

# The Lived Experiences of Teachers Assigned in Remote Elementary Schools

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**Abstract-** This study explored the lived experiences of teachers assigned to remote elementary schools, focusing on the challenges they face, the coping strategies they employ, the impact of these challenges on teaching and learning, the support provided by stakeholders, and the development of an intervention program to address their needs. Guided by five statements of the problem, the research aimed to describe the challenges encountered by teachers, examine how they cope, assess the effects on instructional quality and student outcomes, evaluate stakeholder support, and propose a structured program to address these concerns. Findings revealed that teachers in remote schools contend with recurring difficulties, including managing multigrade classrooms, scarcity of instructional materials, limited access to technology, and geographical isolation. These challenges negatively influence teaching quality and student learning outcomes, exacerbating educational inequities between remote and urban areas. Despite these obstacles, teachers exhibited resilience through improvisation, collaboration with peers and communities, and a strong commitment to their profession. Stakeholder support, though present, was often irregular and insufficient to fully mitigate systemic challenges. In response, the study proposed Project R.E.A.C.H. (Resilient Educators and Communities in High-Need Schools), a comprehensive intervention program designed to enhance teaching effectiveness, improve student outcomes, and ensure teacher protection. Through stakeholder collaboration, professional capacity building, infrastructure development, and wellness initiatives, R.E.A.C.H. aims to foster a safe, equitable, and high-quality learning environment for both teachers and students in remote elementary schools.

**Keywords:** remote elementary school, lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanism, teachers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The researcher's perspective holds that the unique professional life of teachers in geographically isolated areas constitutes a critical, yet unexplored, area of inquiry defined by the severe conflict between resource deprivation and deep communal engagement. The constant requirement for complex pedagogical adaptation, which is largely imposed by factors such as multigrade classrooms and severe logistical hurdles, strongly indicates that existing educational models are fundamentally insufficient and fail to accurately reflect the lived experiences of these educators. The daily struggle with minimal materials and challenging travel conditions represents more than mere obstacles; they reveal an intense and unmeasured form of occupational stress and dedication. Therefore, dedicated research is

immediately required to systematically document these specific challenges, rigorously quantify the factors contributing to teacher resilience, and ultimately develop evidence-based policies that can ensure the continuous delivery of high-quality education in remote communities.

Schools that are situated in remote or rural areas are often characterized by notable geographic seclusion from urban places and limited avenue to essential resources and infrastructure. According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S Department of Education, most of remote schools are more than 25 to 55 miles away, and with very low population density leading to have minimal school enrollment. These schools usually serve small group of students composed of fewer than a dozen per grade level who live in meager populated places where transportation infrastructures are seasonal or

underdeveloped, affecting both the performance and attendance of the students and the access to wider support services just like extracurricular programs and specialized staff.

Moreover, other than geographic criteria, the definition of remote schools also emphasizes the confined access to both professional development opportunities and different educational resources. The National Academies described remote and rural schools as a place where schools face with reduced funding, little curricular options, limited access to teachers' professional growth and learning, and deficiencies in various technology infrastructure. Similarly, the European Commission Reports, concluded that remote schools experience economic and social constraints that worsen classroom isolation such as teachers struggle with insufficient training, and face reduced digital connectivity and lesser enrichment programs.

The abovementioned situations are not new or no different from remote schools in the Philippines. The study of Sarmiento et al. which involved nearly 29,000 teachers across the Philippines, revealed that educators from remote areas experienced different struggles and challenges. One of the major identified problems is the lack of reliable internet connectivity, which severely affect the teachers' ability to access online resources and online teaching tools. Because of this, teachers have limited chances for professional development such as difficulty in updating their skills about new teaching strategies and pedagogies. Due to these limitations, most of the teachers are forced to shoulder and accept the responsibility on the financial burden of education, utilizing their own money to print learning modules, purchase mobile data, and create teaching or instructional materials. These responsibilities affect teachers' financial stability and contribute to their burnout and stress.

Similarly, According to Quejada and Orale said that teachers from remote elementary schools in Samar encountered numerous challenges in accomplishing their roles. Most of the time, these teachers walk long distances through dangerous and muddy trails, risking their safety just to make it in their schools.

Upon, reaching their school, they are confronted with the insufficient quantity of chairs, textbooks, and other basic classroom necessities. They often use their own money to buy instructional materials because of the minimal government support. Moreover, the performance of the students as well as the classroom management are also affected with the inconsistent parental involvement in remote schools.

Furthermore, Tayko – Narag described these remote schools as being located in isolated communities, often inaccessible by vehicles because of the absence of proper roads. Some of these schools operate without electricity, making it impossible to use any form of modern technology for the teaching and learning process. Some schools have electricity; however, they don't have internet connectivity which prevents both teachers and students from participating in communication and online training, and even from accessing digital learning resources. Many of these schools serve indigenous or tribal populations, where cultural and language barriers can further complicate the delivery of quality education. Despite these severe limitations, teachers continue to provide instruction under makeshift conditions, driven by a strong commitment to serve underserved communities. According to the study, nearly a thousand of these schools operate under such circumstances across the Philippines, affecting the educational experiences of around 900,000 students.

Despite the existence of different challenges and limitations, such schools often cultivate and initiate an action for a strong place-based pedagogy and community integration, leveraging their unique environmental and cultural contexts for innovative educational practices. Galut explored the lived experiences of teachers assign in remote schools in the Philippines in his hermeneutic phenomenological study. Through the use of focus group discussions and in-depth interview, the study revealed that educators exhibit a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment, making them describe their roles as a calling and not just a job. The teacher – participants shared how they developed localized and responsive teaching approaches that connected

with their students' realities, making the teaching and learning process more meaningful. The study concluded that in these remote settings, genuine community support and strong teacher dedication make quality education not only possible but deeply transformative.

Similar to the study above, Paway explored the lived experiences of educators working in indigenous, geographically isolated, and disadvantage areas (GIDAs) of the Philippines, using the phenomenological approach to determine and understand their perspective. These teachers experience problems in cultural and linguistic diversity, which requires them to adjust rapidly and with sensitivity in multilingual classrooms. However, the study also reveals that forging strong connections with local communities and implementing culturally responsive teaching practices has profoundly enriched their educational work. Rather than viewing the remote context as a limitation, participants embraced it as an opportunity to develop adaptive teaching methods tailored to the unique needs of their learners. Ultimately, this engagement fostered greater community trust, reinforced teacher commitment, and deepened their dedication to ensuring inclusive and culturally rooted learning for all students.

Another significant phenomenological exploration is the study of Dulana et al. Their study highlights the experiences of teachers in "last – mile" schools in Negros Occidental, showing their daily struggles and coping mechanisms. In this study, it was revealed that teachers reported managing more logical and administrative tasks rather than instruction, limiting their time to teach effectively. However, strong interventions such as increased financial and human resources, reduced administrative load, and enhanced transportation and allowances allowing educators to refocus on providing quality instruction. They also benefited from regular monitoring and community partnerships that provided supplemental materials, emotional support, and collaborative problem – solving. These interventions were linked to noticeable improvements in teacher satisfaction, reduced

burnout, and stronger educational outcomes in otherwise underserved communities.

One of the municipalities in Sorsogon Province that has many schools in remote areas is Magallanes. Magallanes is a coastal municipality in the province of Sorsogon, known for having many remote elementary schools locate in inland, upland, and island communities. This municipality is comprised of 34 barangays wherein some areas are with underdeveloped infrastructure, limited road access, and some are accessible through boat rides, or rough terrain, and long hikes. Seasonal weather conditions, poor transportation facilities, and the scarcity of learning resources further intensify the difficulties faced by these schools.

In response to these challenges and limitations in various resources, remote elementary schools in Magallanes have shown outstanding resilience and achievements. Educators work closely with parents, barangay officials, and volunteers to deliver education through different approaches such as community-based program, and context-sensitive teaching strategies. The innovations of teachers despite the barriers in island and upland areas underscores the commitment and dedication of local stakeholders and educators to provide and have an access to basic education. These ongoing efforts reflect a strong commitment to inclusive learning and demonstrate how partnerships and grassroots initiatives can transform educational access in even the most remote parts of the municipality.

Because of the gathered data on both negative and positive experiences of teachers in remote schools or areas, the researcher therefore, conducted a study titled "Lived Experiences of Teachers Assigned in Remote Elementary Schools". This study used in-depth interviews with the teacher – respondents to gather their most significant evaluated experiences as remote elementary school teachers. This study also determined the challenges experienced by these teachers in their remote school assignments, how do these challenges affect the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, and the mechanisms or strategies of teachers to cope with the different challenges. Moreover, all the data

gathered were analyzed and interpreted appropriately to plan and make an intervention program that can contribute to address different challenges.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study on the lived experiences of teachers assigned in remote elementary schools, provided an in-depth exploration in the experiences of teachers in remote elementary schools in Magallanes, Sorsogon. Specifically, the study sought answers on the following questions:

- What are the lived experiences of teachers assigned in remote elementary schools particularly along their challenges in managing multigrade classes?
- How do teachers cope with the challenges they experience in remote elementary schools?
- How do these challenges affect the quality of teaching and learners' learning outcomes?
- How do stakeholders support teachers assigned in remote elementary schools in navigating their challenges?
- What intervention program can be proposed to address the different challenges experienced by teachers assigned in remote elementary schools?

