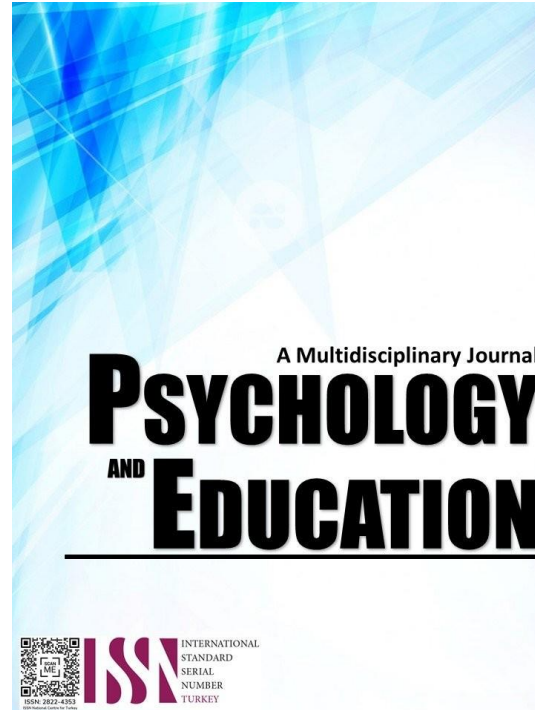


EXPLORING REMOTE TEACHER ENGAGEMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE NEW NORMAL



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Exploring Remote Teacher Engagement and Work-Life Balance in the New Normal

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Abstract

The study delved into qualitatively determining the teacher engagement and work-life balance of secondary teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Rizal during the School Year 2021 - 2022. The study employed a purposive sampling technique in determining the school and the study's respondents. The researcher utilized one (1) teacher participant per school from each learning area, such as English, Science, Filipino, Mathematics, and MAPEH. A total of ten (10) participants. The study concluded that teacher participants had various significant experiences in remote learning as to instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance such as using technological platforms and differentiated instruction, enforcing positive feedback and guidance to students, and positive outlook in both personal life and professional career. Also, regarding meaning formulated from the responses, teacher engagement was highly implemented in select secondary schools. The select schools have their projects and programs implemented such as Project AKAP: Anak, Kamusta Ang Pag-aaral, Project RIOS (Reach-out Individuals Outside School), ALTO program, etc. that could help students who lag behind in remote learning to cope and go back to their core. As to the themes that emerged from the meanings, it is important to have sustainability in the projects and programs implemented at the school to promote the development of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, and actions, which ensure quality learning for the students in the remote learning.

Keywords: *remote teacher engagement, work-life balance, instructional and teacher engagement*

Introduction

School administrators aim to bring about positive change in the school environment while teachers implement, encourage and evaluate those changes. In and out of the classroom, teachers serve as students' and parents' personifications of education. The teacher's role is crucial to academic work. Teachers significantly influence how well students perform. But among all occupations, teachers experience the highest levels of failures, stress, exhaustion, and cynicism (Johnson, 2021).

Raphael (2022) asserts that there are two kinds of teacher engagement. The first type's foundation is made up of institutional rules and regulations. These guidelines outline what a teacher must do and how much autonomy is. Such regulations' obligatory nature ensures that a teacher continues to fulfill her obligations and remains formally engaged within the institutional framework.

Self-motivation on the part of the teacher is the second type of engagement. The mental state that precedes it cannot be controlled by outside forces. This kind of engagement can probably be measured by how much a teacher is interested in the optional elements of her workspace. A teacher's interest in and readiness to go above and beyond her required duties varies from person to person. A teacher's professional activities are innately improved by self-motivation.

Teacher engagement is an important predictor for teacher performance since engaged teachers are active practitioners who take the initiative at work and engage in activities outside school. Even if they feel tired, the feeling is described as a pleasant state because of its association with accomplishment. Thus, teachers should consider their goals and priorities when designing an assessment and grading system. It's best to encourage student learning rather than merely holding them responsible.

In remote learning, teachers had to deal with issues like not having enough time to prepare and print the modules for the students, which resulted in late production, a lack of printing supplies, and a shortage of supplies that reduced teachers' productivity. Sometimes, some students submit their work late or not because of claims made by some parents or students that the modules are delivered after the scheduled time. In some cases, teachers have trouble effectively monitoring students' performance due to a lack of tools or effective communication, as well as unstable internet connectivity because monitoring is done via messenger or other social media platforms.

As a result, these could impact how engaged teachers are with their students, resulting in an unhealthy and stressful work environment. Additionally, teachers in today's society face a lot of pressure. Schools are working under increased scrutiny and public dissatisfaction with educational quality while juggling daily struggles like staff shortages, uneven parental involvement, deteriorating facilities, and the threat of a global pandemic.

