

Public School Teachers and Administrators' Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone and almost all industries across the world including the educational system. The impact of the pandemic on students was given attention in several research. However, its negative effects on the teacher's and school administrators' well-being are not yet fully analyzed and understood. Thus, in this research, the Pagdadala model was used to understand the impact of the pandemic on teachers' and administrators' well-being. The data gathered from 244 participants were analyzed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following their recommended six phases of data analysis from familiarizing with data, generating initial code, looking for, reviewing and naming the themes, and coming up with the final results, it showed that the Dinadala (Burdens) of the burden bearers were grouped into health, work, financial, self, and family themes. The manner in which the burden bearers handle the identified burdens or the Pagdadala (Burden Bearing) was themed into personality development, self-care, spiritual, community protocols, and other possible resources. Last, the source of strength of the burden bearers or the Patutunguhan (Destination) were grouped into family, spirituality, society, self, and work themes. The results of this research can be utilized as a guide in identifying appropriate interventions to improve the well-being of teachers and administrators and address the concerns that emerged because of the pandemic.

Keywords: , Well-being, Pagdadala Model, Burden, Burden Bearing, Destination, COVID-19

Introduction

The Coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The first case of the said disease was reported in late 2019 (World Health Organization, 2020). Since then, the said disease has spread across nations and countries and was officially declared a global health crisis on March 11, 2020 (Ducharme, 2020). Globally, as of March 20, 2021, the number of confirmed cases already reached 121,759,109 including 2,690,731 deaths. In the Philippines alone, from January 3, 2020, to March 20, 2021, the number of infected individuals already reached a cumulative number of 648,066 cases, while the number of COVID-19 related deaths reached an amassed number of 12,900 (World Health Organization, 2020). The huge amount of COVID-19 cases, in consort with the dreadful amount of deaths due to the said disease, caused people to panic, be anxious, and experience other forms of mental and psychological problems (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020; Lee, 2020; Hau & Minn, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020).

The Philippines' economy was heavily damaged due to the implementation of the community quarantine for more than a year. Businesses of different fields were affected. Travel, tourism, and even the entertainment industry were also affected. As a result, the suffering of the economy was felt by everyone. Another field that was significantly affected by the COVID-19

pandemic is the field of education (Rabacal et.al., 2020; Brammer et.al., 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

Literature Review

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Administrators and Teachers

Identifying the struggles and hardships of the students during the COVID-19 pandemic is just one aspect among the list of adverse effects the said virus has caused. The academic administrators and teachers are very much affected as well by the pandemic. Similar to the students, teachers and administrators also need to undergo a drastic shift in the education system in order for them to continuously cater to the needs not only of their students but also of the stakeholders of the schools and universities whom they are affiliated with (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021; Lee, 2020; Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). One struggle that stands out is the challenge for teachers to be flexible and effective in teaching subjects that are more feasible to teach inside the classroom such as laboratory courses. The pedagogy or the art of teaching is identified to also be a major concern given the fact that not all teachers are adept with online pedagogy. Furthermore, the abrupt change in the education system did not give the academic administrators and teachers a chance to prepare and be ready for the new system of teaching and learning

which resulted for school administrators and teachers experiencing distress, burnout, anxiety, and other forms of mental health concerns (Jain, Lall, & Singh, 2020; Flores & Swennen, 2020). The overall quality of life of teachers was heavily affected by COVID-19 in a negative light as they experienced risk to their safety, physical health, emotional well-being, and psychological condition (Rabacal et al., 2020).

With the raised concern, the Government of the Philippines initially addressed the situation by enforcing pre-existing laws. For example, in chapter V, sec. 24 of RA 11036 (2018) also known as the Mental Health Act states that educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, universities, and technical schools, shall develop policies and programs for students, educators, and other employees designed to raise awareness on mental health issues, identified and provide support and services for individuals at risk, and facility access, including referral mechanisms of individual with mental health conditions to treatment and psychosocial support. Aligned with this, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued Department Order No. 014 s. 2020 known as the Guidelines on the Required Health Standards in Basic Education Offices and Schools ensures the protection of the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teachers, and personnel, especially during the time of the pandemic. In the guidelines, DepEd provided priority to the protection and promotion of mental health and general welfare and ensured all of their offices include provisions of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to all learners and personnel to improve and strengthen their mental resilience. Also, in 2021 the DepEd issued Department Memorandum No. 074. s. 2021 also known as Inclusion and Promotion of Mental Health in all DepEd Events and Programs. The said memorandum is also aligned with D.O. No. 014 s. 2020 and empowered by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Services (DRRMS). The law of the land, together with department orders and the pandemic, increases the need to develop mental health plans and programs in every educational institution.