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed phenomenological research design. A phenomenological study is a qualitative research approach that aims to understand and describe individuals lived experiences in relation to a specific phenomenon. The present study is phenomenological because it explored and understood the lived experiences of teachers assigned in remote elementary schools in Magallanes, Sorsogon. Rather than simply quantifying challenges or coping strategies, the study delved into the personal perceptions, feelings, struggles, and insights of the teachers as they dealt with isolation, limited access to resources, and the impact of these on their teaching practice. The goal is to uncover how these teachers experience and make sense of their daily realities, especially in terms

of professional and emotional coping mechanisms. By focusing on in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study aligned with the principles of phenomenology, aiming to present a rich, contextualized understanding of what it truly means to teach in a remote, underserved area.

A non-probability sampling technique called purposive sampling is used in determining the participants of this study. This approach is commonly used in qualitative research where the goal is to understand a specific phenomenon rather than to make generalizations. there are 4 remote elementary schools included from Magallanes North District while 5 remote elementary schools are located in Magallanes South District. Specifically, there will be 2 teacher – participants each from Hubo Elementary Schools, Cagbolo Elementary School, Cagtalaba Elementary School, Biton Elementary School, Ginangra Elementary School, and Magsaysay Elementary School. In addition, there will also be 1 teacher – participant each from Tagas Elementary School, Lapinig Elementary School, and Pawik Elementary School.

## IV. RPRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETSTION OF DATA

This chapter present and discusses the findings of the study. Specifically, it presents the lived experiences of teachers assigned in remote elementary schools particularly along their challenges, their mechanisms to cope with these challenges, the effect of these challenges to the quality of the teaching and learning outcome, the support of the stakeholders to the teachers to navigate the existing challenges, and the designed intervention program to address various challenges experienced by teachers assigned in remote elementary schools.

### I. The Lived Experiences of Teachers Assigned in Remote Elementary Schools Particularly Along their Challenges

Using a phenomenological lens, this section captures the essence of what teachers live through in remote elementary schools, focusing on the meaning of

their challenges rather than just enumerating problems.

### **I.A. Confronting Challenges in Managing Multigrade Classes in Remote School Contexts**

Teachers in remote schools face persistent difficulties in handling multigrade classes, diverse learner abilities, and behavioral concerns within the same classroom environment. A single teacher is often responsible for learners across different grade levels, which requires preparing multiple lesson plans, delivering varied instruction simultaneously, and ensuring that each child's needs are addressed. This is further complicated by issues of discipline and learner motivation, where limited parental support and the effects of poverty sometimes manifest in irregular attendance or classroom disruptions. With scarce instructional resources and little institutional assistance, teachers must stretch their time and energy, frequently switching roles between being an educator who imparts knowledge, a counselor who provides emotional support, and even a caretaker who attends to learners' basic needs.

Such conditions make teaching both exhausting and fragmented, as teachers are constantly pulled in multiple directions, often feeling that their efforts are spread too thin. However, these same challenges also become opportunities for professional and personal growth. Through daily exposure to demanding classroom realities, teachers gradually develop patience, versatility, and enhanced classroom management skills. They learn to improvise, to differentiate instruction creatively, and to balance authority with empathy. In this way, while multigrade and learner-related challenges are sources of strain, they also become formative experiences that shape more resilient, adaptable, and compassionate educators.

According to participant 3 "Handling different grade levels in one classroom is like teaching three or four subjects at the same time. While I explain a lesson to the older pupils, the younger ones get restless and need my attention. Sometimes I feel torn, because I cannot give my full focus to everyone. It is exhausting, but over time I have learned to be more patient, creative, and flexible just to make sure that

all of them are learning, even in small steps". The experience highlights that multigrade teaching without adequate support stretches teachers' capacities and risks compromising instructional quality, as their attention is divided among learners with varying needs. However, it also shows that such conditions foster resilience and professional growth, pushing teachers to develop stronger patience, creativity, and adaptability in their practice.

Moreover, participant 8 mentioned "Managing learners of different ages in one classroom is very challenging. While the older pupils can work independently, the younger ones constantly need assistance, and this makes me feel drained at the end of the day." This suggests that the uneven learning needs in multigrade settings place heavy emotional and physical demands on teachers, often leading to fatigue. It also points to the importance of additional classroom support and differentiated strategies to ease the burden and ensure equitable learning outcomes.

Meeting the various learning requirements of kids in the same classroom was one of the main issues faced by multigrade instructors in the Upper Calanasan District, Apayao, according to Bagay's phenomenological study on the difficulties and adapting solutions into their multifarious experiences. Teachers described how they have to plan lessons that simultaneously address fast learners, students who lag behind, and those with behavioral or motivational issues, all without sufficient time or tailored support. Bagay also reported that managing classroom behavior in such settings becomes especially difficult, since split attention is demanded of the teacher: while trying to instruct one group, the other group may get restless or disengaged.

The implication of this finding is that teacher training programs should more explicitly prepare multigrade teachers to handle complexity in learner dynamics. Equipping teachers with strategies for differentiated instruction, behavior management, and time allocation becomes essential. Furthermore, educational policy should provide extra support, and resources such as varied learning materials, activity

kits to reduce teacher overload and improve learning outcomes for all students in multigrade settings.

### **I.B. Encountering Technological and Infrastructural Limitations in Remote School Settings**

Encountering technological limitations in remote school settings remains one of the most pressing issues in delivering quality education. Many remote schools face unreliable or completely absent internet connectivity, lack of gadgets, and outdated or insufficient digital tools. These constraints hinder teachers from integrating technology-based strategies that could enrich learning and make lessons more interactive. For students, the absence of adequate technological access often results in reduced engagement.

As participant 11 said "As a teacher in a remote school, one of my biggest struggles is the lack of stable internet connection and available devices. Even if I want to use online resources or digital tools to make my lessons more interactive, the poor connectivity and absence of gadgets among my students make it very difficult. Sometimes I have to rely on my own phone and data just to download materials, but even that is not always reliable. This makes me feel limited as I know technology could help, yet it is not accessible to us most of the time." The statement of participant 11 implied that technological limitations significantly hinder the ability of teachers in remote schools to integrate digital tools and online resources in their instruction. This constraint reduces opportunities for interactive and modernized teaching, placing teachers at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts in urban areas with better access to technology. It also highlights the inequity in educational delivery, where students in remote schools are deprived of the benefits of digital learning. Furthermore, the reliance on personal resources, such as teachers using their own phones and data, reflects the additional burden placed on educators to bridge gaps in technology. Overall, this situation emphasizes the urgent need for stronger infrastructure, provision of devices, and reliable internet connectivity to ensure equal access to quality education.

Geographical distance, poor connectivity, and difficult travel contribute greatly to teachers' sense of isolation in remote schools. The absence of reliable internet access and the delayed flow of information hinder their opportunities for professional growth, training, and collaboration with peers. As a result, teachers often feel excluded from innovations and support systems that are more accessible in urban settings. This spatial and digital divide not only restricts their instructional practices but also intensifies the challenges of preparing lessons and accessing timely educational resources. Ultimately, these conditions add to the emotional and psychological burden of teaching in remote areas, making the profession even more demanding.

Participant 6 shared "Sometimes I feel cut off from the rest of the teaching community because we don't have internet here. I cannot easily attend online trainings or access new materials, and the long travel to the town makes it even harder to stay connected and updated". The statement implies that poor connectivity and geographical distance limit teachers' access to professional development and collaboration opportunities, placing them at a disadvantage compared to colleagues in more accessible areas. It also suggests that the sense of isolation contributes to emotional strain and professional stagnation, underscoring the need for systemic interventions such as reliable internet access, localized training programs, and support mechanisms tailored for remote schools.

Similarly, participant 4 said that "Traveling to school is one of the hardest parts of my job. During rainy days, the muddy and slippery road makes me anxious, but I still push through because I know my pupils are waiting for me." This statement implies that difficult travel conditions increase teachers' physical and emotional strain, sometimes even risking their safety, yet their strong commitment to learners drives them to persevere. It highlights the importance of infrastructure support and travel allowances to ease the burden of teachers assigned in geographically isolated schools.