In the Taytay Sub-Office, teachers encounter numerous difficulties with instruction retention, module distribution and retrieval, power fluctuations, slow internet connectivity, and health risks. Nonetheless, educators dealt with these hindrances by developing faring strategies to make their working environment healthy and manageable. Even more so in these trying times, teaching can be challenging and frustrating, but anything is possible, as these educators proved.

Indeed, teachers are crucial in preparing future workers to manage and lead properly regarding their well-being and reasonable expectations, such as the expectation of a healthy balance between work and other commitments. An engaged teacher will ensure the

students learn the skills required for employment. To do so, the quality of teachers' work life must also be high so that the students would benefit.

These are why the researcher was motivated to conduct the study on teacher engagement and work-life balance secondary teachers in selected public secondary schools in the Taytay Sub-Office. The study's results were used as the basis for proposing a program to enhance teachers' engagement and work-life balance.

Research Questions

This study investigated the glimpse of remote teacher engagement and work-life balance in the new normal. The study's findings served as the basis for proposing a program to enhance teachers' engagement and work-life balance. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. How did the teachers describe their experiences in terms of:
 - 1.1. instructional engagement;
 - 1.2. teacher engagement; and
 - 1.3. work-life balance?
2. What insights may be drawn from the testimonies of my co-participation instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance in selected public secondary schools in Taytay Sub-Office, Division of Rizal?
3. What factors to improve based on the insights of teacher-participation instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance in online teaching?
4. Based on the findings of the qualitative analysis, what program may be proposed to strengthen the instructional engagement, teachers' engagement, and work-life balance of the teachers for teachers?

Literature Review

In the aftermath of the global pandemic, everything has changed. Academic leaders will eventually comprehend that distance education is more than just a potential provenance of income. In its place, online learning will be acknowledged as a crucial component of each school's strategy for ensuring academic continuity and institutional resilience (Kim, 2020).

The study by Cardwell (2021) claimed that having highly engaged teachers affected how engaged students were. The majority of the student perception variables had weak to moderate correlations, according to the analysis. There were significant correlations between Belief about Self and autonomy and Belief about Self and relatedness. Data showed a discrepancy between teachers' and students' perspectives on student and teacher engagement. It is advised that administrators, teachers, and students all understand what engagement is and are aware of what it means in the classroom regarding how it feels, sounds, and looks.

Ishak et al. (2017) examined the range of the teacher's working life quality. The study found that, regardless of the industry the quality of work life is crucial in achieving institutional objectives. Organizational culture, compensation, institutional commitment, meritocracy, work-life balance, well-being services, effective grievance resolution, work satisfaction, and many others accord to better work-life.

Furthermore, Gamiao (2020) scrutinized the implications of work-life balance to some Indian teachers in various academic strands in universities and colleges. According to the findings, teachers' position, their appointment type, the academic strand they are teaching in, and the makeup of the institution where they are employed all have a direct and significant impact on how well they can balance their personal and professional lives. The study found no appreciable variations in teacher's work-life balance quality with regard to gender or marital status.

Meanwhile, Canoy (2020) attributed work-life quality as a salient element of a successful organization. The quality of work-life was assessed based on financial literacy, debt, alternative employment, non-teaching responsibilities, well-being, and familial obligations. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher gathered insights and delved into the core issue of their lived experiences. The study figured out that teachers have low QWL in the aforementioned factors. As advised, the Department of Education (DepEd) offers programs for intervention to enhance teachers' quality of work life.

Relatively, the study by Marmol (2019) aimed to gather data on teachers' perceptions of their relationships with one another, their commitment to the school, and their work-life balance so that policy reviews can be based on this information. According to the findings, teachers perceive their commitment to their work-life balance and to their students as being moderate in various ways, and there is no correlation between the two variables. The first three most important factors for a policy review were noted to be the salaries of teachers, medical assistance, hospitalization, and retirement age.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used the qualitative research design, specifically the phenomenology study since it investigated the teacher engagement and

work-life balance of secondary teachers in Taytay Sub-Office, Division of Rizal. According to Neubauer (2019), phenomenology is a form of qualitative study emphasizing the investigation of people's interactions with the outside world. It is also a research method that aims to capture the essence by looking at it from the viewpoint of those who have had the experience. The goal of phenomenology is attributed to the description of the significance of this experience that considers both what and how it was experienced.

Participants

The study participants were the teachers from the selected secondary schools in Taytay Sub Office, division of Rizal. The selected schools were Benjamin B. Esguerra Memorial National High School and Taytay National High School. The researcher selected one (1) participant from each learning area such as English, Science, Filipino, Mathematics, and MAPEH per school. A total of ten (10) participants. The participants were teachers in the four major subjects such as English, Science, Filipino, and Mathematics because they were the most critically important subject teachers in the new normal.

