LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL HEADS ASSIGNED IN REMOTE AREA

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ABSTRACT

School heads in remote areas face several challenges on their journey of providing quality education. This qualitative phenomenological research study investigated the lived experiences, coping mechanism, and insights gained by 12 public school heads assigned in remote schools of Division of Davao del Sur. Research participants were not a resident of the school they were assigned. The researcher used a validated semi – structured interview guide for individual in-depth interview and focused-group discussion. Colaizzi's method was used to analyze the data gathered. The result shows that school heads in remote areas faced physical discomforts, emotional discomforts, teaching and community adjustments, and work consolations. Their coping mechanisms include physical enduring practices, emotional surviving technique, teaching and community coping technique, and positive work atmosphere They developed personal realization, social realization, and professional realization. It was concluded that despite the challenges encountered, they established their sense of commitment toward their vocation and willingness to continue their journey. The findings of this study may help the Local Government Unit officials to create an ordinance to cover safety and security of the teachers. The officials of the Division Office may provide an additional payment or insurance to the teachers and a wellness program may be organized to destress the teachers in remote area. The school heads may improve their ways on managing the school by partnering with non – government parties.

KEYWORDS: *Educational management, lived experiences, school heads, public school, remote area*

INTRODUCTION

Managing a school is a wonderful job, albeit a difficult one, particularly for any educator sent to remote area. Regardless of how frightening the situation seems to be, principals in far flung areas remain unfazed. Despite the shortage of teachers, the remoteness of the area, the tough terrain, the high cost of car rental for their travels, and the fact that they only get to see their families once a month, they persevere to continue their undying dedication to providing the best education for the students. More than recognition, their passion and love to teaching that brings life-giving hope needs continued support. Their journey to career longevity despite the remoteness of the school they are assigned to manage is indeed worthy to share. Accordingly, they are valuable assets to the community because they act as living catalysts for the upholding of values, the instilling of dignity, the development of integrity, and the protection of every individual's right to education.

It has always been mentioned that education is the most effective tool for bringing about positive change in the world. du Plessis and Mestry (2019) stated that public schools in rural areas of South Africa are categorised by various factors that negatively impact on the provision of quality education. Rural areas are generally remote and relatively underdeveloped. As a result, majority of schools in remote area lack the necessary physical resources and basic infrastructure for sanitation, water, roads, transport, electricity, and information and communication technology. Shah, Mahmood, and Shah (2015) mentioned that good management is essential in schools because schools provide education and education is essential for the economic, social, and moral development of the nation. If there will be poor management in school, there will be poor education. As a result, there will be backwardness in the country. They further mentioned that education is the only instrument through which a nation can earn her name and fame according to its nation's hope. Therefore, the role of principals and or school heads assigned in remote areas is vital.

Every experience is a different one, depending mostly on where you are assigned. What remains the same is the fact that there are many challenges that you must go through. According to Diaz (2015) one of the biggest challenges of heading a far-flung school is its physical aspect, It's location. He further states that Most of the school heads and teachers assigned in these areas live in the city – or near the city and traveling to far-flung schools will take its toll on their health, especially when they must cross several rivers and mountains to reach the school. He further mentioned that another problem these public school principals encountered is the lack of instructional materials to be used so school heads therefore used their own money to buy whatever the school needs. The argument mentioned above is supported by Navales, Flora, and Estremera (2017) that the basic education in the Philippines faces perennial problems like shortage of textbooks, facilities, and classrooms particularly in the public school system. Therefore, the work of a public school teachers and school heads isn't a walk in the park.

In like manner, the study conducted by Equipado & Guilbas (2021) asserts that based on the teachers' experiences in far flung areas is indeed very challenging because they encounter uncomfortable means of transportation like habal-habal just to reach the station. Habal-habal is a local dialect for motorcycle for hire and the last option of those who do not have their own motorcycle and cannot afford to pay for special tricycle rides. Some teachers also experienced other difficulties or challenges going to their school. Some of them mentioned that the path itself is hazardous where unexpected venomous animals like snake may harm them or cause vehicular accident. Furthermore, the challenges or difficulties mentioned by the participants of the study also include the slippery road especially during rainy season.

In another study conducted by Quejada & Orale (2018), the same challenges were mentioned, the teachers and school heads need to walk, they must create, innovate, and re-invent instructional materials using available local materials. Issues related to absences became another problem because most of the pupils need to help their parents at home or to work in the field to augment family's daily survival, no matter how young they are. But, despite the challenges encountered they continue to serve.