Relevant to the findings of the present study, is the study of Galut that investigated the lived experiences

of teachers assigned to very remote, difficult-to-reach schools in Kabugao District, Philippines. The study documents how teachers traverse dangerous and lengthy paths like hiking for hours, crossing rivers, or riding unsafe boats, to reach their classrooms. These access challenges are not just physical barriers but sources of emotional strain, isolation, and financial cost, as teachers sometimes pay out of their own pockets or sacrifice personal well-being just to make the daily commute. This mirrors what respondents described about narrow, slippery roads, the anxiety in traveling, and the hardships related to distance. Galut also shows that despite these hardships, many teachers remain committed: their passion for teaching, strong sense of responsibility, and connection to learners help them cope and persist.

It provides empirical backing for the experiential statements made by the respondents of the present study about travel hardships and emotional toll. It reinforces the idea that geographic isolation and travel difficulties are central to the lived reality of remote teachers, not peripheral issues. This study supports implications around the need for infrastructure support, provision of travel allowances or subsidies, and more emotionally oriented support structures to reduce isolation and stress for remote teachers.

### **I.C. Experiencing Teaching and Learning Scarcity in Delivering Instruction in Last-Mile Schools**

Another dominant challenge experienced by most of the respondents is the lack of teaching and learning materials. Teachers continually improvise and make do with what is available, often relying on locally sourced materials. This scarcity shapes all other aspects of their work, leading to constant stress and feelings of inadequacy, yet also fostering creativity and adaptability.

Participant 4 said "One of the hardest parts of teaching here is the lack of materials. Sometimes I only have a piece of chalk and the blackboard to work with. I try to make charts and visual aids out of old cartons or recycled paper, but it takes so much time and effort. There are moments I feel limited and frustrated, yet I also realize it pushes me to be more

resourceful and creative just to make sure my pupils understand the lesson". Participant 4 highlights that the lack of teaching and learning materials directly affects instructional quality and teacher morale. Limited resources not only create frustration and feelings of inadequacy but also consume teachers' time and energy as they try to compensate through improvisation. However, this challenge also fosters creativity and resilience, as teachers develop innovative strategies to ensure that learning continues despite scarcity. The implication is that while resource shortages can stimulate teacher adaptability, they should not be normalized; rather, they underscore the urgent need for systemic support in providing adequate instructional materials so that teachers' ingenuity can complement, rather than replace, essential resources.

Similarly, participant 7 shared that "Teaching in this remote school often feels like preparing for a battle without the right tools. I want to use engaging activities, but without enough books, charts, or even basic supplies, I sometimes feel my lessons fall short. Still, I try to make do with what's around like using stones for counting or bamboo sticks for demonstrations, because I don't want my pupils to miss the chance to learn." This statement illustrates how resource scarcity limits teachers' instructional possibilities and creates a sense of professional inadequacy, yet also underscores their determination to sustain meaningful learning through improvisation. The implication is twofold: first, that teachers' creativity becomes a survival strategy in under-resourced contexts, and second, that institutional and community support is necessary to bridge the resource gap. While ingenuity is commendable, relying solely on it risks uneven learning experiences for students; thus, interventions must combine resource provision with recognition of teachers' adaptive practices.

Medel and Gallardo's showed findings closely mirror what respondent 4 described: teachers in resource-poor, remote settings are forced to make do with what they have, leading to feelings of constraint and sometimes frustration. Similar to respondent 4, the teachers in the study reported needing to use

recycled or local materials, adapt their teaching strategies, and invest additional time and energy to compensate for what they lack. These shared narratives suggest that resource scarcity is not an isolated phenomenon but a structural issue, one that systematically disadvantages remote schools and teachers.

The implication is that provision of materials needs to go beyond occasional donations. Policies should ensure regular, reliable access to instructional materials as part of the baseline support for remote schools. Additionally, teacher training should include components on adaptive pedagogy and creative use of local resources, so the strategies that teachers use aren't purely reactive but more systematically embedded in teacher education and school planning.

#### **I.D. Encountering Geographical Isolation and Terrain-Related Barriers in Remote School Assignments**

The majority of the participants characterize remote teaching as both a blessing or rewarding experience and a challenge, despite all the hardships. While others feel drained financially and physically, some highlights gain in patience, resourcefulness, and stronger sense of vocation. This paradox in professional strain intertwined with professional growth is the defining feature of their lived experience.

According to participant 1 "teaching in a remote place has been both a challenges and a blessing. The journey to school is not always easy, though the road is passable, but its narrow, zigzag path that makes me nervous especially on rainy days when it turns slippery. But these challenges fade when I see the eagerness in my learners' eyes. They are not only diligent and kind but also truly aiming for knowledge, which inspires me every day". Similarly, participant 2, mentioned that "being a teacher in a remote school is never simple. The long walks and steep climbs test my strength, especially when I have to carry my own teaching materials. At times, I feel the weight of isolation, with no internet connection and limited resources to rely on. Yet, the moment I step inside the classroom, all the fatigue turns into

joy. My pupils greet me with bright smiles and their determination to learn, despite their hardships, gives me the courage to continue. Their persistence reminds me why I chose this profession, it is more than a job, it is a mission".

The experiences of participants 1 and 2 reveal the paradoxical reality of remote teaching where physical strain, isolation, and lack of resources are constant companions, yet these challenges are counterbalanced by the deep sense of fulfillment derived from their learners' enthusiasm and resilience. The teachers' testimonies suggest that while the environment imposes significant burdens, the intrinsic motivation and commitment to learners serve as powerful coping mechanisms. This implies that interventions for remote schools should not only address structural needs such as road accessibility, connectivity, and instructional resources, but should also nurture the teachers' sense of purpose through recognition, support programs, and professional development. Their lived narratives affirm that the heart of teaching in remote areas lies in transforming hardship into inspiration, underscoring the importance of holistic support that considers both the professional and personal dimensions of teachers' lives.

The shared insights of the respondents towards their experiences as remote elementary school teachers are relevant to the study of Equipado and Gilbas. They further documented the lived experiences of elementary teachers in remote schools, showing that teachers develop creativity, resourcefulness, and patience precisely because of scarcity and challenges. The study concluded that while remote teaching stretches teachers physically and emotionally, it also molds stronger professional identities. This aligns directly with respondent A's description of teaching as "both a challenge and a blessing," showing consistency across contexts in the Philippines.

In addition, these perceptions are also reflected with the study of Quejada and Orale (2018) on their exploration on the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Samar, Philippines. They found that educators in remote schools constantly struggle with

lack of materials, limited infrastructure, and unsafe travel. Yet, like the respondents of the present study, they expressed fulfillment in seeing their pupils' perseverance, showing that despite structural barriers, the relational and moral aspects of teaching provide strength.

### **I.E. Experiencing Personal Discomfort and Professional Growth Limitations in Remote Teaching Assignments**

Experiencing personal discomfort and professional growth limitations is a reality faced by many teachers in remote teaching assignments. Working in isolated areas often means enduring long travel times, poor living conditions, and lack of access to basic amenities, which can affect teachers' overall well-being. These personal challenges are further compounded by limited opportunities for professional development, as trainings and seminars are usually conducted in urban centers that are difficult to reach. As a result, teachers may feel left behind in terms of updating their knowledge and skills compared to their peers in more accessible schools. Such circumstances highlight the dual struggle of balancing personal sacrifices with restricted professional growth, which can impact both teacher motivation and the quality of education delivered.

Participant 8 mentioned "Teaching in a remote school is really challenging because aside from the long travel and lack of basic facilities, I often feel isolated and uncomfortable with the living conditions. It's also frustrating that I cannot easily attend seminars or trainings since they are held far from our place, and sometimes I miss out on opportunities to improve my skills. While I want to grow professionally, the distance and limited access make it hard for me to keep up compared to other teachers in town. These situations sometimes affect my motivation, but I try my best to cope for the sake of my students."

Kingsford-Smith et al. investigated how job demands and resources related to teacher wellbeing across rural, regional, and metropolitan schools, finding that workload and student-behavior stress negatively predicted wellbeing while teacher

collaboration was a strong positive predictor; importantly, they showed that the perceived irrelevance of professional development uniquely increased strain for rural teachers. The study used multigroup structural equation modeling on large, comparative datasets to identify which demands and resources mattered most in different locations, highlighting that supports effective in cities may not meet the needs of remote contexts. Their results imply that lack of context-relevant professional development and the heavier non-instructional burdens of remote postings can produce personal discomfort and limit teachers' professional growth. For teachers assigned to geographically isolated schools, the study underscores the need for tailored, locally accessible PD, stronger collaborative networks, and workload adjustments to protect wellbeing and promote growth. Thus, Kingsford-Smith et al. directly supported the finding that remote assignment conditions can constrain teachers' professional development and wellbeing unless interventions address location-specific demands.

