership has a significant impact on teachers' and students' achievement and that work satisfaction promotes academic advancement. To win the confidence and support of many stakeholders, school administrators, and teachers should serve as role models for effective leadership behaviors within the school and community. Great educational leaders create enticing plans and gather people to implement them.

Similar to how teachers' roles are changing, school administrators' duties are becoming more sophisticated and nuanced as facilitators of the collaborative work of professionals within and outside of their schools. Schools can be categorized as either learning organizations or teaching organizations, according to Cambridge [2]. Experts are gathered in professional learning groups to share information and work on projects that improve student learning. Others have talked about the function of leaders in networks that are student outcomes-focused and collaborate with teachers [7]. The idea of accountability is emphasized in these interpretations with a focus on the participants' professional obligations.

The performance of the school is under the control of the administration, principals, and instructors. It was claimed that such administration's attitudes, values, beliefs, and personal attributes can motivate staff to achieve organizational goals, and if student success increases over time, it's mainly because important stakeholders share the leader's vision for these goals [6].

Classroom supervisors are essential to ensuring that kids receive the instruction of the highest caliber. They must make sure that educational policies are in place to support the successful learning of all children. They serve as a motivator, counselors, and supporters of effective teaching methods. While improving test results are important, effective

instructors also understand the crucial role that instruction plays in students' development.

So, ensuring good collaboration should be one of the responsibilities of educational facilitators. They should understand the value of and potential for successful collaboration. Nevertheless, it won't work unless teachers put a lot of time, effort, preparation, and faith into it [4]. To create or modify the campus action plan, the collaborative approach should start with data analysis and input from teachers, curriculum staff, and consultants.

On the other hand, emphasized that curriculum development is an essential part of educational leadership because it enables schools to define their mission, define their activities, and direct their decision-making [12]. As they lead a school team through this crucial phase of school reform, leaders may use this thought-provoking how-to guide to help them make wise choices and create positive policies.

Because of this, a successful school needs a solid curriculum and high standards of performance at every grade level. Only if the principal assumes the position of a true curriculum leader will this be possible.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs descriptive-quantitative designs, assessing respondents via a questionnaire-checklist survey. The study aimed to determine the academic leadership of Elementary School Heads under the Isabela City Schools Division. One hundred-Ten (110) Elementary School Teachers were selected as respondents through simple random sampling. A self-administered checklist questionnaire was constructed focusing on three domains such as affective engagement, cognitive engagement, and behavioral engagement. A five-point Likert scale was used. For the interpretation and interval scale of the rating, the table below shows the rating interval and its equivalent descriptive interpretation.

TABLE 1. Interval Scale and Interpretation

| Interval Scale | Qualitative Description |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 4.50-5.00 | Very High Engagement |
| 3.50-4.49 | High Engagement |
| 2.50-3.49 | Moderate Engagement |
| 1.50-2.49 | Low Engagement |
| 1.00-1.49 | Very Low Engagement |

The questionnaire checklist was validated by a committee of experts who qualify for the judgment on the instruments. The degree of validity was established by ensuring that all objectives being formulated in the research problems are provided with the corresponding items in the questionnaire checklist. A final draft is printed and administered for pilot testing to the teachers who are non-respondents of the study. The administration of the questionnaire checklist was conducted, and the data obtained from them are computed using the Cronbach Alpha.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The instructional engagement level of public elementary school heads in Isabela City, Basilan Province, Philippines concerning affective, cognitive, and behavioral.

The following table shows the mean and standard distribution of the responses of the school heads on an instructional engagement under the area of affective engagement.

TABLE 2. Mean Distribution on Instructional Engagement of School Heads in Terms of Affective Engagement

| A. Affective Engagement | Mean | Qualitative Description |
|--|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. I feel directed when my head supervises me in the employment of modular learning. | 4.26 | High Engagement |
| 2. Teaching is inspiring when modularized instruction motivates and engages students. | 4.32 | High Engagement |
| 3. Teaching is affectionate when the teacher is regularly contacting the student. | 4.34 | High Engagement |
| 4. I am open-minded to the adjustment of the student's learning construct in remote learning. | 4.41 | High Engagement |
| 5. I feel responsive when I give study-skills advice in modularized instruction. | 4.24 | High Engagement |
| 6. I feel at ease to focus on other non-teaching preparations with the technical assistance of my school head. | 4.08 | High Engagement |
| 7. It is facile to teach when the school had directed a clear curriculum implementation. | 4.27 | High Engagement |
| 8. I feel esteemed when I engender respect for intellectual diversity. | 4.28 | High Engagement |
| 9. I feel safe with the schools existing program and policy | 4.26 | High Engagement |
| 10. I feel directed when 'need analysis' is employed in preparing modules. | 4.26 | High Engagement |
| Area Overall | 4.27 | High Engagement |

The data shows that the mean rating of teachers under the area of affective engagement is 4.27 and descriptively 'high engagement'. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of affective engagement.