Instruments

The researcher utilized a semi-structured questionnaire. This semi-structured questionnaire is composed of semi-structured interview guide questions on the experiences of the participants with regards to teacher engagement and work-life balance in selected public secondary schools in the new normal; to what degree has teacher engagement impacted been implemented in selected public secondary schools and how do they perceive as the potential of their engagement to raise the quality of instruction.

Procedure

Different steps were taken in the conduct of the study following the Gantt Chart of activities. This covers everything from developing the research problem of revising the manuscript and submitting the finished product. The Office of the Superintendent of the Schools Division and the Offices of the Secondary School Principals gave their approval for the study to be carried out. A gathering of related literature and studies was done to define the important words and aspects of the study.

Furthermore, the researcher made a semi-structured questionnaire on the testimonies of the teacher participants in their experiences with regards to teacher engagement and work-life balance in selected public secondary schools in the new normal; to what degree has teacher engagement impact been implemented in selected public secondary schools; and how do they perceive as the potential of their engagement to raise the standard of instruction. Then, it was validated by experts knowledgeable in making test questionnaires. After choosing the desired number of teacher participants from the different learning areas, the researcher now started by asking questions to the participants. Then, qualitative analysis was followed specifically the thematic coding method technique.

Finally, the interpretation and analysis of data were done. A summary of the research's findings, interpretations, and suggestions was developed. Then, the searcher put it together for the final oral presentation.

Results and Discussion

This portion presents the results and discussion based on the gathered data.

1. How do teachers describe their experiences with regards to?

1.1. instructional engagement

The themes that emerged as a response by the select teachers on remote learning as to instructional engagement were instructional delivery methods, access, differentiated instruction, student learning issues, numerous interactive activities, policy standards, open communication, and multimedia and technological applications.

Delivery of Instructional Materials to Students

The delivery of instructional materials is important because they assist and guide students in remote learning, especially during this time of the pandemic, which makes the learners understand a topic. Instructional resources give students practical experiences that enable them to build concepts and skills and functions array of means. According to Teacher 1, "She/he experienced this pandemic the different ways on how to deliver the instructional materials to their student such sending video lessons and video tutorial about the lessons." Thus, having different modes of instruction (direct instruction, individual writing, pair-share, small group discussion, online discussion, etc.) allow students to demonstrate learning in variety of ways even during this time of pandemic which can lead to better performance and quality learning.

Uses of Technological Platforms in Instructions

Teachers use technology to give instructions and track and assess their students' performance during this time pandemic. According to Teacher 2 "I just gave instructions via messenger, text messages, phone calls, and via Facebook posts." Indeed, providing equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of ability, with appropriate instructional materials, teaching methods, and learning activities that facilitate learning at an individual and appropriate rate and depth can greatly support students in attaining quality learning.

Utilizes Differentiated Instruction

Differentiation in remote learning allows instructors to control what and how students learn and assess. Teachers can augment individual growth in course content through differentiated instruction because of its adaptability. According to Teacher 3 “I made and gave discussion videos to her/his students as their additional resources in answering activities. Also, online, or interactive applications like Desmos Graphing Calculator, Kahoot, Quizizz, etc. can boost students’ interest and increase engagement among them.” It can be deduced that differentiated instruction enables teachers to provide students with the assistance they required rather than grouping them all in one large group.

Dealing with Student Attitudes and Behavior

Another struggle faced by the teachers in dealing with students’ attitudes and behavior. Students did not participate in the online class. According to Teacher 4, “No interactions from students. If there are the same few students only. Not all students can do online tasks even in the presence of their own internet connection.” It may imply that students also shared some of the challenges that learners faced in distance learning. Anxiety, depression, bad internet, and an unfavorable home learning environment are a few of the difficulties that students face, which are made worse when they come from underprivileged backgrounds in far-flung locations. Thus, it will lead to poor performance of students indifferent learning areas.

Overwhelmed with Interactive Games/ Activities

In remote learning, the use of interactive games and activities can boost student engagement, promote socio-emotional learning as well as encourage learners to take calculated likelihood. One investigation into the well-liked multiple-choice quiz application Kahoot discovered that it raised academic results while also enhancing learners' attitudes toward learning. According to Teacher 5, “I found that if I integrated interactive games into my lecture and activity, the majority of students will participate in the ODL class.” It may infer those numerous interactive activities encourage the acquisition of practical skills and more likely a milieu for an excellent way for students to enhance the value of teamwork, improve their skills, and expand their practical abilities and capabilities in doing various activities.

Keeping with the prescribed MELC

To help all schools, schools’ division offices (SDOs), and regional offices (ROs) choose and implement learning delivery strategies that are suitable for the local context and learner diversity while addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19, DepEd provided the MELCs. According to Teacher 6, “I followed the topics given in the Most Essential Learning Competencies and used the modules provided by the DepEd and made Weekly Home Learning Plan for the guide of the students.” It may infer that the policies can provide direction, consistency, accountability, efficiency, and clarity on how an organization operates in this new normal.