One common causes of discomfort of teachers are the socioeconomic realities of learners. Teachers in remote areas often struggle with student absenteeism and poverty-related concerns, particularly when families cannot afford basic school supplies, uniforms, or transportation. These challenges directly affect classroom participation and continuity of learning, making it difficult for teachers to achieve set instructional goals. At the same time, they create a moral tension, as teachers must weigh the pressure of meeting curriculum standards against the reality of their learners' economic hardships. Many teachers respond with compassion, adjusting lessons or even providing out-of-pocket support, but this adds to their personal and financial burden. Ultimately, the interplay of poverty and absenteeism not only hinders academic progress but also shapes the teacher's role into one that extends beyond instruction, encompassing care, understanding, and advocacy for disadvantaged learners.

Participant 10 mentioned "Some of my pupils are absent because their parents ask them to help in the

farm or take care of their younger siblings. Even when they want to study, their family's situation makes it hard for them to attend regularly, and it pains me to see their learning suffer because of poverty." This statement implies that economic hardship directly disrupts learners' school attendance and academic progress, placing teachers in a difficult position as they try to balance curriculum requirements with compassion for students' realities. It highlights the need for stronger support systems such as feeding programs, financial assistance, and community partnerships to ease the burden of poverty and encourage consistent school participation.

In addition, participant 1 said "Even when students want to come to school, they often miss days because their families can't afford the fare or have no food for breakfast; I worry that when they return, they're behind and discouraged." This suggests that basic economic constraints like transport costs and food insecurity are key determinants of student attendance, which in turn affects continuity in learning. It also implies that teachers must not only teach but also work as emotional supporters to help students overcome shame or discouragement, underscoring the need for interventions like school-based meals or travel subsidies.

Similarly, Baynosa et al. explored what it's like for public elementary school teachers in schools in Negros Occidental, where geography, infrastructure, poverty, and resource constraints converge to make teaching especially difficult. In their findings, issues like lack of instructional materials, difficulty accessing school (transport-related challenges), and teacher efforts to supply students with what they need despite these limitations recur as common threads. The study also underscores how many students in these schools miss classes or fall behind because of economic hardships, weak infrastructure such as roads and transport, and inability to afford school necessities mirroring the respondent statement about absenteeism and poverty. Baynosa et al. showed that despite these obstacles, teachers often go beyond their formal roles in caring for students, adjusting instruction, using local or improvised materials, or even doing extra work to

ensure learners aren't left behind. Thus, this study offers strong empirical support for this specific theme of the study that poverty-related absenteeism isn't just a sideline issue but a core part of the lived experience of remote teachers.

## **II. The Mechanisms of Teachers Assigned in Remote Elementary Schools in Coping with the Challenges they Encountered**

In a phenomenological perspective, coping mechanisms are not merely strategies but lived meanings, they represent how teachers construct ways of enduring, adapting, and even flourishing despite adversity. The narratives of participants in this study illuminate both practical strategies and inner orientations, revealing resilience as a defining characteristic of remote teaching.

### **II.A. Employing Adaptive Instructional Strategies to Manage Multigrade Teaching in Remote School Contexts**

One of the most dominant themes was the use of improvised and local materials. Teachers transformed available community resources into teaching aids. Coupled with planning lessons ahead, and applying different teaching strategies, this shows that scarcity is met with creative improvisation. Phenomenologically, this reflects that teachers' embodied senses of making do – they turn constraints into opportunities for pedagogical innovation.

Participant 2 said "Most of the time, I prepare my own charts using recycled cartons or old newspapers. It is tiring to make them after school hours, but I know these improvised materials help my pupils understand the lesson better." This suggests that teachers' commitment drives them to invest personal time and effort in creating improvised teaching aids, turning limitations into opportunities for learning. At the same time, it points to the need for systemic support and resource provision, so teachers' creativity enhances rather than replaces access to proper instructional materials.

Participant 5 added "Because we lack ready-made materials, I always plan my lessons in advance and

think of what local objects I can use. Sometimes I bring shells, bamboo sticks, or even household items to make the class more interactive." This reflects that advance planning combined with the use of local resources enables teachers to sustain effective instruction despite scarcity. It also implies that their adaptability should be complemented by institutional provision of resources and training on contextualized teaching strategies, ensuring that improvisation enhances pedagogy rather than being a constant necessity.

Similarly, the study "Experiences of Teachers Teaching in Far-Flung Areas of Division of Davao Del Norte: A Phenomenological Study" by Algonos et al. examined precisely how teachers in remote parts of Davao Del Norte cope with challenges including poor resources, logistical difficulties, social isolation, and limited infrastructure. Among the coping strategies they report are modifying pedagogical approaches and harnessing repurposed resources and community initiatives to address material shortages and make learning more engaging. This aligns strongly with the respondent's statement about planning ahead and creatively sourcing local objects for instruction. The study underscores that while teacher ingenuity is essential, sustained improvement depends on systemic support such as better infrastructure, greater resource allocation, mentorship programs, and supportive policy interventions

## **II.B. Adapting Instructional Delivery Through Low-Tech Resourcefulness and Collaborative Practices**

Adapting instructional delivery through low-tech resourcefulness and collaborative practices is a common approach among teachers in remote school settings. Due to limited access to advanced technology and modern teaching tools, educators often rely on improvised and locally available materials to make lessons meaningful and engaging. This resourcefulness is complemented by collaboration with co-teachers, parents, and community members who provide support in developing and delivering instruction. Such practices not only compensate for the lack of technological resources but also foster creativity, teamwork, and

shared responsibility in the teaching and learning process. Ultimately, these strategies highlight the resilience of teachers who continue to ensure quality education despite resource constraints.

Participant 4 said "Since we don't have access to advanced technology in our school, I usually create improvised teaching materials using locally available resources. I also work closely with my co-teachers and sometimes even parents to prepare activities that will make learning more engaging for the students. It may not be high-tech, but through teamwork and creativity, we are still able to deliver meaningful lessons." This statement implies that even in the absence of modern technology, effective teaching and learning can still take place when teachers employ resourcefulness and collaborative practices. It highlights the importance of adaptability, creativity, and community support in overcoming resource limitations. Moreover, it suggests that fostering collaboration among teachers and stakeholders can enhance instructional delivery and maintain learner engagement despite technological constraints.

Similarly participant 7 mentioned "Because we don't have computers or projectors in our school, I often draw visual aids by hand and use recycled materials for class activities. I also coordinate with my fellow teachers to share ideas and materials so that we can lessen the workload and still provide meaningful lessons for the students. These simple methods may not be modern, but they help us sustain student interest and participation." This statement implies that teachers' ingenuity and collaboration can substitute for the absence of technological tools in remote schools. It shows that low-cost, creative strategies can still promote student engagement and learning effectiveness when technology is inaccessible. It also underlines the importance of peer collaboration as a practical solution to reduce workload while ensuring quality teaching. Ultimately, it reflects that resilience, teamwork, and creativity are critical in sustaining instructional delivery under resource-limited conditions.

These findings and shared experiences are parallel to the study of Anderson et al. (2021). They investigated

how teachers' creative agency and adaptive practices during the COVID-19 crisis supported their well-being and capacity to continue instruction under severe constraints. The study found that teachers who developed creative self-efficacy and received environmental support such as training, encouragement, and peer collaboration, were better able to improvise teaching materials, adopt alternative delivery methods, and sustain positive affect despite limited technology, directly supporting the findings of the present study about low-tech resourcefulness and teamwork in remote schools. This research therefore validated the importance of fostering teacher creativity, locally relevant training, and collaborative networks as practical ways to maintain instructional quality when technological resources are scarce.

### **II.C. Traversing Geographical Isolation Through Community Ties and Adaptive Mobility Strategies.**

Teachers frequently emphasized the importance of collaboration with learners, parents, co-teachers, and the wider community as a vital mechanism for coping with challenges. Support systems extended beyond the four walls of the classroom, with school heads providing guidance, parents contributing assistance, and stakeholders offering resources or moral support. These forms of collaboration help ease the sense of isolation often felt by teachers in remote areas, reminding them that they are not alone in addressing difficulties. By sharing responsibilities, teachers experience a lighter workload and greater confidence in managing their roles despite limitations. Thus, the lived experience of remote teaching is fundamentally relational, anchored not in individual struggle but in a spirit of interdependence and community solidarity.

According to participant 4, "As a teacher in a remote area, I really rely on the support of others. My co-teachers often share strategies when we face difficult lessons, and the school head guides us on how to handle challenges we might not be prepared for. Parents also help by reinforcing what we teach at home, and sometimes local stakeholders provide materials or even just encouragement, which makes a big difference. Knowing that I'm not alone and that

I have a network to lean on makes me feel more confident and less overwhelmed. It really feels like teaching here is not just my responsibility, it's a shared effort with the whole community."

The shared experience of Participant 4 highlights the significant impact of collaboration and community engagement on teaching effectiveness, especially in remote areas. Support from co-teachers, school heads, parents, and local stakeholders not only reduces feelings of isolation but also helps distribute responsibilities, allowing teachers to manage their workload more effectively. This relational approach fosters greater confidence and resilience among educators, which can translate into improved learning outcomes for students. The statement implies that policies and programs encouraging partnerships between schools and their communities are essential for sustaining teaching quality and promoting holistic support for learners, ensuring that both teachers and students benefit from a network of shared resources and guidance.