Particularly, the teachers have 'high engagement' on all indicators. These indicators were ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows:

Indicator 4: I am open-minded to the adjustment of the student's learning construct in remote learning.

Indicator 3: Teaching is affectionate when the teacher is regularly contacting the student.

Indicator 2: Teaching is inspiring when modularized instruction motivates and engages students.

Indicator 8: I feel esteemed when I engender respect for intellectual diversity.

Indicator 7: It is facile to teach when the school had directed a clear curriculum implementation.

Indicator 1: I feel directed when my head supervises me in the employment of modular learning.

Indicator 9: I feel safe with the schools existing program and policy.

Indicator 10: I feel directed when 'need analysis' is employed in preparing modules.

Indicator 5: I feel responsive when I give study-skills advice in modularized instruction.

Indicator 6: I feel at ease to focus on other non-teaching preparations with the technical assistance of my school head. The following table shows the mean and standard distribution of the responses of teachers on an instructional engagement under the area of cognitive engagement.

TABLE 3. Mean Distribution on Instructional Engagement of Teachers in Terms of Cognitive Engagement

| B. Cognitive Engagement | Mean | Qualitative Description |
|--|-------------|-------------------------|
| 11. The conduct of school needs analysis among teachers strengthens the BE-LCP | 4.17 | High Engagement |
| 12. School heads academic leadership ability ensures the smooth delivery of remote learning. | 4.28 | High Engagement |
| 13. Students' well-being is a priority in remote learning | 4.35 | High Engagement |
| 14. The creation of a curriculum team can cater to individual differences in learning needs. | 4.43 | High Engagement |
| 15. The provision of feedback ensures learning | 4.33 | High Engagement |
| 16. The establishment of strong rapport among the parents and stakeholders ensures the success of BE-LCP | 4.31 | High Engagement |
| 17. Performance assessment in modularized instruction evaluates the key skill learned. | 4.27 | High Engagement |
| 18. Modules reduce the routine aspects of instructional teaching. | 4.16 | High Engagement |
| 19. Modularized instruction integrates learning theory and practice based on the exercises given. | 4.20 | High Engagement |
| 20. Learning new methods and approaches is vital to the delivery of remote learning | 4.38 | High Engagement |
| Area Overall | 4.29 | High Engagement |

The data shows that the mean rating of teachers under the area of cognitive engagement is 4.29 and descriptively 'high engagement'. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of cognitive engagement.

Particularly, the teachers have 'high engagement' on all indicators. These indicators were ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows

Indicator 14: The creation of a curriculum team can cater to individual differences in learning needs.

Indicator 20: Learning new methods and approaches is vital to the delivery of remote learning.

Indicator 13: Students' well-being is a priority in remote learning.

Indicator 15: The provision of feedback ensures learning.

Indicator 16: The establishment of strong rapport among the parents and stakeholders ensures the success of BE-LCP.

Indicator 12: School heads academic leadership ability ensures smooth delivery of remote learning.

Indicator 17: Performance assessment in modularized instruction evaluates the key skill learned.

Indicator 19: Modularized instruction integrates learning theory and practice based on the exercises given.

Indicator 11: The conduct of schools needs analysis among teachers to strengthen the BE-LCP.

Indicator 18: Modules reduce the routine aspects of instructional teaching.

The following table shows the mean and standard distribution of the responses of teachers on an instructional engagement under the area of behavior engagement.

TABLE 4. Mean Distribution on Instructional Engagement of Teachers in Terms of Behavior Engagement

| C. Behavior Engagement | Mean | Qualitative Description |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|
| 21. Prepare modules and other learning resources for instructional delivery | 4.35 | High Engagement |
| 22. Follow the directives of the school head about BE-LCP | 4.38 | High Engagement |
| 23. Contextualize and localize learning resources | 4.38 | High Engagement |
| 24. Use the appropriate technological platform for learning and modalities | 4.34 | High Engagement |
| 25. Emphasize learners' mental health and homeroom guidance | 4.39 | High Engagement |
| 26. Monitor students' performance and learning | 4.47 | High Engagement |
| 27. Provide learning intervention to the least learned most essential learning skills (MELCS) | 4.42 | High Engagement |
| 28. Attend the webinar and other training related to distance learning | 4.18 | High Engagement |
| 29. Evaluate and revise the effectiveness of the strategies used | 4.33 | High Engagement |
| 30. Provide adequate learning resources in all applicable modalities of distance learning | 4.38 | High Engagement |
| Area Overall | 4.36 | High Engagement |

The data shows that the mean rating of teachers under the area of behavior engagement is 4.26 and descriptively 'high engagement'. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of behavior engagement.

