

# Work-Related Stressors and Coping Strategies of Elementary Sped Teachers in Metro Manila

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**Abstract-** This study aspires to identify the work-related stressors and coping strategies of Elementary SPED (Special Education) Teachers around Metro Manila. It aims to determine the work-related stressors of SPED teachers, methods that they utilize to cope with given stressors, and if there is any significance between work-related stressors and coping strategies being experienced and utilized by the said demographics. The researchers used a self-constructed questionnaire that is validated by 2 Psychology experts, 1 Education expert, and 1 SPED teacher. Purposive sampling method was utilized, and the researchers have used survey methods to gather data, along with a semi-structured supporting interview. Weighted mean was used to identify which stressors among the given specifics had been the most stressful, and which coping strategies were the most effective. Chi Square Test of Independence or Fisher's exact test was utilized to determine if there are any relationships between the demographic profile and work-related stressors and coping strategies, and work-related stressors and coping strategies. The study would raise awareness on the stressors that possibly affects the performance of SPED teachers. The findings could possibly reflect the needs and complaints of the SPED teachers, and the supervising officials could make adjustments in order to be effective and efficient leaders.

**Keywords-** SPED teacher, semi-structured, stressors etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Special Education (simply put as SPED) teachers, who are referred as the professionals who are responding to the educational needs of the children who have a wide range of learning, mental, emotional, and physical disabilities to realize and further maximize the children's full potential, face a lot of challenging roles in their job such as dealing with their pupils' needs in relation to their innate or acquired disabilities, constructing tremendous paper works on their case reports, preparing and modifying the education curriculum that would fit for their SPED pupils, and interacting with their co-teachers, supervisors, and generally responding to the demands of their working environment.

As they struggle to work in response to these and other specific demands of their job, they experience a great amount of physical and psychological exhaustion that could have an impact on their overall performance and functioning.

Stress, as defined by Selye (2004), is the "single, nonspecific reaction of the body to a demand for change". In simple terms, it is the psychological and physiological response that is produced when an internal or external stimulus is perceived as an imbalance in the level of demand acted upon a person (Andaya et al., 2011). Prolonged exposure to stress causes effects that can adversely affect the performance of a SPED. The effects of work-related stress include loss of concentration, loss of motivation, poor decision-making, sleep disturbances, fatigue and emotional lability (Mills et al., 2008).

The effects of stress are directly linked to coping. Studying coping strategies of different individuals is very helpful on generating insights and developing structured means of explaining and venturing out not only the effects of stress to an individual, but to devise appropriate strategies on how people can efficiently respond to the inevitable stress imposed by their workplace.

Efficient coping strategies will most likely improve their job performance and productivity, and could have a possible effect on improvements on their personality as they face situations outside their environment.

## II. RELATED LITERATURE

Special Education Teachers are teachers who “work with students who have a wide range of learning, mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. It is easy to mis-concept that SPED teachers are the one who corrects abnormal behaviors and manifestation of children diagnosed with various neuro development disorders.

The professionals whose job is to correct behavioral manifestations of disorders are Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and ABA Therapists to name a few. Occupational therapists are professionals who “focuses [on the treatment] on helping people with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability” by “improving their cognitive, physical, sensory, and motor skills and enhance their self-esteem and sense of accomplishment” through various modes of therapy that OTs specialize (Kid’s Health, 2017). On the other hand, Speech-Language Pathologists “works to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech language, social communication, cognitive-communication, and swallowing disorders” (ASHA, n.d.).

In our country, the Department of Education designed two categories of teachers (DepEd, 1998), specializing groups of qualified teachers to cater SPED pupils suffering with the aforementioned neuro developmental conditions, and the rest being retained to their regular classes catering students under the basic education curriculum.

Regular item teacher (teachers who handle regular classes prescribed by the national curriculum set by the DepEd) in the Philippines receives a minimum

amount of Php 18,718 per annum or a salary grade 10. Their salary increases depending on their position title and can reach up to salary grade 12 or Php 22,149 for regular item teacher III. Meanwhile for SPED item teachers (teachers who handle SPED classes), the minimum salary they receive is salary grade 13 or Php 24,224 and can go up to salary grade 17 or Php 34,781 (DBM, 2012) (DepEd, 2005) (Comelec, 2018).