Participant 7 also mentioned "I feel that teaching in a remote area would be much harder without the support of my colleagues, parents, and the community. When I encounter challenges, I can turn to my co-teachers for advice, and our school head often guides us on solutions. Parents also help reinforce learning at home, and sometimes local organizations provide materials or encouragement. This support makes me feel that I am not facing the difficulties alone, and it motivates me to continue teaching despite limited resources." This experience illustrates that collaboration and community support are crucial for sustaining effective teaching in remote areas. Assistance from co-teachers, school heads, parents, and local organizations helps reduce feelings of isolation and provides practical resources and guidance, enabling teachers to manage challenges more confidently. This interconnected support system not only strengthens teacher morale and resilience but also positively affects student learning by ensuring consistent reinforcement and engagement. The statement implies that fostering strong partnerships between schools and the wider community is essential for enhancing educational

outcomes and maintaining a supportive environment for both teachers and learners.

Similarly, the study of Dyantyi & Gqoli on strengthening parent-teacher collaboration in a rural secondary school: A pathway to learner academic success conducted in a rural secondary school in the Amathole East district of South Africa emphasizes the critical role of parent-teacher collaboration in enhancing learners' academic performance. Through semi-structured interviews with six participants, including parents and teachers, the research highlights how active involvement, consistent communication, and a welcoming environment contribute to improved educational outcomes. This study aligned with the focus of the present study on the importance of collaboration and community engagement in remote teaching. It provides empirical evidence supporting the notion that strong partnerships between educators and the community are essential for overcoming challenges and ensuring academic success in rural settings.

#### **II.D. Cultivating Teachers' Resilience and Professional Advancement Through Spiritual Grounding, Community Support, and Self-Directed Learning**

Teachers emphasized that coping with challenges often begins with cultivating a positive mindset, reminding themselves of their purpose and commitment as educators, and taking time to celebrate small achievements in their daily work. They highlighted the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, making deliberate efforts to prioritize self-care and personal well-being alongside professional responsibilities. Some noted that simple practices, such as reflecting on successful lessons or acknowledging student progress, helped sustain motivation and resilience. From a phenomenological perspective, these strategies reveal the intentionality of teachers' consciousness, showing that they interpret difficulties not merely as obstacles but as meaningful experiences connected to their vocational mission. Overall, these insights suggest that coping mechanisms in teaching are both practical and deeply reflective, integrating emotional, psychological, and professional dimensions of educators lived experiences.

According to participant 3, "When I face challenges in teaching, I try to remind myself why I became a teacher in the first place. I celebrate even the small successes, like when a student finally understands a concept or participates actively in class. I also make sure to take time for myself, whether it's resting, exercising, or spending time with my family, because I know I can't give my best if I'm burnt out. Keeping a positive mindset really helps me see difficulties as part of my purpose rather than just problems. These practices make me feel more motivated and capable, even when the workload feels heavy or resources are limited."

The shared experience of respondent 3 highlights the critical role of mindset, reflection, and self-care in sustaining effectiveness and resilience in the teaching profession. By intentionally focusing on purpose, celebrating small successes, and maintaining work-life balance, teachers are better able to cope with stress and prevent burnout. This suggests that professional development programs should include components on emotional well-being, stress management, and reflective practice to support teachers' holistic needs. From an educational perspective, such coping strategies not only benefit teachers personally but also positively impact students, as motivated and balanced educators are more engaged, patient, and effective in the classroom. Overall, these findings imply that teacher support systems should extend beyond instructional guidance to encompass psychological and emotional well-being, reinforcing the interconnectedness of teacher health and educational quality.

Relevant to the shared experiences of the respondents is the study of Aulen and Lindqvist (2021) examining the relationship between teachers' coping profiles and their overall well-being. The study found that teachers use a variety of coping mechanisms, such as problem-solving, positive self-talk, time management, self-care, social support, and professional support. Self-care was found to be the most important component of total resilience. The study also found that positive self-talk and time management were associated with higher levels of resilience, while problem-solving showed weaker

correlations. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a positive mindset and engaging in self-care practices to enhance teachers' ability to manage work-related stress and maintain their well-being. The study's findings reinforce the idea that teachers' coping strategies, especially those focused on preserving a positive outlook and taking care of their own wellbeing, are crucial for fostering resilience. This research provides empirical evidence supporting the claim that coping strategies, positive mindset, and self-care are crucial for fostering teacher resilience and well-being.

Moreover, although less frequent, some teachers sought professional development through seminars and trainings and leaned on teaching experience and feedback analysis. Others relied on technology and resources when available. This indicates that coping also involves seeking external structures of growth, not just internal resilience. The meaning structure here is aspirational: teachers continually seek to transform adversity into opportunities for self-improvement.

Participant 4 shared "Whenever I face challenges in my teaching, I try to attend seminars or trainings whenever possible to learn new strategies. I also review feedback from my lessons and reflect on my own experiences to see what I can improve. Sometimes, I use online resources or teaching tools when they are available to help me manage difficult topics. I feel that even when things get tough, there are always ways to grow and become a better teacher. This mindset helps me turn challenges into opportunities to improve my skills and knowledge." Similarly, participant 8 also mentioned that "I try to make the most of any professional development opportunities that come my way, like workshops or trainings, because they give me new ideas for teaching. I also reflect on my past experiences and analyze feedback from my students to see how I can improve. When I have access to technology or additional resources, I use them to enhance my lessons. Even though challenges are part of the job, I see them as chances to grow and develop my skills. This approach keeps me motivated and helps me stay committed to becoming a better educator."

The experiences shared by participants 4 and 8 highlighted the critical role of continuous professional development and reflective practice in enhancing teacher resilience and effectiveness. By actively seeking seminars, trainings, and other learning opportunities, as well as analyzing feedback and personal teaching experiences, teachers demonstrate a proactive approach to professional growth. The use of available technology and resources further supports their capacity to manage challenges and adapt to changing classroom demands. These practices suggest that coping with difficulties in teaching is not solely about internal resilience but also involves leveraging external structures for skill development and instructional improvement. Overall, the statements imply that fostering a culture of lifelong learning, reflection, and access to professional resources is essential for sustaining teacher motivation, competence, and adaptability in the face of educational challenges.

Relevant to this is the study of Emborgo and Uchang stated that looked into how public-school teachers overcame obstacles during professional growth. Time management, resourcefulness, self-care, persistence, asking for help, and teamwork are some of the important tactics that the study found. Teachers were able to manage and withstand the challenges of professional development thanks to these tactics. The study emphasizes how these coping mechanisms might improve teachers' resilience and direct helpful professional development initiatives. The findings align with the notion that coping with difficulties in teaching involves leveraging external structures for skill development and instructional improvement. This research provides empirical evidence supporting the claim that fostering a culture of lifelong learning, reflection, and access to professional resources is essential for sustaining teacher motivation, competence, and adaptability in the face of educational challenges.

Furthermore, Support for teachers extended beyond formal systems such as school administration or professional networks, encompassing faith in God, strong family ties, and encouragement from friends. Many teachers described how spirituality provided

them with a sense of purpose and perspective, helping them interpret daily challenges as meaningful aspects of their vocation. Reliance on family offered emotional reassurance and practical support, while friends contributed encouragement and a listening ear, all of which helped reduce stress and feelings of isolation. These personal anchors enabled teachers to reframe difficulties, viewing them not simply as obstacles but as opportunities for growth and resilience. Overall, the combination of spiritual belief and interpersonal support reinforced teachers' motivation and commitment, allowing them to persist and find fulfillment in their professional roles despite ongoing challenges.

According to participant 8 "Whenever I feel overwhelmed by my teaching responsibilities, I turn to my faith in God for strength and guidance. I also lean on my family, who always support and encourage me, and I talk to close friends who understand the challenges of teaching. Their support reminds me that I am not alone and gives me the courage to keep going. I find that combining my spirituality with these personal relationships helps me stay motivated and focused, even during difficult times. It makes me realize that teaching is not just a job, it's a calling that I can face with hope and resilience." This shared experience suggests that personal and spiritual support systems play a crucial role in sustaining teacher motivation and resilience. Faith, family, and friends provide emotional grounding and a sense of purpose, helping teachers cope with stress and persist in their profession. This implies that teacher support programs should recognize and integrate personal and relational resources alongside formal professional structures to promote well-being and long-term commitment.