Open communication with students

Teachers who communicate openly can help students to develop their skills at all levels. Good communication also improves relationships between both teachers and students. According to Teachers 7 and 8 “We create a group chat and contacted the students; through this they can communicate well. We would answer some queries from the parents and learners and give them clear instructions. Also, we posted instructions on GC and open communication for their concerns.” It can be surmised that when all parties such as students, teachers, and parents in a conversation, they can express their ideas to one another, this is referred to as open communication.

Utilizing Multimedia Applications and Technology

Teachers use multimedia technology to provide new methods of learning that can take place in schools or at home. Giving teachers access to multimedia learning resources that promote constructive concept development allows them to concentrate on facilitating learning while working with individual students. According to Teacher 9, “Increasing multimedia expertise and discovering online platforms for better instructions,” and Teacher 10 “Due to the pandemic, it lessened but still it's good because of technology.” It can be concluded that technology can give students quick access to information, accelerate their learning, and give them enjoyable opportunities to apply what they have learned.

The implications and themes are consistent with the findings of Taylor (2020), Kim (2020), Grissom (2020), Sasmoko, et al. (2018), Clemes (2020), and Borup, et al. (2021) explained that teachers designed and planned learning activities, encouraged discussion with students and parents, gave students one-on-one instruction, fostered a safe and caring learning environment, encouraged students to participate in learning activities, and closely watched student behavior and learning in order to improve student outcomes.

1.2. Teacher Engagement

The themes that emerged as the response by the selected teachers on remote learning as to teacher engagement were teachers’ motivation, professional development, sympathy, miscommunication, positive feedback, supporting learning, and teachers’ preparedness and readiness.

Teachers’ Motivation

The motivating style of a teacher toward students revolves around what instructors say and do to encourage students to engage in learning activities, and it shows up as controlling versus autonomy-supportive teaching in distance learning. According to Teacher 1, “I am so motivated in teaching them even if it’s not in face-to-face setting. They keep sending thank you messages whenever I was able to teach them and inspire them.” In addition to being significant in and of itself, motivation is a strong predictor of learning and success. Even in the midst of the pandemic, students who are more driven to learn are more likely to attend class for longer periods of time, put forth more effort, learn more thoroughly, and perform better on assessments.

Attending Webinars for Teachers

Teachers can interact with their students at a scheduled time by using webinars. These sessions can be used to lecture, disseminate information, and give students feedback. In contrast to asynchronous learning, this enables instantaneous interaction. According to Teacher 2, “I attend some seminars that are related to my profession,” and Teacher 8 “They attended a lot of training to help us be equipped with the effective methods of teaching in this new normal. No one wants to be left behind.” As a result, professional development training can assist teachers in improving their time management and organizational skills in the face of the new normal.

Understanding Student’s Situation in Remote Learning

Understanding students' situation in remote learning enables teachers to provide them with high-quality learning experiences. Allowing them to explore areas of interest, such as the new normal education set-up and strategies in teaching can increase their likelihood of engaging with the learning process. According to Teachers 3&9 “Teachers and even the students are struggling due to the new educational set-up. Some students forced themselves to work and earn money for themselves and their families. It is the obligation and responsibility of the teacher to be aware of and consider the students' problems. Also, patiently teaching students with online platforms for teaching.” It implies that sympathy for students in their experiences and challenges in remote learning helps teachers develop a safe space and build relationships among students and their colleagues, positing better learning position.

Miscommunication between Colleagues

Miscommunication is defined as misunderstandings between colleagues delineating from failure of communicating effectively which made the target audience fails to comprehend the message. According to Teacher 4, “To colleagues, misunderstanding occurs even miscommunications unlike in the face to face set up where teachers can talk personally or address problems easily.” It can be deduced that teachers in all-remote environments saw higher rates of student absences and lower rates of work completion than face-to-face teachers.

Enforcing positive feedback and guidance to students

Positive feedback enhances students' self-esteem and encourages them to think positively. Meaningful feedback lays the groundwork for students to become self-regulated learners while increasing their confidence. According to Teacher 5, “In Group Chats, I tried to avoid mentioning her/his students' names as much as possible. I sent them a private message regarding their missing work or class status.” It can be surmised that effective feedback, whether given remotely or in person, reduces the “gap” in learning – the space between current and desired understanding. Feedback is most effective when it assists students in bridging the gap between where they are and where they need to be.

Use of learning activities and PowerPoint lessons in the modular modality

Both teachers and students can benefit from effective PowerPoint use in their teaching and learning processes. It facilitates the professional organization of a presentation, which inspires and supports staff members. According to Teacher 6, “I gave PowerPoint of lessons to our class group chat for them to understand more.” To ensure that every student has an equal chance of success, including those who are learning remotely, learning supports may be interpreted as tools, techniques, and procedures that support students' learning while fostering their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and emotional growth.