The position titles that are currently implemented by the DepEd are as follows: Teacher I, II, III, IV, V, SPED Teacher I, II, III, Master Teacher I to IV, Head Teacher I to V, Guidance Coordinator and Guidance Coordinator, and Principals I to IV (DepEd, 2016). These ranks are granted to teachers based on set of requirements assigned to each position title. Position titles and Item titles affects their salary grade just what was mentioned and illustrated earlier.

No job is perfect, and every job will have some amount of stress associated with it, that stress can be beneficial when it encourages employees to work harder and try their best, or when it sparks enthusiasm and improvements on the job. When stress levels get too high, however, employee performance can suffer and productivity decreases (Dwamena, 2012). Stressed out employees are dissatisfied with their work and less likely to take extra steps to do their best (Brewer, 2004).

Stress is how our body reacts to these things. It is what drives us to do the job and finish it right away to meet the deadline but have it done well. The heightened tension gives us an adrenaline rush that allows us to push ourselves to the limit. Oftentimes, it is after the work is done or when the crisis is resolved that we feel the exhaustion.

Managing stress is vital to successfully meeting challenges brought by uncertainty and change. There are many ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require understanding and identifying the cause of stress in your life and how you deal with those stressors and learning strategies that will be helpful to you.

Coping strategies start with identifying the sources of stress. But this is not easy as true sources of stress aren’t always obvious and it is easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Coping theorists have generally

categorized coping strategies under three groups: a) strategies focused on resolving problem; b) strategies used to alleviate the emotions triggered by the situation; and c) strategies involving social support (Dalton& Pakenham, 2004). Apart from personality traits, people also tend to develop habitual modes and methods of managing stress and coping with upsetting emotions. By and large, these habitual methods do help people to manage and defuse stressful situations they find themselves in, but they are not all equally efficient at this task.

Some work better than others. While some really do succeed in helping people to manage upsetting emotions, the lesser quality methods generally end up causing more problems than they solve (Dombeck, 2006).

### III. RELATED STUDIES

**Hussain (2010)** states that stress is an unpleasant state of emotion wherein an individual is filled with frustration, anxiety and exhaustion. They define teacher stress as an negative state of being that arise from unclear role specifications, high self-expectation and the inability to influence decision making, to clashes with superiors, isolation poor communication and role conflict.

They also state that workers would often complain about being given work to be completed in an insufficient amount of time. Some factors that were considered were the home life of the teachers and the social circle that they kept outside of their career life. Teachers who stay this way tend to feel undervalued and would accumulate stress that would then lead them to appear irritable, miserable, lack energy and commitment and would sometimes make them change some aspects of their personalities in response to the stress from work.

**Smith's (2012)** study examined the coping mechanisms used by teachers in Utah Secondary Agriculture and other teachers not related to agriculture. The author claims that teaching is a stressful occupation and stressed teachers have negative impacts on classroom performance. Their research concluded that there are significant relation between the demographic profile of the respondents and specific coping mechanisms they use. Factors such as age, length of teaching career, type of certification and hours spent on teaching have a

relationship with what kind of coping mechanism they use.

### IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the following variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Civil Status
- Total Years of Teaching Service
- Monthly Income Status
- Educational Attainment
- Neuro developmental Cases Being Handled
- Class Size

2. What are the work-related stresses of the Elementary SPED Teaches at the selected schools and institutions in Metro Manila as measured by work-related stress evaluation in terms of their demographic profile?

- Workload Stressors
- Role Conflict
- Workplace Condition
- Socioeconomic Condition

3. What are the coping strategies of the Elementary SPED Teaches at the selected schools and institutions in Metro Manila as measured by coping strategy evaluation in terms of their demographic profile?

- Exercise
- Relaxation
- Recreational Activities
- Religious Activities

4. Is there a significant relationship between work-related stressors in terms of their demographic profile?

5. Is there a significant relationship between coping strategies in terms of their demographic profile?

6. Is there a significant relationship between work-related stressors and coping strategies of the respondents?

### V. METHODOLOGY

The researchers would use survey methods on gathering data. A questionnaire check-list would be constructed and used to determine the work-related

stressors experienced and coping strategies utilized by the SPED teachers, and a semi-structured supporting interview would be conducted to probe and give further insights of the given variables. Purposive sampling method will be used since the researchers have estimated that there are only at least 1-2 elementary SPED teachers on selected public elementary schools.