With the growing literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the real concerns about mental health during such a situation, little is still known regarding its adverse effects on teachers and administrators. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there is hardly any number of studies existing to identify the struggles of the identified target population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, there is a limited number of research conducted regarding its impact on Filipino academic administrators and educators. This study will

specifically focus on the Filipino public academic administrators and educators of the DepEd, Division of Palawan as participants. This is mainly because of the unique technological and geographical challenges they are experiencing before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (Laririt, 2021). Hence, it is the objective of this study to further delve into the experiences of target participants in relation to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their well-being. By doing so, this study explores some of the dimensions of the well-being of the participants that provide realistic experiences that can be seen as unique needs of the particular region which is Palawan to become the basis for the development of their regional mental health plans and programs.

Theoretical Framework

The *Pagdadala* Model by Decenteceo (1997,1999) will be utilized to guide the analysis of the study. The *Pagdadala* Model is a paradigm used to originally understand how Filipino people handle the psychological burden they are experiencing especially during difficult times. The model has six aspects, namely *Ang Dinadala*, *Ang Nagdadala*, *Ang Pagdadala*, *Ang Patutunguhan*, *Ang Pagdadaanan*, and *Ang Pinagdadaanan*.

Ang Dinadala, or the Burden, is described as the problems that the individual is carrying. This may pertain to but is not limited to the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of the person. *Ang Nagdadala*, or the burden bearer, pertains to the individuals themselves who are deemed to carry on their shoulders the burden or the problems. *Ang Pagdadala* refers to the way and means how the individual carries or handles the burden or problem on his own. *Ang Patutunguhan* is considered the destination of the burden bearer. This also refers to the sources of strength or possible reasons why an individual continues to strive despite carrying numerous burdens or problems. *Ang Pagdadaanan* is the path of the burden bearer. This pertains to the plan or strategy on how the individual will deal with and solve the burden of the problem. Lastly, *Ang Pinagdadaanan* denotes the probable experiences that the person may encounter while dealing with the burden of the problem.

The *Pagdadala* Model may be used and may be related to many notions. For example, the *Pagdadala* Model was seen to be associated with Psychological First Aid (PFA) (Landoy, Hechanova, Ramos, & Kintanar, 2015). One aspect of PFA is to listen to the

burdens of the individuals who are in need. Moreover, the aim of PFA is to help the survivors of disasters and crises for them to be able to use their self-efficacy for their betterment and development. The such aim may be comparable to the objective of Decenteceo's (1999) *Pagdadala* Model. Ergo, the *Pagdadala* Model may also be identified as community-based mental health and psychosocial support model based on the discussion of the researchers with Lyra Verzosa, a book author and a consultant on psychosocial and psychoeducational fields (2015). Moreover, in a related study, the *Pagdadala* Model was used to identify how teachers care for their students who are in low-resource urban public schools (Fortunado & Canoy, 2021).

In the present study, only the first four aspects of the *Pagdadala Model* will be used. This is due to the reason that it is aim of the research to identify the present problems of the target participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ergo, it excludes the idea of conducting a longitudinal study to identify how the target participants plan to deal with and combat their burden in the future.

Methodology

The researchers analyzed the data gathered from small groups in a workshop organized by the Department of Education (DepEd), Division of Palawan for teachers and school administrators using thematic analysis. Common themes were identified from the different responses of teachers to understand the effects of the pandemic on their well-being. Through the lens of The *Pagdadala* Model, the experiences such as the burden and coping of the Filipino academic administrators and educators were made salient.

It is important to note the reflexivity of the researchers, who are all educators of college students and have firsthand experience teaching online during the pandemic. Moreover, they are also students because they are all taking their doctoral degrees during this time of the pandemic. The analysis of the participants' responses might have been influenced by the researchers' background.

Data Collection

The data was gathered online through a survey form distributed via Google Form in August 2020 from the teaching staff and school administrators of the DepEd, Division of Palawan. Then, the data was sorted for data analysis. Other qualitative methods such as online

interviews and focus group discussions are not possible due to the technological and geographical challenges of the participants.