Prepared and well-equipped teachers in teaching students

It is crucial to develop teachers' knowledge and skills through professional development as the learning environment demands them to be so. Moreover, they have consistent contact with their learners and have a great deal of control over the learning environment which made continuous professional development salient element in the teaching field. According to Teacher 7, “I always make sure to be prepared and well-equipped with the things that are necessary for any upcoming events.” It can be gleaned that effective teaching involves preparation and planning as these two elements are fundamental towards successful teaching-learning processes.

Readiness for Changes in Educational System

Many factors point to the need for meaningful educational change. Holistic development means looking into the improvement of learners' skills, attitudes, and values making them more capable individuals. According to Teacher 4, “It’s different now compared to the face-to-face classes where you can interact directly with the students and other teachers however you should be ready and prepared all the time.” It may imply that teachers must prepare regardless of what changes occur in the educational system that can contribute to meaningful learning.

The themes are consistent with the findings of Sasmoko, et al. (2018) examined arrays of standpoints as well as questioned the preliminary study on teacher engagement, to derive with alternative notion of teacher engagement within the Indonesian context and have impact towards development of framework for teachers.

1.3. Work-life balance

The themes that emerged as the response by the selected teachers on remote learning as to work-life balance such as school rules and regulations, positive discipline, professional advancement, stress management, positive outlook, healthy work-life balance, and time management.

Orientation of Students to Rules and Regulations Implemented

Orientation to rules and regulations is intended to answer questions before they are asked and to provide solutions before problems arise. By carefully planning and making use of all the resources available for remote learning, orientation should allay concerns and set students up for success. According to Teacher 1, “I told them all the ground rules that I must set and to be implemented this school year. I gave them limitations with regards to sending questions and messages beyond office hours.” Therefore, rules and regulations are essential in a school or even in distance learning because they aid in student discipline, maintain order, and uphold the standard of learning.

Enforcing Positive Discipline

Positive discipline involves teaching and reinforcing desired behaviors while weaning out unwanted ones without harming the child physically or verbally, whether in a classroom setting or while the child is being educated remotely. According to Teacher 2, “I made sure that I answer the queries of the students and parents from 7 am to 5 pm every Monday to Friday.” Thus, positive discipline promotes self-control and teaches students how to make wise decisions, keeping them safe. Additionally, it promotes constructive interactions between students and their teachers, which helps with the growth of confidence and self-esteem.

Focusing on Professional Development

Effective professional development improves the skills of teachers while also adding value to the school. Continuous professional development is well- designed and delivered successfully because it benefits the individual, their profession, and the public. According to Teacher 3, “I always make sure to focus on work as a professional teacher but never forget to have leisure time. It is the obligation and responsibility of the teacher to be aware of and consider the students' problems. Also, patiently teaching students with online platforms for teaching.” It can be deduced that teachers now have the tools and training they need to keep up with students' needs and make plans for shifting educational trends thanks to professional development in the twenty-first century, or the new normal.

Poor Stress Management Skills

The better teachers manage their emotions, the better they can be mindful of their students and manage them even in remote learning. Emotions, in general, have impacts on all aspects of learning, including attention and memory, which can influence the rate of learning. According to Teacher 4, “I couldn't manage this. I am stressed out. I am always tired doing and finishing the tasks that I need to do for synchronous and asynchronous classes.” It can be surmised that a teacher's ability to be aware of their students and effectively manage their class in remote learning is inversely correlated with their level of emotional control.

Positive Outlook in Both Personal Life and Professional Career

Teachers have a long-lasting impact. A transferable orientation to learning and thinking that lasts far beyond the immediate is made possible by their capacity to elicit from students' positive thoughts and feelings about their learning and about themselves as learners. According to Teacher 5, “I also find ways to relax and unwind even in simple things. With this, I believe that I may claim to be a well-being individual.” It may infer that for a workplace to be productive, there needs to be a good work-life balance. Workplace burnout can be avoided, and stress can be reduced by ensuring a healthy work-life balance.

A Silver Lining Work-Life Balance

If teachers maintain a healthy work-life balance, they will be more content when they get to work. In turn, this lessens stress and the risk of burnout, two common workplace health issues. Chronic stress affects teachers who experience stress all the time. According to Teacher 6, “I think with regards to Work-Life Balance, aside from the teaching load given to me and additional work. I spent more time working on school matters such as reports, preparing PowerPoint for my students, and following up on the outputs of my students.” Thus, positivity makes it easier to achieve the goals of every individual. That's because people who are happy tend to make wiser decisions. They can plot a course and make plans as opposed to reacting to failures.