**1. Respondents:**

The respondents came from selected public elementary schools in the Parañaque and Quezon City area. The researchers used purposive sampling on determining the sample/respondents. There are a total of 75 respondents, with 15 from Parañaque City and 60 from Quezon City.

**2. Research Instrument Used:**

A questionnaire checklist was constructed and utilized to determine the stressors and coping strategies of elementary SPED teacher respondents. The instrument contained three parts: Demographic Profile, Work-Related Stressor Evaluation Questionnaire and Coping Strategies Evaluation Questionnaire. The researchers created an item pool for each specifiers for the work-related stressors and coping strategies for the SPED Teachers. They have aimed to create 10-15 items per specifier, constructing 90 items overall.

Likert Scale was chosen to be the means of rating on how the respondents agree on the given scenarios and situations presented implying possible sources of stress in terms of their workload as a SPED teacher, role conflicts, workplace condition, and socioeconomic condition. For the coping strategies, they would rate how often they use the depicted scenarios and situations that were presented on the third part of the test. 90 items were constructed and it is already for validation.

**VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents according to the Specifies:**

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Age.

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
21 – 30	21	28.0
31 – 40	33	44.0

41 – 50	15	20.0
51 – 60	4	5.3
No Answer	2	2.7
Total	75	100.0

(Mean = 36.27; SD = 8.689; Range = [21,60])

Majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 31 – 40 years old, 33 out of 75 being in the said age bracket. We can infer that the sample of our SPED Teachers were mostly in their later young adult years. Following to that bracket were around 21 – 30 years old, 21 out of 75 being in the said age bracket. Next to them were in the age of 41 – 50, having 15 out of the 75 respondents among the sample. Lastly, there are 4 respondents from the age of bracket of 51 – 60. Base on the data gathered, the average age of SPED teachers was around 36(.27) years old, with a standard deviation of 8.689.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents according to Gender.

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	68	90.7
Male	7	9.3
Total	75	100.0

According to the data, among the 75 respondents, 68 or 90.7% of them were female and only 7 or 9.3% of the respondents were male.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents according to Civil Status.

Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Single	26	34.7
Married	43	57.3
Separated	2	2.7
Widowed	1	1.3
No Answer	3	4.0
Total	75	100.0

The majority of the SPED teachers were married numbering 43 out of 75, 57.3% of the respondents. The second most frequent status is single with the teachers numbering 26 out of 75, 34.7% in percentage. The next one is separated numbering a measly 2 out of 75, 2.7% in percentage. The next one is widowed with only 1 out of 75 respondents, 1.3%.

Most of the SPED teachers, whether they are a regular or a SPED item teacher, has served 10 years or below, having 35 out of 75 respondents from the sample. It can also be inferred that most of the teachers who handle SPED class are still new to such teaching profession. 20 out of 75 respondents have served 11 – 20 years on handling SPED class; 7 have served 21 – 30 years; only 1 has served for more than 30 years. The total teaching years of service doesn't reflect the years of teaching service dedicated to SPED alone, but also to the regular class an individual teacher might have possibly practice before coming in the SPED teaching profession.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents according to Total Years of Teaching Service.

Total Years of Teaching Service	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
10 years and below	35	46.7
11 – 20 years	20	26.7
21 – 30 years	7	9.3
Greater than 30 years	1	1.3
No Answer	12	16.0
Total	75	100.0

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to Monthly Income.

Monthly Income	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Php 15,000 – Php 20,000	28	37.3
Php 20,001 – Php 30,000	35	46.7
Php 30,001 – Php 40,000	8	10.7
Above Php 40,000	1	1.3
No Answer	3	4.0
Total	75	100.0

Based on data gathered from the sample, the average salary of SPED teacher ranges from above Php 20,000 to PHP 30,000, which compromises of 35 respondents out of 75. 28 out of 75 respondents have a salary ranging from Php 15,000 to Php 20,000. Only 8 receives a monthly income ranging above Php 30,000 to Php 40,000, while only 1 receives a monthly salary of above 40,000.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Attainment.

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
College Graduate	29	38.7

Master's Degree	37	49.3
Doctor's Degree	2	2.7
No Answer	7	9.3
Total	75	100.0

The majority of the SPED teacher respondent from the sample had already attained a master's degree numbering 37 out of 75 respondents or 49.3%. The second most frequent answer from the SPED teacher sample is that they are only college graduates numbering 29 out of 75 or 38.7%. Lastly, 2 out of 75 or 2.7% of the respondents indicated that they have a doctoral degree.