In addition, participant 7 mentioned "I often pray and reflect on my faith, which gives me strength to keep going. My family also encourages me and reminds me of why I chose this profession, while friends provide advice and moral support when I feel stressed. Knowing that I have these personal connections helps me feel less alone and more capable of handling difficulties. This combination of faith and close relationships keeps me motivated and confident in my teaching. It reminds me that

even in tough times, I have the support I need to continue doing my best." This statement indicates that personal faith and strong social relationships serve as vital coping mechanisms for teachers, enhancing their emotional resilience and perseverance. Support from family and friends, alongside spiritual grounding, helps teachers navigate challenges and maintain motivation. The implication is that fostering teachers' well-being should include acknowledging and supporting these personal and relational resources in addition to formal professional support.

These statements or shared experiences are reflected in the study of Kusuma and Fathiya examined the role of self-efficacy and social support as predictors of teacher resilience in inclusive elementary schools. The study discovered that a number of aspects of teacher resilience, such as personal competence, persistence, family cohesion, social skills, peer relationships, and spiritual influences, were strongly impacted by both self-efficacy and social support. Notably, the study highlighted that social support, encompassing emotional and instrumental assistance from family, peers, and the community, played a crucial role in enhancing teachers' ability to cope with challenges and maintain their commitment to the profession. These findings underscore the importance of personal and relational resources, such as faith and strong social networks, in fostering teacher resilience and well-being. The study's results align with the notion that coping with difficulties in teaching involves leveraging both internal strengths and external support systems to promote professional growth and sustained motivation.

### **III. The Effect of Challenges in Remote Elementary Schools in the Quality of Teaching and Learning Outcomes**

The core challenges encountered by teachers in their daily routine are the major factors affecting the quality of education. These challenges include lack of instructional and learning materials, learners' behavior or discipline, learners' diversity, and lesson execution and time management. To manage these challenges, teachers in remote elementary schools, employ different strategies such as using local

materials as instructional materials, and engaging or collaborating with every learner, parent, and the community. However, the challenges faced by teachers in remote elementary schools significantly affect the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, creating a cycle where resource limitations directly impact educational performance and the overall well-being of the learners.

### **III.A. Constraining Instructional Depth and Equitable Educational Opportunities in the Complexities of Multigrade Teaching**

The complex structure of multigrade teaching in remote schools presents a significant constraint on both instructional depth and the provision of equitable educational opportunities. Teachers must simultaneously cater to multiple grade levels and diverse learning needs, which complicates lesson execution and time management. This situation often necessitates a reduction in the time and focus dedicated to any single grade's curriculum, potentially limiting the depth of instruction and mastery of subject matter for all students. Furthermore, managing learners' diversity, including varying comprehension levels, study habits, and hygiene, within a single classroom challenges the teacher's ability to provide individualized and equitable attention to every pupil. Consequently, the inherent challenges of multigrade teaching can compromise the quality of learning outcomes across all grade levels.

Participant 12 said "Sometimes, I feel limited by the strict curriculum and lack of resources, which makes it difficult to explore topics in depth or give all students equal learning opportunities." This suggests that structural constraints like rigid curricula, insufficient materials, or limited access to technology can hinder teachers from providing rich, meaningful learning experiences and equitable education for all students. It highlights the need for support systems and flexible instructional strategies to overcome these barriers.

Similarly, participant 2 mentioned "I want to challenge my students with deeper and more meaningful lessons, but the reality of large class sizes, limited teaching materials, and insufficient

access to technology makes it difficult to ensure that every student can fully engage and benefit from the learning experience. Sometimes I have to simplify lessons or skip certain activities just to make sure I can manage the class, which prevents me from exploring topics in depth. This situation also makes it challenging to address the individual learning needs of students, meaning that not all of them get an equal opportunity to excel." This statement reflects how structural and resource limitations constrain instructional depth and equitable education. It highlights that without adequate support such as smaller class sizes, sufficient materials, and access to technology, teachers are forced to compromise on lesson quality and differentiation. This underscores the importance of systemic interventions and resource allocation to ensure all students can engage in meaningful, high-quality learning experiences.

Quejada and Orale conducted an ethnographic study to document the lived experiences of six elementary teachers in a remote school located in the southwestern part of Samar, Philippines. The study aimed to shed light on the challenges faced by educators in Geographically Isolated and Depressed Areas (GIDAs), where access to resources and infrastructure is limited. The findings of Quejada and Orale are directly relevant to the current study, which explores the constraints on instructional depth and equitable education in remote elementary schools. Both studies highlight the impact of resource scarcity, student challenges, and community poverty on the quality of education in GIDAs. The current study builds upon these insights by examining how these constraints affect teachers' ability to provide deep and equitable instruction, and by exploring potential strategies to overcome these challenges.

### **III.B. Growing Digital Divides and Learning Discomfort**

The growing reliance on digital tools in education has highlighted significant disparities in students' access to technology, creating what is often called the digital divide. Students in remote or under-resourced areas often lack devices, stable internet connections, or digital literacy skills, which limits their ability to fully participate in online or blended

learning. This gap not only affects academic performance but also contributes to learning discomfort, as students may feel anxious, frustrated, or left behind when navigating digital platforms. Teachers, likewise, experience challenges in designing lessons that accommodate varying levels of access and competence, which can hinder instructional effectiveness. Addressing these divides is critical to ensuring equitable learning opportunities and fostering confidence and engagement in digitally mediated learning environments.

As stated by participant 3 "Many of my students struggle to keep up with online lessons because they don't have reliable internet at home, and some don't even have a device to access the materials. This makes me worry that they are missing important parts of the lesson, and I often have to repeat content or find alternative ways to help them learn." This statement implies that digital inequity directly impacts students' learning experiences, leading to gaps in knowledge and increased teacher workload. It highlights the need for schools to provide support systems, such as offline resources, shared devices, or community access points, to ensure all students can engage meaningfully with digital learning.

Participant 9 also stated "Even when devices are available, some students feel intimidated by using online tools and platforms. They often hesitate to participate or submit assignments, which affects their confidence and overall engagement in class." This indicates that learning discomfort is not only caused by access issues but also by digital literacy and familiarity. The implication is that teachers need to integrate digital skills development into instruction and provide ongoing guidance, so students can navigate technology confidently, reducing anxiety and improving participation and equity in learning.

Similarly, Olabiyi et al. conducted a study examining the impact of digital learning tools on the literacy development of elementary students in Philippine schools. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research investigated how digital tools such as interactive reading applications, e-books, and

gamified learning platforms influenced students' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking skills. The study also explored the accessibility of digital resources, teacher preparedness, and socio-economic factors affecting their implementation. Findings revealed that while digital tools significantly improved student engagement and literacy outcomes, challenges such as limited access to technology, inadequate teacher training, and infrastructure gaps hindered their overall effectiveness. These results are highly relevant to the present study, as they align with the identified challenges of growing digital divides and learning discomfort in remote elementary schools. Both studies emphasize that, despite the benefits of digital learning, addressing barriers to access and providing adequate support for teachers and students are crucial to ensuring equitable and effective learning experiences.

### **III.C. Impeding Attendance, Engagement and Learning Resource Distribution in Remote Schools**

The primary effect of challenges on student learning outcomes is largely negative, particularly affecting performance and understanding, as many teachers face limitations in essential teaching and learning resources. Over half of the respondents noted that inadequate materials, such as textbooks, visual aids, and instructional tools, hindered their ability to deliver lessons effectively. These limitations make it difficult for learners to grasp concepts fully, resulting in lower academic performance and reduced comprehension. Consequently, the overall learning outcomes of students are compromised, highlighting the need for improved access to resources and support to mitigate the adverse effects of such challenges.

According to the respondents, the lack of instructional and learning materials poses a significant barrier to delivering lessons effectively. Teachers reported that when essential resources such as textbooks, visual aids, and teaching tools are unavailable, it becomes challenging to explain concepts clearly and demonstrate learning activities. This scarcity also limits opportunities for student engagement, as learners are less able to participate

actively or interact with the lesson in meaningful ways. Respondents emphasized that the absence of these materials often forces them to rely on improvisation, which may not fully address the learning needs of all students. Overall, the lack of instructional and learning materials not only diminishes the quality of teaching but also negatively impacts students' comprehension, participation, and overall academic outcomes.

This finding is supported by the study conducted by Yusuf and JinJiri said regarding the relationship between the availability of instructional materials and students' academic performance in English language at the junior secondary level in Yobe State. The study employed structural equation modeling to analyze data from 230 students. Higher pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the utilization of instructional materials and enhanced academic achievement. Adequate teaching resources are crucial for improving student comprehension and achievement, as demonstrated by the superior performance of students who were taught utilizing instructional materials compared to those who were not. This study underscores the critical role of instructional materials in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes, aligning with the notion that limitations in such resources can hinder student engagement and academic outcomes.

Another negative impact of the challenges faced in teaching is their effect on students' physical, social, and psychological needs, as well as their overall well-being. Respondents noted that limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient support can lead to fatigue, stress, and decreased motivation among learners. These conditions also affect social interactions, as students may have fewer opportunities to collaborate, engage in group activities, or build positive relationships with peers. Psychologically, students may experience frustration, anxiety, or a sense of inadequacy when they struggle to keep up due to the constraints of the learning environment. Overall, the cumulative effect of these challenges undermines students' holistic development and well-being, highlighting the

importance of addressing both academic and non-academic factors in promoting a supportive and healthy learning environment.