Healthy Work-Life Balance in Doing Job Descriptions

Maintaining a work-life balance lessens stress and helps to avoid burnout at the office. Chronic stress is among the most prevalent health conditions at work. It may result in heart issues, digestive issues, hypertension, chronic pain, and aches and pains. According to Teacher 7, “In this trying time, I see to it that I have a healthy work-life balance. It would be a great factor in having a healthy mind

and body. I always make sure to be active and productive by doing the things I love.” It means that having a healthy work-life balance can make a teacher happier when they come to work.

Good Time Management in Doing School Related Works

Teachers who use effective time management can accomplish more in less time because they are focused and don't waste time on distractions. Moreso, stress is decreased by effective time management. According to Teacher 4, “Proper time management is the key. Making sure that all school-related work must be done on time.” It suggests that the capacity for effective time management is essential. Teachers can make use of it to improve student learning in the classroom or even through distance learning.

Quality Time with Family

A few benefits of spending time with family include an increase in self- assurance, a deeper emotional bond between family members, improved communication skills, improved academic performance, a decline in behavioral issues, and the opportunity to create memories that are centered around joy, laughter, and togetherness. According to Teacher 9, “Work from home was a very big help in my case since I have a toddler this pandemic, I was able to balance my work and had quality time with my family.” It implies that quality time with family makes a big difference in terms of happiness.

Stressful but Manageable Work

Workloads that are too heavy can have a negative impact on performance. This means that employee performance can be affected by workload. Employee performance decreases as workload increases, particularly when it makes problems difficult for employees to solve. According to Teacher 10, “It's a little bit stressful but manageable. It's like, work is 24-hours already because you get non-stop messages even when it's already past work hours.” It may imply that not being stressed at work can help teachers' minds and bodies adapt to resiliency and can stay healthy always.

The themes are consistent with the findings of Ishak, et al. (2017) revealed that the quality of work life is increasingly being recognized as a critical issue in achieving the organization's goals in all sectors, including manufacturing, banking, education, tourism, services, and others. The quality of a person's working and personal lives is influenced by a variety of factors, including compensation, organizational commitment, recognition, work-life balance, welfare facilities, properly handling grievances, job satisfaction, and others.

2. Insights of my co-participants from their testimonies on instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance in selected public secondary schools in Taytay Sub-Office, Division of Rizal

The themes that emerged as a response by the teacher-participants are continuous and sustainable programs, teachers' assistance, stakeholders' engagement, and well-implemented.

Different Projects and Programs of the Division are Well Implemented

Projects help organizations learn, change, adapt, enhance, and adopt new procedures, goods, or technologies. Despite the failures, many projects are successful and provide their employers with substantial value. Thus, projects and programs at school should provide sustainable support to students in remote learning. According to Teachers 1, 2, 3 & 4, “Projects and programs help a lot of students who couldn't access internet connection. We make a schedule at different locations, and we go to their houses and brought them modules and at the same time, we teach them. Also, the project gives solutions to some reasons why students fail to submit their outputs.” It can be deduced that sustainability education encompasses all academic subjects and extends far beyond the classroom. It gives students practical skills that they can use to benefit the environment even during the pandemic. It helps students today develop the independence they'll need in the future.

Educational Support Programs and Activities

Educational assistance systems give students the extra aid they need to learn efficiently. According to Teacher 5, “It has always had a significant impact on schools to have support programs and activities other than those provided by the Department of Education to provide quality education to students and teachers because everything benefits the children.” It may imply that a teacher's assistant can provide more one-on-one instructional time because each student is different and has different learning needs in remote learning.

Limited Teacher Scaffolds

Moreso, the participants articulated that they receive partial learning scaffolds from some of their teachers. They perceived that some teachers cannot be approached. According to Teacher 6, “The teacher engagement impact on her/ his student is not 100 percent because of the situation today. She/ he cannot give her/himself to them because of distance learning and some of her/ his co-teachers cannot be approached when the students have a concern.” Teaching assistants provide insightful advice that can be used by teachers to assess their lesson plans and evaluate the students' progress.

Each Personnel Actively Participated and Contributed to the Projects of the School

To create efficient educational systems and learning environments, all stakeholders must connect with one another in a meaningful

way through collaboration. According to Teacher 7, “Each personnel actively participated and contributed their abilities and skills to have a successful school year. Since the school is using modular learning, the teaching and the non-teaching staff worked together to print out, organize, and bundle the modules to be distributed to the learners.” Thus, effective collaboration across all stakeholders of the school needs both active listening and active doing in attaining quality learning in remote modality.

Teacher Support Mechanism

Teachers, school leaders, policymakers, parents, and, most importantly, the learners themselves benefit from support mechanisms that communicate evidence of learning progress and provide insights to teachers, school leaders, policymakers, parents, and, most significantly, the learners themselves. Procedures for assessment might be incorporated into learning activities. According to Teachers 8&9, “We talked and think of the best solution, they joined them during home visitation, we helped them and participated with their ALTO program (remedial classes) and supported other projects that will help ease the financial problem of some of our learners.” It may imply the teacher support mechanism can assist teachers to develop their professional skills, attitudes, and values in teaching students that can support learners learning progress even in the new normal.