Table 7. Frequency of Neuro developmental cases being handled by SPED teachers.

Cases Being Handled	Frequency (f)
Intellectual Disorder	49
Autism Spectrum Disorder	45
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder	38
Hearing Impaired	34
Down Syndrome	34
Cerebral Palsy	33
Visually Impaired	10
Oppositional Defiant Disorder	9
Learning Disability	5
Global Developmental Delay	3

The table represents all the neuro developmental cases that the 75 SPED teachers are currently encountering (when survey was conducted). Respondents teaching children with Intellectual Disorder are the most frequent, as 49 teachers are currently handling one or more of the said case. Next was Autism Spectrum Disorder, with 45 teachers handling such case?

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents according to Class Size.

Class Size	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1 – 7 Pupils (Small)	9	12.0
8 – 15 Pupils (Average)	25	33.3
Above 15 Pupils (Large)	37	49.3
No Answer	4	5.3
Total	75	100.0

(Mean = 15.72; SD 7.489; Range = [1,34])

38 teachers are currently handling Attention-Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder, 34 teachers are handling Hearing Impaired pupils and those with

Down Syndrome, 33 of them were handling pupils with Cerebral Palsy, 10 of them were handling Visually Impaired pupils, 9 of them were handling pupils with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, 5 of them were handling Learning Disabilities, and 3 of them were handling pupils with Global Developmental Delay.

According to the gathered data, the most frequent size of class a teacher has is large which is categorized as having 15 and above pupils. The teachers with these much pupils number – 37 out of 75 – which is 49.3% of the total number of respondents. The second most frequent answer is the average class with approximately 8-15 pupils in each class. The number of teachers who indicated in their survey forms is 25 out of 75 which 33.3% of the total number of respondents is. 9 out of 75 SPED teachers responded that they only had a small class numbering approximately 1-7 pupils per class and 4 out of the 75 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 9. Summary of the Weighted Mean of the Specifiers in Work-related Stressors.

Specifiers	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Socio-economic Condition	2.60	Moderately Stressful	1
Workplace Condition	2.46	Less Stressful	2
Workload Stressors	2.37	Less Stressful	3
Role Conflict	2.22	Less Stressful	4

Ranking the specifiers of the coping strategies used in this study, Socio-economic Condition ranked the highest yielding mean with 2.60, interpreted as moderately stressful, next to Workplace Condition with 2.46 and Workload Stressors with 2.37, interpreted as Less Stressful.

Table 10. Summary of the Weighted Mean of the Specifiers in Work-related Stressors.

Specifiers	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Conscious Acceptance	3.23	Very Effective	1
Recreational Activities	2.84	Effective	2
Relaxation	2.64	Effective	3

Religious Activities	2.37	Somehow Effective	4
Exercise	2.26	Somehow Effective	5

Last of them was Role Conflict with a mean of 2.22 which is also interpreted as less stressful. The Overall Weighted Mean for the work-related stressors of SPED teachers is 2.34 interpreted as Less Stressful.

Ranking the specifiers of the coping strategies used in this study, Conscious Acceptance ranked the most effective with a mean of 3.23, next to Recreational Activities with 2.84 and Relaxation with 2.64, interpreted as Effective. Following those are Religious Activities with 2.37 then Exercise with 2.26, interpreted as Somehow Effective. The Overall Weighted Mean for the coping strategies of SPED teachers is 2.67 interpreted as Effective.

## 2. Relationship between Work-Related Stressors and the Demographic Profile of Elementary SPED Teachers:

Table 11. Summary of the Chi-square Test and Fisher's Exact Test between Work-Related Stressors and Demographic Profile.

Variables	Test Statistic	P-Value
Age**	-	0.711
Gender**	-	0.665
Civil Status**	-	0.797
Total Years in Service**	-	0.235
Monthly Income Status**	-	0.464
Educational Attainment**	-	0.038
Class Size*	5.923	0.046

\* - Chi-square test was used

\*\* - Fisher's Exact test was used

Table 12. Summary of the Chi-square Test and Fisher's Exact Test between Work-Related Stressors and Cases being Handled.