Participant Details

A total of 244 participants are part of the teaching and administration personnel of the DepEd, Division of Palawan. The administrators who participated in this study are principals, supervisors, bookkeepers, etc. and the teachers are from different teaching ranks.

Data Analysis

The researchers reviewed the collected responses of the participants who are part of the DepEd, Division of Palawan. The responses were analyzed using Thematic Analysis following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). The researchers spent time going through the responses to familiarize themselves with the data. Then, initial codes were generated. Afterward, common themes were identified and reviewed. Subsequently, themes were labeled until the results were finalized. The themes were identified according to the *Pagdadala* Model which includes *Dinadala* (Burden), *Pagdadala* (how the individual handles the burden), and *Ang Patutunguhan* (the destination of the burden bearer).

Results

Psychological Burdens

Table 1 (*see appendix*) presents the *burdens* of the 244 Teaching Staff and Administrators of DepEd, Division of Palawan. It identifies 8 themes, such as Health (n=139, 26.53%), Work (n=138, 26.34%), Financial (n=107, 20.42%), Self (n=50, 9.54%), Family (n=38, 7.25%), Technology (n=21, 4.01%), Other (n=21, 4.01%), and Community (n=10, 1.91%).

Health as the highest ranked burden consists of concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of vaccine, current health condition (Pregnant, pre-existing condition, and etc.), Nutrition, and Mental Health Related concerns (Stress, Fear, Anxiety, Depression and etc.). Work as ranked two is focused on becoming an educator and other related factors. This includes adjustment on new normal education setup which is transitioning to modular and online class or distance learning, production and distribution of modules, reactions of parents about the module, lack of resources (budget, laptop, printers, ink, modem, bond paper, & other school supplies),

preparations of learning materials, time management, effect to the enrollment, fear of losing job, reports and other documentary requirements, work-life balance, and the new work setup. Financial as the third highest burden is concerns about their current financial status, financial problem, national economic problem, income, expenses, and poverty. Next on ranking is themed about Self. This includes changes in routine and lifestyle, regulating emotions, insecurities, doubt, over thinking, about love life, personal strength, life challenges, plans and priorities, coping on the death of relatives, time management, and adjustment during the pandemic. Ranked fifth is Family. This includes concerns about family problems, time with the family, role as wife or husband, being far away from the family, communicating with relatives, and marital problems. Second to the last is about technology and other factors. Technology includes low internet connection and bandwidth, lack of gadgets, and adjustments to modern technology. Others as a theme are about climate change, the war in the middle east, concerns with the future, difficulty in transportation, Spiritual Problem, and the status of the education system during this pandemic. Lastly, is about community. These are burdens related to quarantine or lockdown, lack of discipline of the members of the community, restricted social interactions, feeling of belongingness in the community, and concerns about the current situations of their students.

Burden Bearing

Table 2 (*see appendix*) shows the manner in which the participants carry the burden. The following ten themes are created from the responses of the participants: Personality Development (n=88, 21.05%), Self-Care (n=71, 16.99%), Spirituality (n=60, 14.35%), Other Resources (n=51, 12.20%), Community Protocol (n=44, 10.53%), Social Support (n=42, 10.05%), Work (n=27, 6.46%), Financial Management (n=26, 6.22%), Technological Advancement (n=5, 1.20%), and Time Management (n=4, 0.96%).

Personality Development as ranked number one is focused on manners of adjustment that provide growth and development to a burden bearer or an individual. This includes attending training or webinars, reading articles about COVID-19, doing research about COVID-19, doing necessary things to bridge the pandemic, being open to communication and cooperation, working hard, becoming strong during the pandemic, being positive in life, becoming flexible and resourceful, setting priorities, keeping the self-busy, strategic decision making, and diligence and

