

STRESS AND BURNOUT OF TEACHERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by:

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The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) became a threat to health, safety, and even to the security of people around the world. It has resulted in a global pandemic that scared humanity. This worldwide disease made governments in every country to implement various lockdowns in the hope of flattening the pandemic curve. It has also demanded the education sector to transform and undergo a paradigm shift in terms of curriculum, instruction, and management. COVID-19 created the biggest disruption to education in all countries that resulted in the closures of schools, colleges, and universities. The pandemic, according to Sahu (2020), has led to the shutting down of educational institutions in over 150 countries and this greatly affected the education of nearly one billion people.

In the Philippines, Proclamation No. 922 by the President of the Philippines was issued last March 2020 that declared a state of public health emergency in the whole country. Community quarantine was implemented to avoid the danger of the virus. In response to this, the Department of Education released DepEd Order No. 12, series of 2020 titled “Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency”. This serves as the guideline to school leaders, teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the modalities of distance education that was being implemented in these trying times.

Teachers or even school leaders were not prepared for the numerous challenges that this pandemic brought to the education sector. Furthermore, teachers were not fully equipped to undergo the transition in teaching from the typical classroom setup to the

“new normal” which is all about distance learning through online teaching, modular method, or the use of educational televisions, radio-based instruction, or other multimedia platforms.

The research conducted by Eickelmann and Drossel (2020) exposed that on average, only 33 % out of 310 teachers mentioned that they were well prepared for distance education, with teachers serving in the highest track of secondary school saying that they were more prepared than those teaching in lower tracks of secondary school or in primary school. Additionally, 34 % of the teachers in this research experienced the new circumstance as a burden, while 36 % of the teachers specified that they benefitted from remote instruction.

Teachers are more likely to suffer job-related stress than other professionals as per the study of the National Foundation for Educational Research (2019). Twenty percent of teachers feel tense about their duties and responsibilities most of the time in comparison to other professions and occupations. Currently, the paradigm shift that this pandemic brought has added to the stress and apprehensions of teachers.

A lot of barriers are being experienced by teachers in distance education. Some of the major hindrances that limit the ability of teachers in using and integrating technology in teaching are lack of resources, time, and support (Pittman and Gaines, 2015). The study of Kyriacou (2010) and Pithers and Soden (1998) revealed that teachers can experience stress if they feel that there is a lack of support and time. These were experienced by teachers during the implementation of a number of lockdowns in the country.

The typical days of teachers, not only in the Philippines but also around the world, were stressful enough, given the very demanding workloads and time pressure. Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, these stressors were multiplied.

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