Parallel to the findings of the present study is the study conducted by Curran and Standage. The study examines the role of teachers in supporting students' basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and how this support influences student engagement and well-being in physical education settings. The research found that when teachers provided need-supportive environments, students exhibited higher levels of engagement, reduced stress, and improved overall well-being. Conversely, environments that lacked support for these psychological needs were associated with disengagement, increased anxiety, and lower motivation among students. These findings underscore the critical role of teachers in fostering an environment that supports students' psychological needs, highlighting the impact of teaching challenges on students' mental and emotional health. The study suggests that addressing these challenges and creating supportive learning environments can enhance students' well-being and academic outcomes.

Finally, one of the significant impacts of the conditions in remote schools is their contribution to poor student attendance. Respondents indicated that limited resources, long travel distances, and challenging environmental conditions often discourage students from coming to school regularly. Health issues, lack of proper facilities, and inadequate support at home also exacerbate absenteeism, as students may feel unprepared or unable to participate fully in lessons. Poor attendance, in turn, negatively affects learning continuity, student performance, and overall academic achievement, creating a cycle of disadvantage. This highlights the urgent need for interventions that address both the infrastructural and socio-environmental barriers to ensure consistent student participation and improve educational outcomes in remote areas.

#### **Similarly, McDonald**

conducted a study examining school attendance

issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the challenges faced by students and the educational system. The research highlighted that school closures, shifts to remote learning, and the lack of access to necessary resources significantly contributed to increased absenteeism. Students in remote or underserved areas were particularly affected due to limited internet access, inadequate technology, and less parental support, leading to disengagement and irregular attendance. These findings underscore the importance of addressing infrastructural and socio-environmental barriers to ensure consistent student participation and improve educational outcomes in remote areas. The study suggests that comprehensive strategies are needed to mitigate the adverse effects of such challenges on student attendance and overall academic performance.

Despite the limitations present in remote schools, learners frequently exhibit remarkable resilience and adaptability in their learning. A significant number of respondents observed that students respond with a positive mindset, demonstrating enthusiasm, curiosity, and determination even in the face of challenges such as limited resources or difficult learning environments. These attitudes reflect the students' intrinsic motivation to learn and their ability to engage actively with the lessons despite constraints. Furthermore, teachers reported that students develop specific traits of resiliency and adaptability, enabling them to adjust to new situations and overcome obstacles in their learning journey. Such responses suggest that students are capable of thriving when supported by encouragement, guidance, and opportunities to engage meaningfully in the learning process. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of fostering a supportive environment that nurtures not only academic skills but also the social-emotional and psychological strengths of learners.

#### **III.D. Limiting Professional Advancement Opportunities**

The environment in which teachers work, especially in remote or under-resourced areas, has a direct influence on their effectiveness and overall performance. Some teachers perceive the

challenges, such as limited resources, large class sizes, and difficult working conditions, as barriers that hinder lesson delivery and student engagement. Conversely, other teachers view these challenges as opportunities to innovate, adapt, and strengthen their problem-solving skills, which can enhance their professional growth. This dual perception indicates that while environmental constraints can negatively affect teaching, they can also foster resilience, creativity, and a proactive approach to overcoming obstacles.

The majority of participants agreed that the existing challenges in their workplace contributed to impaired performance. Many teachers reported that working in remote schools negatively affects their ability to perform effectively due to limitations in essential teaching and learning resources. These constraints, such as the lack of textbooks, instructional materials, and classroom facilities, make it difficult to deliver lessons efficiently and engage students fully. Additionally, environmental factors like long travel distances, large class sizes, and limited professional support further exacerbate the impact on teacher performance. Overall, these findings suggest that the challenges inherent in remote teaching not only hinder instructional quality but also place significant strain on educators, highlighting the need for targeted support and resource provision to enhance their effectiveness.

This result is similar to that of Albina's study, which looked at the difficulties experienced by new instructors in rural schools, with a special emphasis on the lack of infrastructure and the scarcity of both teaching and physical resources. The research highlighted that these constraints significantly impact effective teaching and learning, leading to impaired teacher performance. Teachers reported difficulties in delivering lessons effectively due to inadequate materials and facilities, which hindered student engagement and learning outcomes. The study underscores the critical need for improved resource allocation and support to enhance teacher effectiveness in remote educational settings. These findings align with the notion that environmental challenges directly influence the quality of teaching and learning in remote schools.

Despite the challenges of remote teaching, many educators reported positive effects on their professional growth and motivation. Teachers noted that the environment encourages both teaching and student performance, fostering a supportive atmosphere in which learning can take place. Remote teaching also promotes the development of valuable skills and traits, enhancing resourcefulness, patience, and creativity. Additionally, educators shared that working in such conditions has strengthened their sense of purpose, reinforcing their commitment to the profession. This perspective aligns with the belief that being resourceful is essential for effective teaching, enabling teachers to provide quality learning experiences despite constraints. Overall, these findings suggest that challenging teaching environments, while demanding, can foster resilience, professional growth, and a deeper dedication to the teaching vocation.

Similarly, Dudzik and Dzieciol-Pedich conducted a study exploring the impact of remote teaching on English language teachers' resilience and coping strategies. The research highlighted that despite encountering challenges such as technical difficulties, lack of student participation, and feelings of isolation, teachers developed resilience by adopting positive attitudes and proactive coping mechanisms. Teachers reported that these experiences not only enhanced their professional skills but also reinforced their commitment to the teaching profession. The study underscores the importance of support systems and professional development in fostering teacher resilience, enabling educators to navigate the complexities of remote teaching effectively. These findings align with the notion that remote teaching environments, while challenging, can serve as catalysts for personal and professional growth among educators.

#### **V. THE SUPPORT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TEACHERS ASSIGNED IN REMOTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN NAVIGATING THEIR CHALLENGES**

The challenges faced by teachers in remote elementary schools are significantly mitigated by the

various forms of support they receive from stakeholders, including local government units, NGOs, parents, and community members. Material support such as school supplies, instructional materials, and infrastructure improvements helps teachers deliver lessons more effectively despite limited resources. In addition to tangible assistance, moral and professional support from co-teachers, school heads, and parents provides encouragement, guidance, and collaboration that reduce the sense of isolation often experienced in remote settings. These combined forms of support not only address immediate teaching needs but also foster a more positive and sustainable teaching environment, enabling educators to focus on improving student learning outcomes.

#### **A. Moral Support**

Teachers shared that moral support from stakeholders such as school heads, colleagues, parents, and community members greatly helped them endure the challenges of remote teaching. Simple acts of encouragement, recognition, and consistent guidance boosted their morale and reminded them of their value as educators. This support lessens feelings of isolation and helps sustain motivation, especially when resources are scarce. Moral support thus becomes an important anchor that strengthens teachers' resilience in their daily struggles.

Similarly, the study of Mitchao and Tantiado examined the relationship between teachers' work environment and their teaching efficacy, highlighting the importance of socio-emotional support such as encouragement, recognition, and a positive atmosphere. Findings revealed that when teachers feel supported and valued, their confidence and performance in the classroom significantly improve. This suggests that moral support from colleagues, administrators, and stakeholders plays a vital role in sustaining teacher motivation and resilience. In the context of remote schools, where material and structural challenges are prevalent, moral support becomes even more critical as it helps teachers endure difficulties and remain committed to their role. The study is therefore relevant because it validates the idea that moral support directly

contributes to teacher effectiveness and overall educational quality.

### **B. Provision of Materials**

Stakeholders, particularly local government units, NGOs, and civic groups, provide essential school supplies and instructional materials. These contributions directly address the scarcity of resources, allowing teachers to implement lessons more effectively and engage learners with appropriate tools. Teachers emphasized that without such support, delivering quality education would be far more difficult in remote schools. By filling these resource gaps, stakeholders ensure that students continue to have access to meaningful learning experiences.

Parallel to the finding of the present study is the investigation of Danola et al. This study in multigrade elementary schools in Dolores I District, Eastern Samar, found that the availability of learning resources such as textbooks, teaching guides, audio-visual aids, and digital tools, had a significant positive relationship with learners' academic performance. Because schools in remote settings often struggle with resource limitations, this research confirms that increasing access to these materials can help improve learning outcomes. The findings suggest that even moderate improvements in resource availability can lead to measurable gains in student achievement. For teachers in remote elementary schools, this underlines the importance of stakeholder efforts to supply instructional tools.

### **C. Manpower Assistance**

Parents and community members contribute manpower by cleaning, maintaining, and beautifying classrooms and school grounds. This collective effort reduces the workload of teachers, enabling them to focus more on teaching rather than logistical concerns. Such participation also fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility in the school community. Manpower assistance reflects the community's commitment to creating a supportive and conducive environment for both teaching and learning.