Teachers’ Challenging Task

Challenges must be prioritized in teaching and learning to develop lessons that stretch and challenge all students. This pushes students out of their comfort zones and encourages them to push themselves to the limit. Thus, teachers support and assistance for students are vital to overcome all the challenges in their tasks. According to Teacher 10, “I fully implemented because of the challenging task for teachers during this pandemic.” It can be surmised that teachers must deal with issues such as difficult students, insufficient funding, and a slew of other issues in the new normal of teaching that can lead to a healthy working environment.

This supports the findings of Canoy (2020), Marmol (2019), and Hamidi (2017), who found that the improvement of collaboration skills and the ability for interest groups to make their own decisions about what actions, changes, and advancements are desirable and effective for the organization are all part of the quality of work life process. Technical schoolteachers generally have different work-life, social, and organizational integration.

3. Factors to improve instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance as perceived by teachers

The themes that emerged as a response by the select teachers on the potential of their participation in enhancing the instructional success such as teachers’ support and engagement, utilization of technology, professional development, adherence, and monitoring.

Teachers’ Assistance to Students

Teachers motivate their students to work hard and succeed in their academic endeavors by setting high standards for themselves. Students want and need reliable information. According to Teacher 1, “They were able to provide a checklist to know what are the lessons that they supposed to provide students more time.” It may imply that teachers oversee ensuring that students feel at ease in their new surroundings and can form meaningful relationships and communicate effectively with students in remote learning. When schools reopen, students may have been out of school for some time.

Sufficient Instruction and Instructional Videos for Students

When used in remote learning, videos give students a more immersive sensory experience than just print materials alone. The subject being taught can be seen and heard by the students, who can then process it just like they would in daily lives. According to Teacher 2, “To improve quality of education in this new normal setting, I always give instruction and instructional videos to my students so they can watch it and learn from it.” Thus, the addition of technology to remote learning can greatly facilitate communication. When participating in remote learning, students who have access to computers and the internet can communicate with their instructors more effectively.

Attending Seminars and other Professional Training/ Webinars

Webinars are a fantastic resource for information. As career counselors, teachers can learn about changing educational trends, the wide range of career options available to students, different methods to help students on their professional path, and much more. According to Teacher 3, “Attending seminars and other professional training/webinars is a must. Life is lifelong learning. As a teacher, I should not stop myself learning new strategies to enhance my skills in teaching.” It can be surmised that professional development could be beneficial for teachers to better manage their time and stay organized. As a result, teachers are more effective and can spend more time on students rather than administrative tasks.

Abiding the Changes in the Educational System

Change in the educational system can improve the teachers’ teaching strategies and approaches that could help learners in gaining knowledge in remote learning. Learners must not only expand their knowledge, but also their skills, attitudes, and values to become capable individuals. According to Teacher 4, “I abide by the changes the department has been doing especially when the pandemic started.” The standard operating procedure is frequently reaffirmed and clarified in workplace policies. Well-written policies enable the organization to manage its employees more effectively by defining acceptable and inappropriate workplace behavior and the

repercussions of disobeying such policies. The procedures and policies of any organization are essential. Policies and procedures interact to form a road map for daily operations.

Teacher Collaboration and Sharing of Experiences

When teachers collaborate, students will learn more. Collaboration among teachers helps students progress and enables them to branch out as educators. According to Teacher 5, “I believe it is through teacher collaboration and sharing of experiences both within and outside the classroom, as well as seminars and training, both virtual and in person.”

Teachers’ Engagement is Vital in Improving the Quality of Education

Engaged educators place a high priority on delivering high-quality instruction, look for innovative approaches and the most effective teaching strategies, regularly monitor and provide feedback on students' progress, and modify their lessons to fit the needs of their remote learners. These actions can make a significant impact on the educational system. According to Teacher 6, “The engagement of teachers is really important to improve the quality of education. If teachers guide students to be active learners rather than simply be observers.” It can be deduced that teacher engagement can help build better relationships with students, staff, and other faculty, which can aid in the school's goal of providing quality learning.

Utilizing Modern Technological Advancements

Using new technology, teachers can tailor the learning experience for each student. They utilize these platforms in remote learning. It enables them to enhance their instructional strategies and personalize learning, enhancing their effectiveness as teachers. By using these helpful resources, teachers can offer fun activities. According to Teacher 7, “It is vital to make use of the modern technological advancements that we have right now, through this learning would be more effective and meaningful.” The incorporation of technology into a remote learning program can significantly improve communication. Students who have access to computers and the internet can communicate with their lecturers more effectively during remote learning.