perseverance. While Self-care as ranked number two is focused on taking care of the self during the pandemic. This includes exercise, a healthy diet, proper sleep, self-awareness, contemplation, proper hygiene, time management, relaxing, rest, unwinding, consulting medical health workers, taking multivitamins, following health and safety protocols, and becoming healthy and strong. Third, in the ranking is spirituality. This includes responses about faith, prayers, and trusting God. Next in ranking is Other Resources. Other Resources include responses about gathering resources to provide basic needs such as: looking for extra income, online selling, and business (fruits, vegetables, dried fish, etc.), sideline farming, applying for a loan in a bank, solicitation, and asking for donations. Fifth in the ranking is focused on following the healthy and safe Community Protocol provided by the government. This includes wearing a face mask and face shield, staying at home, physical distancing, and sanitizing the school. Social Support as the sixth on the ranking is focused on asking for help or assistance (from Local Government Units (LGU), Non-Government organizations (NGO), family, friends and etc.), communicating with family and friends through the usage of modern technology, bonding with family, pets, and friends building helping relationships, socialization, becoming responsible to yourself and to others. Doing work is the seventh highest theme. This is more focused on addressing burdens in the work. This includes an adjustment in the new normal work setup, the orientation of stakeholders on various modalities in school, work-from-home setup, doing online reports, understanding changes in the education system, hardworking, and loving their job. On the other hand, Financial Management placed on eighth ranks. It is focused on budgeting and fundraising activities. The last two themes are Technological Advancement as ranked number nine, and Time Management ranked number ten. Technological Advancement includes managing internet connections in the area, maximizing social media platforms, and maximizing gadgets. While Time Management is concentrated on proper scheduling, budgeting time, and creating boundaries.

Destination of the Burden Bearer

Table 3 (*see appendix*) shows the destination of the Burden Bearer or the *Patutunguhan*. Six themes were created from the responses of the participants. These are Family (n=252, 46.67%), Spirituality (n=130, 24.07%), Society (n=88, 16.30%), Self (n=33, 6.11%), Work (n=32, 5.93%), and others (n=5, 0.93%).

The family was the number one source of strength for

the participants. This includes the plan for the future of the family, the love for and of parents, siblings, spouse, their children, and other relatives. While Spirituality is second to the highest is getting strength from faith and God. Society ranked third, is about getting resilient resources from other people around us. This includes friends, co-workers, school stakeholders, partners, government, and individuals who recovered from COVID-19. Fourth in ranking about states and conditions for the self. This includes inner strength, self-motivation, self-care, dreams, inspiration, and hope. The next ranking is about work. The participants hold and do their responsibilities as educators, the love for their students, and help and support from the stakeholders. Lastly are other themes. This includes pets, their current budget, and the community guidelines.

Discussion

Psychological Burdens

The COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting people from different parts of the world for more than a year already. According to the World Health Organization (2020), the pandemic resulted in thousands of deaths, and in the Philippines, more people are getting diagnosed with the virus. As an effect, people are getting anxious and they experience other forms of mental health problems (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020; Lee, 2020; Hau & Minn, 2020). Aside from people getting affected on the individual level, the economy also suffered because of the implementation of the Community Quarantine. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic included the educational system (Rabacal et al., 2020; Brammer, Branicki, et al., 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). After examining the responses of Teaching Staff and Administrators of DepEd, Division of Palawan, 8 major themes have emerged as their Burden or Dinadala based on the Pagdadala Model. According to Decenteceo (1999), burdens are the problems that individuals carry based on their roles, relationships, and responsibilities.

Amidst the pandemic, Teaching Staff and Administrators of DepEd, Division of Palawan ranked health as their highest burden. It is understandable that teachers and school administrators would worry about their health because of the Covid-19 virus. Everyone is at risk of contracting the virus and the effects are unpredictable. Specific concerns about health are their current health conditions, lack of unavailability of vaccines, and mental health-related concerns such as feeling stressed and anxious. Individuals with

comorbidities are at greater risk of getting the virus so it makes sense that teachers and administrators with preexisting conditions will carry health as their burden during this time. Moreover, they have also included mental health as one of their health concerns. The uncertainties of the pandemic could explain why a lot of individuals in the education sector are experiencing mental health concerns. These findings are consistent with the existing literature that pointed out that teachers worry about their safety and physical health (Rabacal, Oducado, & Tamdang, 2020) and experience mental health problems (Jain, Lall, & Singh, 2020; Flores & Swennen, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2020)

Teachers and Administrators of the DepEd Division of Palawan are also carrying work as another burden. They have disclosed that the new set-up which is remote learning is requiring them to make a lot of adjustments. Most teachers are in a modular learning setup. Thus, in the middle of the pandemic, they had to create content and print modules and send them to their students. Some teachers were even doing house-to-house calls just to accommodate students who are having a hard time with the new setup. Some teachers are conducting classes online which means that they have to adjust their work setup to make it conducive for online teaching. The new setup requires extra preparations for teachers. These confirmed the findings of previous research that teachers have been experiencing drastic changes in the new setup and are struggling to adjust (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021; Lee, 2020; Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