Cases being Handled	P-Value
ASD*	0.295
ADHD*	0.039
DS*	0.606
CP*	0.440
VI**	0.053
HI*	0.454
ODD**	0.106
ID*	0.789

Global D**	1.000
Learning**	0.064

\* - Chi-square test was used

\*\* - Fisher's Exact test was used

The p-values of the tests of relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the work-related stressors: Age (p = 0.711), Gender (p = 0.665), Civil Status (p = 0.797), Total Years in Teaching Service (p = 0.235), Monthly Income Status (p = 0.464), Educational Attainment (p = 0.038), and Class Size ( $\chi^2 = 5.923$ , p = 0.046).

The p-values of the relationship between neuro developmental cases being handled by teachers and work-related stressors are as follows: Autism Spectrum Disorder (p = 0.295), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (p = 0.039), Down Syndrome (p = 0.606), Cerebral Palsy (p = 0.440), Visually Impaired (p = 0.053), Hearing Impaired (p = 0.454), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (p = 0.106), Intellectual Disability (p = 0.789), Global Developmental Delay (p = 1.000), and Learning Disability (p = 0.064).

### 3. Relationship between Coping Strategies and the Demographic Profile of Elementary SPED Teachers:

Table 13. Summary of the Chi-square Test and Fisher's Exact Test between Coping Strategies and Demographic Profile

Variables	Test Statistic	P-Value
Age**	-	0.368
Gender**	-	1.000
Civil Status**	-	0.451
Total Years in Service**	-	0.444
Monthly Income**	-	0.884
Educational Attainment**	-	0.770
Class Size**	-	0.271

\* - Chi-square test was used

\*\* - Fisher's Exact test was used

The p-values of the tests of relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the coping strategies of the SPED teachers are as follows: Age (p = 0.368), Gender (p = 1.000), Civil Status (p = 0.451), Total Years in Service (p = 0.444), Monthly Income (p = 0.884), Educational Attainment (p = 0.770), and Room Size (p = 0.271).

The p-values of the tests of relationship between coping strategies of the SPED teachers and the cases they are handling are as follows: Autism Spectrum Disorder (p = 0.210), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (p = 1.000), Down Syndrome (p = 0.328), Cerebral Palsy (p = 0.092), Visually Impaired (p = 0.796), Hearing Impaired (p = 0.093), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (p = 0.109), Intellectual Disability (0.386), , Global Developmental Delay (p = 0.077), and Learning Disability (p = 0.644).

Table 14. Summary of the Chi-square Test and Fisher's Exact Test between Coping Strategies and Cases being Handled.

Cases being Handled	P-Value
ASD**	0.210
ADHD**	1.000
DS**	0.328
CP**	0.092
VI**	0.796
HI**	0.093
ODD**	0.109
ID**	0.386
Global D**	0.077
Learning**	0.644

\* - Chi-square test was used

\*\* - Fisher's Exact test was used

Table 15. Fisher's Exact Test Results as a test for significance between Work-related Stressors and Coping Strategies.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	1.228 <sup>a</sup>	2	.541	.550		
Likelihood Ratio	1.765	2	.414	.494		
Fisher's Exact Test	.832			.791		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.048 <sup>b</sup>	1	.827	1.000	.513	.192

N of Valid Cases	75					
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a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .56.

b. The standardized statistic is .218.

#### 4. Relationship between Work-Related Stressors and Coping Strategies of Elementary SPED:

Based on the Fisher's Exact test, the p-value from the tests of relationship between Work-related Stressors and Coping Strategies was ( $p = 0.832$ ). The conclusion of the findings presented in this chapter based on the data gathered from the survey will be explained in the next chapter.

### VI. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the precedings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated: The demographic profile of the respondents consists of more 31 – 40 year-old teachers. Most of them are females, already married, and has been serving as teacher for 10 years and below.

Majority of them receives a monthly income ranging Php 20,001 – Php 30,000, also and has at least attained a Master's Degree. Most of them handles/has handled pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and they currently have a relatively large class, having students of more than 15 students per day.

Socio-economic Condition has been the factor of the SPED teachers that moderately stress the SPED teachers. Conscious Acceptance has been the most effective coping strategy that SPED teachers employ within themselves to deal with their perceived stressors. Among the demographic profiles, only Educational Attainment, Class Size, and ADHD as case being handled had significant relationships between the Work-Related Stressors of the Teachers.