The study of Clarito et al. bore significance to this specific finding of the present study. Clarito et al.

explored the role of community manpower assistance in schools, particularly through programs like Brigada Eskwela, and found that parents, volunteers, and local stakeholders significantly contributed by cleaning, repairing, and improving school facilities. Their involvement reduced the non-teaching workload of teachers, allowing educators to focus more on instruction and student learning. The study also revealed that manpower assistance strengthened school-community collaboration, creating a sense of shared responsibility for education. Such collective efforts not only improved the physical learning environment but also boosted teachers' morale, knowing that they were not alone in facing challenges. This is highly relevant to remote elementary schools, where manpower support from stakeholders is vital in sustaining quality education despite resource and logistical constraints.

### **D. Technical and Program Support**

Teachers also benefit from technical support and school-based programs such as the Special Hardship Allowance (SHA), feeding programs, and reading interventions. These initiatives help reduce their financial and professional burdens while directly addressing student needs. For example, feeding programs improve student attendance and readiness to learn, while allowances recognize the unique difficulties teachers face in remote postings. Technical guidance and training workshops further build teachers' competence and confidence in navigating modern teaching strategies.

In a same vein, Bautista et al. looked at the program and technical support Filipino teachers got in schools during the COVID-19 outbreak. Their study revealed that teachers benefited from capacity-building training, access to online learning management systems, information dissemination tools, and technical provisions that helped them adapt to distance learning. These supports enabled teachers to maintain instructional delivery and reduce the challenges posed by the abrupt transition to online education. For teachers in remote elementary schools, the findings highlight the importance of technical and program support in ensuring that lessons are delivered effectively despite limited resources. The study is relevant

because it demonstrates how structured technical assistance and school-initiated programs can empower teachers to navigate difficulties and sustain quality education.

### **E. Infrastructure and Safety Support**

Local officials, barangay leaders, and other stakeholders extend assistance in improving school facilities and ensuring safety. Efforts such as repairing classrooms, maintaining school security, and even providing medical or dental missions enhance the overall well-being of both students and teachers. These interventions create a safer, healthier, and more supportive environment that allows education to continue despite challenges. Such structural and safety-related support underscores the critical role of community partnerships in sustaining remote schools.

Relevant to the present study is the study of Alonsabe et al. that examined how teachers perceive their school heads' leadership in addressing infrastructure and facilities challenges, including safety and accessibility concerns in Region X, Northern Mindanao. The study revealed that while leadership practices are generally viewed positively, teachers continue to report significant infrastructure deficits like cramped classrooms, lack of technological equipment, poor lab facilities, and safety issues. Such shortcomings directly affect both the learning environment and the teacher's ability to deliver content effectively, particularly in remote or resource-constrained settings. For teachers in remote elementary schools, this research underscores the necessity of improved infrastructure and safety as fundamental supports; without them, even well-designed instructional materials or games may be less effective. Overall, the study is relevant as it affirms that stakeholders such as school heads, local government, and community, must prioritize structural support to create safe, accessible, and conducive learning environments.

## **VI. PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS DIFFERENT CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS ASSIGNED IN REMOTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Project R.E.A.C.H. is a comprehensive intervention program developed to support and strengthen the capacity of teachers and the learning environment in remote and high-need elementary schools.

### **Rationale**

Teachers assigned to remote elementary schools encountering recurring, significant challenges, including the necessity of managing multigrade classrooms, chronic scarcity of instructional materials, limited access to technology, and profound geographical isolation. These systemic difficulties negatively influence the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes, thereby exacerbating educational inequities between remote and urban areas. While teachers demonstrate strong resilience through improvisation and community collaboration, stakeholder support has often been irregular and insufficient to mitigate these challenges fully. Therefore, Project R.E.A.C.H. was developed to address these specific needs, enhance teaching effectiveness, promote student success, and ensure the overall well-being and protection of educators working under constrained conditions.

### **Objectives and Scope**

The overarching goal of Project R.E.A.C.H. is to foster a safe, equitable, and high-quality learning environment for both teachers and students in remote elementary schools. Specific objectives include providing adequate teaching and learning resources to address scarcity issues, enhancing teacher competence through continuous professional development, improving school facilities to focus on safety and accessibility, and reducing non-instructional tasks through community involvement. Furthermore, the program aims to address learners' academic and socio-emotional needs and ensure teacher safety and welfare. The scope of this project is comprehensive, focusing on enhancing professional capacity,

improving infrastructure, and implementing wellness initiatives across remote elementary schools, drawing essential support and collaboration from DepEd, LGUs, NGOs, parents, and community organizations to uplift both educators and learners.

### **Project Methodology and Plan**

Project R.E.A.C.H. will roll out a series of targeted initiatives built on the principles of collaboration, capacity building, infrastructure development, and teacher welfare enhancement. This involves implementing capacity-building activities focused on multigrade teaching and localized pedagogy to enhance teacher competence and instructional effectiveness. Resource and infrastructure development will be addressed through the regular distribution of instructional materials and improvements to school facilities, focusing specifically on safety and accessibility to mitigate resource scarcity. Community and volunteer mobilization will be key, with volunteer programs activated to help lessen teachers' administrative tasks and community-led programs assisting in addressing learner needs, improving attendance, and strengthening parent engagement. Finally, teacher welfare and protection will be addressed through the introduction of wellness and counseling initiatives to ensure the educators' mental and emotional well-being.

### **Means of Verification (MOVs)**

The Means of Verification (MOVs) listed below will serve as concrete evidence that the project activities have been successfully rolled out and achieved their short-term milestones. Capacity building will be verified through attendance sheets and completion certificates for training activities. Resource and Infrastructure results will be confirmed by inventory reports of distributed instructional materials and photographic documentation/reports of improved school facilities. Community mobilization will be tracked using volunteer sign-up sheets, reports detailing administrative tasks taken over by volunteers, and records of community-led programs implemented. Teacher welfare will be verified by documenting the wellness and counseling sessions conducted, and sustainability will be confirmed through reports on capacity-building activities for

parent leaders and local officials, alongside advocacy campaign documentation.

### **Monitoring and Impact**

The project will employ a systematic monitoring and evaluation plan throughout its implementation, utilizing progress reports, classroom and facility observations, teacher satisfaction surveys, and annual assessments to track the program's effectiveness and sustainability. By the end of the intervention, the expected impact includes improved teacher performance and instructional effectiveness, heightened student participation and achievement, and the presence of upgraded learning environments and stronger community partnerships. Furthermore, the long-term sustainability of Project R.E.A.C.H. is emphasized through empowering local communities—including parent leaders and barangay officials—to maintain the achieved gains and continue support for educators, ensuring a shared sense of responsibility for quality education despite geographic and socio-economic challenges.

## **VII . CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Teachers in remote elementary school experience difficulties such as managing multigrade classes, scarcity of resources, limited technology, and geographical isolation.
- Teachers cope with challenges by improvising instructional materials, planning lessons strategically, and collaborating with parents, co-teachers, and community members.
- Challenges in remote schools negatively affect teaching quality and student outcomes such as multigrade settings, poverty, lack of resources, and weak access to technology limit individualized instruction, reduce student engagement, and create inequities in learning achievement.
- Stakeholders such as parents, barangay officials, and school administrators extend moral, material, and logistical support, though this is often irregular and insufficient.

- Teachers in remote elementary schools face significant challenges that affect both teaching quality and student learning, yet they show resilience through dedication, collaboration, and adaptive strategies thereby implementing Project R.E.A.C.H. (Resilient Educators and Communities in High-Need Schools) can provide targeted support, enhance teacher protection, and improve educational outcomes in these underserved communities.

Based on the result of the study, the following are recommended to address the existing challenges experienced by teachers assigned in remote elementary schools.

- The Department of Education and local government units prioritize supplying remote elementary schools with sufficient instructional materials such as textbooks, teaching aids, and classroom supplies.
- Stakeholders to address the digital divide by providing internet connectivity, digital devices, and training programs to both teachers and students.
- Specialized training programs be developed to help teachers handle multigrade classrooms more effectively such as workshops and continuous professional development focused on differentiated instruction, adaptive pedagogy, and classroom management will equip teachers with strategies suited to their context.
- Government agencies and local stakeholders collaborate to provide transportation allowances or safe transport systems for teachers assigned in geographically isolated areas. Infrastructure improvements, particularly roads leading to schools, must also be prioritized to ease access and reduce the burden on teachers.
- The study recommends the adoption of Project R.E.A.C.H. (Resilient Educators and Communities in High-Need Schools) as a comprehensive intervention program. Project R.E.A.C.H. should be institutionalized to provide sustainable resource support, digital inclusion, professional development, and community collaboration. Its implementation can reduce teacher burdens, enhance instructional quality, and promote equitable educational opportunities for learners in remote elementary schools.

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