Also included in the burdens of teachers and school administrators during the pandemic are financial concerns. The economy was affected when the community quarantine was implemented. Since people were asked to stay indoors, food traffic was considerably reduced. Hence, some companies closed, and people lost their jobs. This could explain why some teachers are concerned about their tenure because almost all organizations that employ people were affected by the pandemic. Previous research also pointed out the financial implications of the pandemic (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Teachers and administrators identified burdens about themselves, thus, the theme of Self is also included. This pertains to personal problems that emerged because of the pandemic such as everyday routine, changes of plans and priorities, goals that have to be adjusted, issues about romantic relationships, and dealing with losing loved ones to the pandemic. Some teachers have also lost their motivation to teach during this time. The overall quality of life of teachers was

affected because of the current situation. These are consistent with previous research that found how the pandemic affected the everyday experiences of individuals in the educational system (Ahmed et al., 2020; Rabacal et al., 2020; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021; Lee, 2020; Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020, Joshi et al., 2020)

Most teachers and school administrators have to work from home because of the pandemic. Because of this, family problems became more salient. Marital problems were reported and some were staying away from their family because of the community quarantine. In some households, individuals were staying together every day since the pandemic started. As an effect, issues related to family dynamics emerged. This was also pointed out in one research that family interaction sometimes can result in unnecessary work interruption that causes more stress to teachers (Joshi et al., 2020).

Some teachers of the DepEd Division of Palawan do not have a good background in technology so some really struggled with preparing materials and conducting online classes. Furthermore, the internet connection in Palawan was reported to be erratic so it also affected the class preparations of teachers. They have also included being burdened by other factors such as climate change, the war in the middle east, worrying about the future, difficulty in transportation, having issues with their spirituality, and the overall status of the education system in the country. This provides evidence of how the pandemic forced everyone to reflect on what is going on within us and in our surroundings. It makes sense for people to be worried about the climate because of the reported peaks in temperature in the first quarter of 2021. The pandemic brought a lot of uncertainties, so people start to worry about what is going to happen in the future. The quarantine restrictions made transportation more difficult. This is why some teachers are considering it a burden especially when they are required to report to work on-site. Spirituality is also affected because the overwhelming cases of deaths, losing loved ones and threats to safety and security could have individuals search for meaning about why these things are happening. Turning into one's spirituality could help some people deal with the current situation. These findings were also found in previous research (Joshi et al., 2020; Said et al., 2020; Rabacal et al., 2020; Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020).

The community was also identified as a burden for teachers and school administrators. This is due to the restricting protocols of the implemented community

quarantine. People were forced to stay at home and some have to live away from their families. As teachers, they are also affected whenever they have students who are struggling with the new setup or have contracted the virus (Joshi et al., 2020; Said et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2020)

Burden Bearing

Decenteceo (1999) differentiated the means of carrying the burdens in his article. There are some burden bearers who carry burdens lightly (*magaan magdala*), sometimes others are comfortably putting pressure on themselves (*mabigat magdala*), while others have the capacity to manage their burdens and responsibilities well (*maayos magdala*). The selected public school teachers and administrators of DepEd, Division of Palawan identified Personality Development, Self-Care, Spirituality, Other Resources, and Community Protocol as the top five themes of manners of carrying burdens during the pandemic.

COVID-19 is new to all of us, and to be able to adapt to the situation the participants look for their growth and development through research, training, and reading articles about the virus and adjustments in the new normal, especially in the education setting. Participants also naturally conduct self-care not just only of concern for themselves but also for their families, co-workers, students, and other members of the community. Filipino values on spirituality are also reflected in this research. It gives that the role of spirituality helps the participants to bridge this pandemic through transcendence, hope, faith, and self-actualization (Delgado, 2005). Financial challenges during this pandemic are also imminent, participants initiated to look for other sources of income and food to be able to survive in this pandemic. Participants also willingly follow the government-prescribed community protocol not just in the work but also inside their homes. Evidently, the participants' means of carrying their burdens amidst the pandemic is focused on the arrangement or managing things on what they can only control. Similarly, from the perspective of Decenteceo (1999) on his model, a burden that is well-arranged is easier to carry.

Destination of the Burden Bearer

The notion of *Patutunguhan*, as Identified in the literature, talks about the destination of the burden bearer (Decenteceo, 1999). However, if one will dig deeper, it will be understood that there is a more profound meaning to it. *Patutunguhan*, in a deeper conception and in a more sensible manner, deals with

the main reason why a person continues to be motivated to strive harder and go to great lengths despite the struggles they are experiencing and the burdens they are carrying. Concisely, the concept of *Patutunguhan* is pertaining to the source of strength of the burden bearer.

In the current study, results revealed that the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines gather their strength to confront their stressors and burdens from a number of sources. These sources are as follows – Family, Spirituality, Society, Self, Work, and others. The main identified source of their strength is their family. By definition, a family is a unit of two or more persons united by the sanctity of marriage, blood, adoption, or consensual union. In the general sense, a family pertains to a single household wherein the people involved in the said household interacts and communicate with one another (Sharma, 2013). This definition rather pertains to a group of individuals who are engaged in a relationship defined by their blood relation such as a parent-children relationship. This overall notion reflects a classic Filipino characteristic that revolves around the culture-embedded practice of Filipinos to provide so much value to their family (Morillo, Capuno, & Mendoza, 2013). Thus, It made sense why the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines identified their family as their main source of strength.

The second source of strength of the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines is their spirituality. By definition, spirituality goes beyond the borders of religiosity and cultural boundaries. Spirituality pertains to one's connection to a supreme being which covers broad facets such as transcendence, hope, faith, and self-actualization (Delgado, 2005). Filipinos, in general, strongly hold on to the concept of spirituality ever since the time when the Spaniards colonized the Philippines (Robertson, 1918). Thus, one can say that spirituality is heavily engraved in the traditional context of the Filipinos. For this reason, the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines often relay their problems and burdens on the capable hands of the supreme being they worship. By knowing that there is someone omnipotent, all-knowing, and even more powerful than them, they gain confidence and inner peace knowing that the supreme being they worship will not turn them down and will not put their efforts in vain.

The third identified factor as the source of strength of the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines is the society or the community

where the respondents are thriving. The society does not factually pertain to the civic, place, or neighborhood where the respondents live in. Rather, it figuratively pertains to the people whom the respondents personally, socially, and professionally interact with such as their friends, workmates, and students. This is in relation to the notion that Filipinos, as a whole, are collective by nature. As a community, the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines, together with the people close to them, are considered a unified society that shares communal values and belief systems. Hence, as collective beings, their joint experiences, strong camaraderie, and sense of familism, keeps the respondents from moving forward despite the hardships they are encountering (Broomhall & Phillips, 2020; Mulder, 2013)

Another factor that keeps the respondents moving forward is their work. Their job continuously motivates them to strive and persevere for the reason that their occupation is their principal means to meet and satisfy their basic needs. Aside from this matter, the respondents also consider the fact that as public school teachers and administrators, many people in their society depend on them, especially the students. Henceforth, it was identified that their responsibilities as the second parent of the students they are teaching and handling inspire them to work even harder. Instead of being repulsive, it was stated that they should embrace the sudden shift in the education system in order for them to continue bringing quality education to the students and to further bring hope during these hard times.

The last source of strength which pertains to one's self is highly interrelated with the other factors of vigor and motivation initially discussed. The self, as a source of strength, pertains to one's inner strength, determination, courage, and optimism. What is more, is the fact that it tackles abstract concepts such as one's dreams for oneself and hopes for a brighter future for the community as a whole. It is deemed by the authors that these facets under the self as a source of strength are one of the main outcomes or effects of gaining strength from one's family, spirituality, society, and work.

The identified factors of *Patutunguhan* or sources of strengths are both intrinsic and extrinsic. This conveys that the public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines are not only resourceful but also resilient individuals for they exhaust all possible resources they have in order for them to be driven, to persevere, and most importantly, to continuously

endure and live on the challenge brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was identified that public school teachers and administrators were indeed affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As burden bearers, the burden or the *Dinadala* of the participants during the COVID-19 Pandemic can be categorized into health, work, financial, self, and family themes. The methodology and approach on how the burden bearers carry the identified burdens or the *Pagdadala* were themed into personality development, self-care, spiritual, community protocols, and other possible resources. Last, the source of strength of the burden bearers or the *Patutunguhan* were categorically grouped into family, spirituality, society, self, and work themes. These aspects, as guided by the *Pagdadala* model, helped in providing a rich conceptualization and understanding regarding the unique experiences of Filipino public school teachers and administrators of Palawan, Philippines during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the experiences of Filipino public academic administrators and educators of the DepEd, Division of Palawan during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the *Pagdadala* model, it was identified that the main problems or burdens being experienced by the identified participants during such an unfortunate event are their health, work, and finances. However, despite suffering from adverse scenarios, these people do not give up and continue to persevere mainly because of their family, strong faith, the society and community where they are in, and many more. These results provide very unique experiences which provide rich information on how people will further understand and comprehend the life of a public school administrator and educator in Palawan, an area that experiences technical and geographical difficulties before and during the COVID-19 pandemic such as frequent electrical blackouts, slow internet connectivity, and inaccessibility of some schools. Thus, the result of this study may be used as a basis for a possible intervention plan to address the burdens identified by teachers and school administrators. These may also be used as an antecedent for the DepEd, Division of Palawan to create a management plan regarding their system and protocols when similar scenarios arise again in the future. Moreover, this may also be used as a basis for developing mental health plans and programs for DepEd, the Division of Palawan, and