Constant Monitoring of Students and Parents

Constant monitoring allows the teacher to change the course right away to review or re-teach concepts or skills, rather than waiting until it covered multiple topics to discover that one or more students didn't grasp a concept or skill. It also provides a visual depiction of her students' learning. According to Teacher 8, “All teachers aim to improve quality education, and pandemic should not be the hindrance. Maybe constant monitoring of students and parents is the key to achieving this.” A centralized source of data that documents the growth of the school can thus be created with the help of school monitoring and assessment. The foundation for challenging and testing assumptions is provided by monitoring and assessment.

Continuous Support of the School and its People

Support staff at schools are essential in ensuring that students learn in safe and encouraging environment. Encourage parent and family involvement in the classroom to forge close, dependable bonds with students and enhance the learning environment. According to Teacher 9, “The continuous hand-in-hand action of the school and its people will surely improve the quality of education we are giving.” Thus, a support system at school can offer every student and teacher an improvement in their performance as well as can help them in reducing their stress.

Upgrading Skills and Knowledge through the Use of Social Media

Social media in education gives students, teachers, and parents access to more beneficial resources, the chance to connect with other students and form study groups, as well as other educational systems that facilitate more convenient remote learning. Social networking sites offer students and institutions a variety of ways to enhance the learning process. According to Teacher 10, “Through the use of social media, I will need to extend their knowledge about it, so that students will be engaged on the discussion whether it is for modular or online classes.” Moreso, teachers can communicate with their colleagues and the parents of their students. Incorporating technology into remote learning that may enhance student engagement, social connection, outcomes, and motivation.

These themes are in line with the findings of Barron (2021), who found that the role of teachers is rapidly changing in a variety of ways compared to the time when learning only occurred in-person, which complicated them. The pandemic has caused a change in two fundamental factors. It has become clear that pedagogical adaptations are essential because the conventional in-person lecture models do not work well in a distance learning setting.

Teacher Engagement and Work-Life Balance Program

Rationale

A teacher's decision to invest energy resources in their work is reflected in the multifaceted motivational construct known as teacher engagement. Many aspects of a teacher's job can either increase or decrease engagement. It emphasizes the significance of human connection and relationships in the teaching profession. The researcher chose this aspect of the study on teacher engagement and work-life balance in remote learning environments because of the importance of a teacher's relationships with students and colleagues.

Currently, teachers must juggle a variety of competing obligations, such as work, raising children, doing chores around the house, volunteering, caring for a spouse, and taking care of elderly parents. These obligations undoubtedly put stress on them and lead to work-life conflict, which has an impact on them, their peers, school administrators, and even the community. While many millennial teachers put in long hours, older teachers also work longer shifts than in the past and need different work arrangements to suit their lifestyle requirements. Unfortunately, having a demanding job that requires long hours and a lot of stress makes it hard for teachers to balance both personal and professional aspects. The importance of work-life balance must therefore be understood by educators. In order to further enhance their practices and productivity as they carried out their duties as educators of students participating in remote learning, the researcher created the Teacher Engagement and Work-Life Balance Program. Additionally, this program aims to generate insightful information about the best practices for teacher promotion, mentoring, and preparation in order to improve their competence and effectiveness in educating students. This program is made available to the Schools Division Office of Rizal attributing the primary goal of assisting teachers and enhancing their productivity, engagement, and work-life balance in areas such as personal, academic, curriculum and instruction planning, classroom management, and social involvement, as well as establishing a link between the teachers' work life balance and engagement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following are the conclusions drawn from the results of the study. (1) The teacher participants had various significant experiences in remote learning as to instructional engagement, teacher engagement, and work-life balance including the utilization of technological platforms and differentiated instruction, enforcing positive feedback and guidance to students, and positive outlook in both personal life and professional career. (2) In terms of meaning formulated from the responses, teacher engagement was highly implemented in select secondary schools. The selected schools have their projects and programs implemented such as Project AKAP: Anak, Kumusta Ang Pag-aaral, Project RIOS (Reach-out Individuals Outside School), ALTO program, etc. that could help students who are lagging behind in remote learning to cope and go back to their core. Thus, projects and programs at school provide sustainable support to students in remote learning. As to the themes that emerged from the meanings, it is important to have sustainability in the projects and programs implemented at the school to promote the development of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, and actions to ensure quality learning for the students in the remote learning. (3) To enhance teaching and learning delivery in distance education, educators come up with different ways on how they will be going to help their students to make the process of learning more fun and creative. They also appropriately respond to students' queries and use child-friendly and age-appropriate resources available at the school level that are based on scientific evidence and can lead to improvement of their learning in remote modalities. Further, teachers should attend conferences and seminars to gain new knowledge in the field amidst the pandemic. The progress of students is also positively impacted by teacher collaboration, which also enables teachers to explore novel territory, enhance their instructional strategies, and personalize learning. This enhances their effectiveness as teachers and makes them more effective and productive.

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