Particularly, the teachers have 'high engagement' on all indicators. These indicators were ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows:

Indicator 26: Monitor students' performance and learning.

Indicator 27: Provide learning intervention to the least learned most essential learning skills (MELCS).

Indicator 25: Emphasize learners' mental health and homeroom guidance.

Indicator 22: Follow the directives of the school head about BE-LCP.

Indicator 23: Contextualize and localize learning resources.

Indicator 30: Provide adequate learning resources in all applicable modalities of distance learning.

Indicator 21: Prepare modules and other learning resources for instructional delivery.

Indicator 24: Use the appropriate technological platform of learning and modalities.

Indicator 29: Evaluate and revise the effectiveness of the strategies used.

Indicator 28: Attend the webinar and other training related to distance learning.

The following table shows the overall mean distribution of the responses of teachers on an instructional engagement under the three areas.

TABLE 5. Overall Mean Distribution on Instructional Engagement of Teachers in Terms of Three Areas

| Instructional Engagement | Mean | Qualitative Description |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| A. Affective Engagement | 4.27 | High Engagement |
| B. Cognitive Engagement | 4.29 | High Engagement |
| C. Behavior Engagement | 4.36 | High Engagement |
| General Overall | 4.31 | High Engagement |

Data shows that the overall mean rating of teachers is 4.31 which is ‘highly engage’. Particularly, the teachers have high engagement in the three areas.

IV. SUMMARY

A. The mean rating of teachers under the area of affective engagement is 4.27 and descriptively ‘high engagement’. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of affective engagement. Particularly, the teachers have ‘high engagement’ on all indicators, and these are ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows:

1. I am open-minded to the adjustment of the student’s learning construct in remote learning.
2. Teaching is affectionate when the teacher is regularly contacting the student.
3. Teaching is inspiring when modularized instruction motivates and engages students.
4. I feel esteemed when I engender respect for intellectual diversity.
5. It is facile to teach when the school had directed a clear curriculum implementation.
6. I feel directed when my head supervises me in the employment of modular learning.
7. I feel safe with the schools existing program and policy.
8. I feel directed when ‘need analysis’ is employed in preparing modules.
9. I feel responsive when I give study-skills advice in modularized instruction.
10. I feel at ease focusing on other non-teaching preparations with the technical assistance of my school head.

B. The mean rating of teachers under the area of cognitive engagement is 4.29 and descriptively ‘high engagement’. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of cognitive engagement. Particularly, the teachers have ‘high engagement’ on all indicators and these are ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows:

1. The creation of a curriculum team can cater to individual differences in learning needs.
2. Learning new methods and approaches is vital to the delivery of remote learning.
3. Students’ well-being is a priority in remote learning.
4. The provision of feedback ensures learning.
5. The establishment of strong rapport among the parents and stakeholders ensures the success of BE-LCP.
6. School heads academic leadership ability ensures the smooth delivery of remote learning.
7. Performance assessment in modularized instruction evaluates the key skill learned.

8. Modularized instruction integrates learning theory and practice based on the exercises given.

9. The conduct of schools needs analysis among teachers to strengthen the BE-LCP.

10. Modules reduce the routine aspects of instructional teaching.

C. The mean rating of teachers under the area of behavior engagement is 4.36 and descriptively ‘high engagement’. That is, teachers are highly involved in instructional engagement in the area of behavior engagement. Particularly, the teachers have ‘high engagement’ on all indicators and these are ranked from highest to lowest mean rating as follows:

1. Monitor students’ performance and learning.
2. Provide learning intervention to the least learned most essential learning skills (MELCS).
3. Emphasize learners’ mental health and homeroom guidance.
4. Follow the directives of the school head about BE-LCP.
5. Contextualize and localize learning resources.
6. Provide adequate learning resources in all applicable modalities of distance learning.
7. Prepare modules and other learning resources for instructional delivery.
8. Use the appropriate technological platform of learning and modalities.
9. Evaluate and revise the effectiveness of the strategies used.
10. Attend the webinar and other training related to distance learning.

D. The overall mean rating of teachers is 4.31 which is ‘highly engage’. Particularly, the teachers have high engagement in the three areas.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The high level of engagement of teachers on instruction provides a primary basis for the division office to engage on other aspects rather than focusing on instruction. It is recommended that the program and activities of teachers.

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