other divisions if it applies to them.

As for the limitations of the study, the researchers relied on online data gathering information from the participants. The data was affirmed by the participants through a presentation of results in a discussion forum. More profound data could have been gathered if focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted. However, the researchers' ability to conduct FGDs and other means such as one-on-one interview sessions, may it be online or in-person, were restricted by the pandemic and the community quarantine protocols. In line with this, future research about the experiences of teachers and school administrators during the pandemic could further be explored by conducting FGDs and other data-gathering methodologies. To state further, it was discussed that only three out of the five aspects of the *Pagdadala* model were used by the current study. Future endeavors regarding the experiences of public school teachers and administrators will be deemed richer if the five aspects of the said model will be utilized.

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Table 1. *The Burdens (Dinadala)*

Theme	<i>n</i>	%	Verbatim
Health	139	26.53	R171: "The main concern or challenge we experience in life is when we cannot be physically close with our family members due to health concerns brought by the COVID-19."
Work	138	26.34	R393: "As a teacher, one of the main challenges we encounter is the lack of internet connection at work. This results for us to travel long period of hours just for us to gain internet connection and be able to join webinars and submit outputs required in our work."
Financial	107	20.42	R115: "Having a financial crisis personally and might be affected by this pandemic."
Self	50	9.54	R295: "A change in the setting of our lifestyle."
Family	38	7.25	R33: "I just came from family crisis in which i had to be away from my work for almost one month. My brother was diagnosed with brain cancer and just passed away last july 28 and 10 days for his wake until his interment last saturday august 8." R357: "Our actions are limited and we are having a hard time adjusting with distance learning due to the lack of gadget and technology of the students and lack of internet access."
Technology	21	4.01	R163: "Worried of what will happen in the future."
Others	21	4.01	R9: "Concers about interacting with other people due of COVID-19 Pandemic."
Community	10	1.91	
Total:	524	100.00	

Table 2. *Burden Bearing (Pagdadala)*

Theme	<i>n</i>	%	Verbatim
Personality Development	88	21.05	R132: "Having trust towards one's abilities and capacities, and trust that all challenges will be overcome."
Self-Care	71	16.99	R252: "Continuously increasing one's immune system through taking vitamins and eating nutritiously."
Spirituality	60	14.35	R334: "Faith and prayers to the Lord to have enough strength and knowledge in order for me to surpass the faced challenges."
Other Resources	51	12.20	R79: "Gathering help from local and private units and agencies regarding educational modules."
Community Protocol	44	10.53	R8: "Following the rules and regulations of the government in order to avoid the spread of the virus."
Social Support	42	10.05	R293: "Encouraging the parents of the students to embrace the new normal of education delivery."
Work	27	6.46	R399: "Listening and reading suggested strategies of teaching."
Financial Management	26	6.22	R51: "Borrowing money in order my temporary financial difficulties to be resolved."
Technological Advancement	5	1.20	R388: "Put up internet connection in the area."
Time Management	4	0.96	R390: "Right schedule."
Total:	418	100.00	

Table 3. *The Destination of the Burden Bearer (Patutunguhan)*

Theme	<i>n</i>	%	Verbatim
Family	252	46.67	R43: "Family and colleagues."
Spirituality	130	24.07	R396: "Faith and trust to the Lord, that He is the greatest healer."
Society	88	16.30	R305: "Stakeholders who are willing and ready to help and provide the needs of the school."
Self	33	6.11	R289: For the dream that I will be successful in life.
Work	32	5.93	R538: "Responsibility of teacher and schools administrators."
Others	5	0.93	R258: "Pets."
Total:	540	100.00	