Unlike any other profession, teaching requires dedication and service for an individual to be considered as a real teacher. Teaching may not be a profitable job. It may not even provide you financial security. It consumes a lot of your personal time, energy, and resources. At times it causes disappointments, heartaches and pain. But touching the heart of children and opening their minds will offer rewards that are not quantifiable.

In the Division of Davao del Sur, where I am presently residing, I encountered a school-head who were assigned in a school which is located on the foot of Mount Apo. In our conversation, I have observed that they have the same problem with other school-heads assigned in aloof areas and they seldom go home because of the scarcity of motorcycle available to reach the place due of its hazardous pathways, unexpected encounter with venomous animals, and other untoward accidents due to mossy road. Despite the challenges encountered, he still has a burning passion to education. This is a teacher's story worthy to explore.

In light of the literature provided, I felt the need to conduct a study that will investigate the lived experiences of the public school heads assigned in most remote schools of Davao del Sur. Despite the situation, teachers in remote areas have not ceased from constantly wearing cheerful faces and optimistic outlook for the love of work and to inspire the lives of the children who are patiently waiting for every start of the week for their love and care, and that somehow change their lives through education Generally, this paper is set with hope of contributing to the betterment of the education system in far flung areas as it unveils the coping mechanisms from the challenges encountered and to excavate the motivation of the school heads in continuously managing far flung schools despite the challenges encountered. There are many tales regarding the sacrifices made by many public school heads. The tales of school principals are powerful expressions of their difficulties and passion for their jobs. It is fair to assume that there are still many secrets that have yet to be disclosed and stories to share.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design

This research study used a qualitative design in phenomenological approach. Burns & Grove (2007) stated that qualitative research is mostly associated with words, language and experiences rather than measurements, statistics and numerical figures. Qualitative research refers to the inductive, holistic, epic, subjective and process-oriented methods use to understand, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on a phenomenon or setting. It is a systematic, subjective approach used to described life experiences and given them meaning. Moreover, Phenomenological approach is selected in this study to collect data on the lived experiences of the school heads assigned in remote area. The research approach would deepen understanding of the nature and the meaning of everyday experiences. According to Corbetta (2003), phenomenological research is a type of approach in qualitative

for which interviews provide in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help to grasp the subject's perspective. Bryman (2008) posits that through interviews or face-to-face discussions, subjective and detailed personal story can be told, with focus on how the interviewee understands and explains different phenomena.   I aim to draw out an in-depth study of the lived experiences of school heads assigned in remote area, their coping mechanism, as well as insights leaned. Bryman and Bell (2007) define quantitative research as entailing the collection of numerical data and exhibiting the view of relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for natural science approach, and as having an objectivist conception of social reality.

Participants and Sampling

In identifying the participants of the study for in – depth interview, I utilized purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. The following were my inclusion criteria: the research participants is a current school head assigned in remote area; all of them must be a non – resident of the school they are assigned; they have at least five (5) year experience as school head in remote area. I will identify five participants for my in – depth interview.

To identify the participants for the focused group discussion, I used purposive sampling technique similar to the technique I used for my in – depth interview. The inclusion criteria were also the same with the inclusion criteria for in-depth interview which means that the participants should be a current school head assigned in remote area; all of them must be a non – resident of the school they are assigned; they are at least five year experience as school head in remote area. I will identify seven participants for my focused group discussion. The total target participants are 12, with five school heads to participate in in-depth-interview and another seven school heads to participate in the focused group discussion. A qualitative-phenomenological study should include five to twenty-five individuals. As a result, nine individuals are sufficient for the research.

Research Instruments

In gathering data for this study, I used a semi structured interview guide. According to Creswell (2014), an interview guide is simply a list of the high-level topics that the researcher plans on covering in the interview with the high-level questions. It is usually one page so that it is easy to refer to. The process of creating such a guide can help me to focus and organize my line of thinking and therefore questioning. Creswell added that it is important to remember that the interview guide really is only a guide. The researcher does not have to follow the exact ordering and there is nothing wrong with going off script at times if a particular line of questioning that I have not anticipated seems worthwhile.

In addition, ensuring validity and reliability was of the utmost importance to this study through careful attention to this study's conceptualization and the means in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented. The interview guide was validated by the pool of experts from Holy Cross of Davao College and an external validator with an average of 4.35. