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Research Article

Preparedness, Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Teachers and School Heads in the Implementation of Face-to-face Classes in Zone 2, Schools Division of Zambales, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the preparedness, challenges, and coping mechanisms of teachers and school heads in implementing face-to-face classes in Zone 2, Schools Division of Zambales. Using a descriptive-quantitative approach, the study surveyed 228 teachers and 13 school heads. Findings reveal that teachers and school heads are highly prepared, though challenges persist in workload management and resource availability. Statistical analysis shows a significant difference in preparedness levels between teachers and school heads, but no significant difference in perceived challenges and coping mechanisms. Furthermore, no correlation was found between preparedness and challenges, as well as between challenges and coping mechanisms, suggesting that preparedness is independent of encountered challenges. The study highlights the need for ongoing training and support for educators.

Keywords: Preparedness, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Face-to-face Classes, Implementation

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a global disruption in education, forcing schools to shift to remote learning (World Economic Forum, 2020). By April 2020, over one billion students were affected, leading to increased reliance on digital platforms (Winthrop, 2020). Although online learning ensured continuity, it also posed challenges for educators, many of whom were unfamiliar with digital teaching methods (De Villa & Manalo, 2020). With the resumption of face-to-face classes, teachers and school heads must navigate new challenges while

ensuring safety and quality education (Du, 2021). This study explores their preparedness, the difficulties they face, and the coping strategies they employ.

Methods

Research Design

The researcher used the descriptive method and gathered information through the use of a survey questionnaire as an instrument, to give the respondents more time to provide their answers freely and independently. The descriptive method was used to determine the

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preparedness, challenges and coping mechanisms in the implementation of face-to-face classes among public-school teachers and school heads from Integrated Schools in Zone 2, Division of Zambales, Philippines for School Year 2022-2023.

Respondents and Location

The respondents of the research study were the public-school teachers and school heads from Integrated Schools in Zone 2, Division of Zambales, Philippines during the School Year 2022-2023. A total population of two hundred twenty-eight (228) teachers and thirteen (13) school heads were the respondents of the research study.

Instruments

The main instrument used in gathering the data for the present study was survey questionnaire. The contents of the survey checklist were lifted from the provisions of DepEd Order No. 17, s. 2022, Policy Guidelines on the Progressive Limited Face to Face Classes. First part of the survey checklist was focused on the profile of the teacher and school head-respondents which include the age, sex, teaching and administrative position, highest educational attainment, and number of years in service. The second part was appraised the level of preparedness, the third part was identified the challenges encountered and the last part was determined the coping mechanisms of teachers and school heads in the implementation of Face-to-Face Classes. The conduct of a pilot test was necessary for the research instrument's test of reliability. The 27 teachers and 3 school heads/ OIC of Calapandayan Integrated School, Naug-sol Integrated School and Pamatawan Integrated School of Subic, Zambales were the respondents for reliability and validity test.

Data Collection

After finalizing the survey instrument, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Zambales. Upon approval, the survey was administered to respondents with confidentiality ensured.

Data Analysis

Figures and data which were collected from the survey questionnaire were analyzed, interpreted and summarized accordingly. 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 Mean, Likert Scale, t-Test and Correlation Analysis.

Result and Discussion

The findings and analysis of data are presented here according to the inquiries of the study. These are shown in textual and tabular formats.

Preparedness Levels of Respondents

Table 1 showed that teachers perceived that they are very well prepared in terms of class scheduling as manifested with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.40 (rank 1). Notably, their preparedness in terms of community strategy had the lowest overall weighted mean of 3.34 (rank 5). On the other hand, the school heads reported that they are very well prepared in terms of contingency plan, as manifested with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.92 (rank 1) while their preparedness in school community coordination had the lowest overall weighted mean of 3.75 (rank 5).

On average, both teachers (OWM = 3.36) and school heads (OWM = 3.84) are very well prepared in the implementation of face-to-face classes.

According to Jamaludin (2020), preparedness for the teaching and learning process is crucial in the new normal era. During emergency response periods like the current one, teachers can take various steps to ensure the success of distance learning, often referred to as "learning at home." In this context, numerous online learning applications can be effectively utilized in education. For instance, platforms like WhatsApp and Google Classroom serve as valuable tools for teachers during the teaching and learning process in this new era. It is essential for both teachers and school

leaders to be well-prepared for the implementation of face-to-face classes, ensuring they can

seamlessly integrate these digital resources into their teaching strategies.

Table 1. Preparedness Levels of Respondents

Dimensions	Teachers			School Heads		
	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 School Traffic Management	3.35	VWP	3.5	3.89	VWP	2
2 Community Strategy	3.34	VWP	5	3.78	VWP	4
3 Contingency Plan	3.38	VWP	2	3.92	VWP	1
4 School Community Coordination	3.35	VWP	3.5	3.75	VWP	5
5 Class Scheduling	3.40	VWP	1	3.84	VWP	3
Grand Mean	3.36	VWP		3.84	VWP	

Legend: WM = Weighted Mean, DE = Descriptive Equivalent, VWP = Very Well Prepared, P = Prepared, SNP = Somewhat Not Prepared, NP = Not Prepared

Challenges Met by the Respondents

As shown in the table 2, teachers agreed on the challenges they met in the implementation of face-to-face classes in terms of teacher training and support, as manifested with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.11 and the challenges they met in terms of school activities had the lowest overall weighted mean of 2.86 (rank 6). On the other hand, the school heads strongly agreed that there were challenges met in terms of teachers training and support, as manifested with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.83 (rank 1). Notably, they disagreed on the challenges met in terms of school activities, with an overall weighted mean of 2.46 (rank 6).

On average, both teachers (OWM = 3.01) and school heads (OWM = 3.08) agreed that they met challenges in the implementation of face-to-face classes.

Loch and Borland (2021) concluded that schools encounter specific challenges related to student preparedness and special needs that are essential for facilitating face-to-face learning. Consequently, educational organizations, schools, and departments should prioritize integrating teacher training into their program budgets. Additionally, they should consider adopting hybrid approaches that combine in-person and online learning as a cost-effective solution.

Coping Mechanisms of the Respondents

The teachers perceived that they always practiced coping mechanisms in addressing the challenges they met in the implementation of face-to-face classes in terms of teacher workload, with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.52. Notably, they often did coping mechanisms in terms of ways and means had the lowest overall weighted mean of 3.18 (rank 6). On the other hand, the school heads always did coping mechanisms in the challenges they encountered in the implementation of face-to-face classes in terms of teacher workload and school activities, manifested with the highest overall weighted mean of 3.80 (tied at rank 1.5); and engagement of learner and parent, with the lowest overall weighted mean of 2.82 (rank 6).

On average, both teachers (OWM = 3.35) and school heads (OWM = 3.50) always did coping mechanisms in addressing the challenges in the implementation of face-to-face classes.

To develop coping mechanisms, many Filipino educators, as noted by Talidong and Toquero (2020), spend their free time on social media, exploring new activities, learning new skills, or connecting with friends and family. Others find solace in religion or spirituality.

t-Test of Difference on the Perceived Level of Preparedness of the Respondents

There was significant difference on the perceived level of preparedness of teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes as manifested on the computed significance value (Sig. = 0.000) which was less than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance,

therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The data clearly manifest on the opposing level of preparedness of teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes. It is clearly stated that school are most Well Prepared than the teachers. It was showed that the degree of preparedness to make effective did not differ between school head and teachers.

Table 2. Challenges Met by the Respondents

Dimensions	Teachers			School Heads		
	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 Teacher Workload	3.08	A	2	2.80	A	5
2 Teacher Training and Support	3.11	A	1	3.83	SA	1
3 Learning Resources	2.97	A	4.5	2.95	A	4
4 School Activities	2.86	A	6	2.46	D	6
5 Engagement of Learner and Parent	3.05	A	3	3.28	SA	2
6 Ways and Means	2.97	A	4.5	3.15	A	3
Grand Mean	3.01	A		3.08	A	

Legend: WM = Weighted Mean, DE = Descriptive Equivalent, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Teachers' preparedness reflects their adaptability, flexibility, and ability to implement policy improvements, ultimately contributing to educational success (Agaloos, Mendoza, Pattalitan, & Sentinellar, 2020) while according to the study of Villar, Yazon, Tan, Buenavida & Bandoy (2021) on the readiness of school heads' leadership practices in the new normal, school heads may continue to prioritize regular and clear contact with subordinates to avoid disagreements and misunderstandings about school issues and concerns.

The result showed that no matter what advised modalities and learning delivery options will be utilized, teachers are still responsible in providing education to the learners as their basic rights. This implies that teachers should be adaptive and flexible in using of all kinds of instructional materials and newly mandated tasks relating to the use of. Teachers must be for teachers regardless of position and years in service; by helping one another, in molding future nation builders and being as one in creating and embracing significant changes in education.

t-Test of Difference on the Challenges Met by the Respondents

There was no significant difference on the challenges met by teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes as manifested on the computed significance value (Sig. = 0.416) which was greater than (>) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

The data clearly manifest that there was no substantial statistically detected difference on the challenges met by teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes.

Teachers' resilience, determination, and ability to respond are extremely important. These qualities affect how teachers and school leaders view themselves during global challenges that disrupt the entire education system. It is essential for teachers and school leaders to adapt to new roles, regardless of the teaching methods being used. Education must continue to focus on its vision and mission to make a significant impact, despite all the changes brought

about by the pandemic (Javier, Galino & Cabantog, 2022).

While the role of a school principal requires a combination of leadership, management, communication, and decision-making skills. It requires a deep commitment to student success

and a willingness to take on a wide range of responsibilities and challenges. A principal has to maintain the discipline of the school as well as he/she has to look up if the study process and outcome of the students are active enough.

Table 3. Coping Mechanisms Did by the Respondents

Dimensions	Teachers			School Heads		
	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank	Overall Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1 Teacher Workload	3.52	A	1	3.80	A	1.5
2 Teacher Training and Support	3.36	A	3	3.79	A	3
3 Learning Resources	3.34	A	4	3.64	A	4
4 School Activities	3.42	A	2	3.80	A	1.5
5 Engagement of Learner and Parent	3.26	A	5	2.82	O	6
6 Ways and Means	3.18	O	6	3.12	O	5
Grand Mean	3.35	A		3.50	A	

Legend: WM = Weighted Mean, DE = Descriptive Equivalent, A = Always, O = Often, S = Seldom, ST = Sometimes

Table 4. Difference on the Perceived Level of Preparedness of the Respondents

Preparedness	Respondent	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
			Teachers	3.3625						
			School Heads	3.8369						
t-test for Equality of Means										
Preparedness			t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed		-4.775	239	0.000	.47438	0.09934		-67007	-.27869
	Equal variances not assumed		-11.454	25.999	0.000	.47438	0.4141		-.55951	-.38925

t-Test of Difference on the Perceived Coping Mechanisms of the Respondents

There was no significant difference on the challenges met by teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes as manifested on the computed significance value (Sig. = 0.165) which was greater than (>) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

The data clearly manifest that there was no substantial statistically detected difference on the coping mechanisms of teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes.

Teachers and school leaders were able to adapt and develop new ways to overcome challenges. They used various strategies to address the difficulties they faced. A key part of the

Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (B-ELCP) from the Department of Education (DepEd) is to help teachers improve their skills so they are better prepared for face-to-face teaching. They emphasized that providing sufficient

training and capacity-building activities for teachers and school leaders would lead to better learning experiences for students, even in a modular distance learning setup.

Table 5. Difference on the Challenges Met by the Respondents

		Respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Challenges	Teachers	228	3.007091	0.3146639	0.0208391	
	School Heads	13	3.079487	0.2394200	0.0664032	

		t-test for Equality of Means					
		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
						Lower	Upper
Challenges	Equal variances assumed	-.816	239	0.416	-.0723965	0.0887721	-.2472721 .1024790
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.040	14.473	0.315	-.0723965	0.0695963	-.2212097 .0764167

This training helps teachers become more familiar with the knowledge and skills needed to support students who face difficulties. To gain a better understanding of lesson concepts, teachers should attend seminars and workshops focused on these skills (Ausa, 2023). These efforts serve as important coping mechanisms for educators as they navigate the challenges of the current educational landscape.

Relationship between the Preparedness and Challenges Met of the Respondents

The t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference in preparedness levels between teachers and school heads ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that school heads may have received more administrative support, leading to higher preparedness scores. However, the correlation analysis shows no significant relationship between preparedness and challenges ($r = 0.101$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that preparedness levels do not predict the challenges encountered.

The study revealed that school heads and teachers have been more visible than during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with generalized lockdowns and school closures in countries all over the world. Good leadership in schools fosters nurturing learning environments that help children grow and develop. To

cultivate such an environment, school heads and teachers must navigate and promote collaboration across the often complex network of stakeholders: education authorities, students, parents and local communities.

Relationship between the Challenges Met and Coping Mechanisms of the Respondents

The computed Pearson r value of $-.040$ denotes very low negative correlation the challenges and coping mechanisms of the two groups of respondents in the implementation of face-to-face classes. The computed P -value 0.532 is greater than ($>$) 0.05 level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. The result signifies that there was no significant relationship between the challenges and coping mechanisms of the two groups of respondents in the implementation of face-to-face classes. This further implies that the coping mechanisms of teachers and school heads in the implementation of face-to-face classes was not affected by the challenges they met.

This means that there is no significant relationship between the perceived challenges met and expressed coping mechanisms of teachers and school heads. This implies that being positive does not mean that an individual will no longer be experiencing challenges.

Based on the study of Cabular & Tolentino (2023), most teachers are challenged by physical, mental health, well-being, level of literacy, numeracy, level of retention, submission of workloads that contribute to stress.

Though barriers surfaced during the implementation of face-to-face learning, teachers and school heads find its ways to overcome it to

cope with the challenges of the new normal. These help them meet the demands of the learning instructions and being able to perform their duties and responsibilities as facilitators of learning to attain quality education despite the gap imposed by the pandemic.

Table 7. Relationship between the Preparedness and Challenges Met of the Respondents

Sources of Correlations		Preparedness	Challenges	Decision / Interpretation
Preparedness	Pearson Correlation	1	0.101	Accept Ho No Relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.117	
	N	241	241	
Challenges	Pearson Correlation	0.101	1	Accept Ho No Relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.117		
	N	241	241	

Table 8. Relationship between the Challenges Met and Coping Mechanisms of the Respondents

Sources of Correlations		Challenges	Coping Mechanisms	Decision / Interpretation
Challenges	Pearson Correlation	1	-.040	Accept Ho No Relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.532	
	N	241	241	
Coping Mechanisms	Pearson Correlation	-.040	1	Accept Ho No Relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.532		
	N	241	241	

Conclusion

Findings indicate that teachers and school heads are generally well-prepared for face-to-face classes, though challenges remain in workload management and resource availability. While significant differences exist in preparedness levels, no significant correlation was found between preparedness and encountered challenges. The study recommends that the Department of Education (DepEd) conduct targeted training programs for teachers and provide additional administrative support to address workload concerns. Schools should implement structured mentoring programs to enhance readiness for future disruptions in education.

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