None among the coping strategies had significant relationships with the demographic profiles presented. There is no significant relationship between Work-Related Stressors and Coping Strategies by the Elementary SPED teachers. Teachers had reported cases when they inevitably deal with students who didn't undergo prior assessment and therapy, claiming to perform functions and duties of behavioral therapists, and the likes. Majority of the teachers were Regular-Item Teachers, thus, trained to handle regular classes and not SPED classes, as most

of them have claimed that they have learned to adapt teaching skills and technique through years, if not months, of experience.

### VII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and the conclusion of the study, the following measures are recommended and proposed by the researchers:

- Increase the sample size by at least 100 or even more. This thesis would yield a more statistically valid and strong results if the number of respondents were even greater than 100.
- Improve the self-constructed questionnaire to reach a higher value of measure and reliability. Remove unnecessary and uninformative demographic details in the questionnaire.
- Coordinate with DepEd to conduct the research and survey in more parts of Metro Manila so that the gathered data can represent the entirety of all the Public Elementary SPED Teachers.
- Use Probability Sampling on determining respondents instead of Non-Probability Purposive Sampling. A fair distribution of respondents will be ideal to eliminated hidden variables and spurious relationship that might be affecting the results of this study.
- Conduct more extensive seminars, workshops, and training that would develop skills of SPED teachers in handling pupils with special needs so that they are more equipped with skills and competencies to address to their pupils.
- Raise the concerns of the teachers in terms of their item titles, as some of the Regular-items were handling SPED classes while they are supposed to be on a Regular class. This mismatch is obviously due to the lack of SPED item teachers available. The researchers suggests that the governing authority might want to reconsider changing the item title of deserving Regular item teachers to SPED item teachers. This might address the concern about their salaries.
- Conduct a needs assessment to every Public SPED Center to find what are the lacking learning materials and physical needs that such center requires for a more conducive learning experience for the teachers and pupils.

### VIII. INTERVENTION PLAN

#### 1. Proposal of SPEDAPATEC Program:

The SPEDAPATEC Program, which stands for SPED Admission, Pre-Assessment, Therapy, and Educational Curriculum Program is a proposed flow of how SPED pupils are administered in SPED Centers at the very least.

## 2. Rationale:

To implement a flow or a phase that a SPED pupil should undergo in order to effectively and efficiently facilitate learning and improvement to the SPED pupils and to aide SPED teachers on organizing and the overall fluidity of their work.

## 3. Plan Design:

### 3.1 SPEDAPATEC Program:

The figure shows the exact flow of the proposed SPEDAPATEC Program. The program aims to address the findings of the research that SPED teachers are forced to become Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, ABA Therapists, etc. (as discussed earlier). This Intervention Plan involves additional employees for institution including, but not limited to, Developmental Pediatricians, Assessment Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, and ABA Therapy. Currently, the SPED Curriculum involves the Self-Contained Program, Transition Program, and the Mainstream Program as illustrated in the figure (DepEd, 2017)

### 3.2 Actual Flow of SPEDAPATEC Program:

#### 3.2.1 Pre-assessment of Developmental Pediatricians or other related professionals

- Firstly, the pupil needs to be assessed so that the correct diagnosis and proper treatment can be determined.
- The DevPeds can be a part-time employee and only be visiting on certain days (i.e. half day)
- This step can be skipped if the pupil already has a pre-existing valid assessment from outsider Developmental Pediatricians, Assessment Center or Psychologists, or other related licensed experts.

#### 3.2.2 Behavior Therapy:

- Depending on the assessment and pre-assessment of the DevPeds/experts, the pupil will be given the proper therapy that they need.
- This phase would be handled by Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, and/or ABA Therapists. Such professionals are equipped with skills and competencies that would alter undesirable behaviors for the improvement of the pupils.

- The said experts can be a part-time employee and only be visiting on certain days (i.e. half day)
- This stage ensures that the pupil is properly behaved and willing to learn when they are finally handed over to the SPED teachers themselves.
- This step can be skipped if the DevPeds states that the therapy is not needed and/or the pupil has already/is currently receiving treatment
- Self-Contained Program
- Transition Program
- Mainstream Program

The intervention program is expected to help the SPED teachers manage their pupils to have the best learning experience and to help their pupils to realize their full potential. More significantly, the SPED teachers would benefit from the said intervention plan, if it would be taken effective, as their pupils are more manageable if they are assessed properly and has done some supervised therapy from their own personnel. The SPED teachers, the same with other mentioned experts could even interact and make discourses with each other for a more effective and efficient evaluation to students.

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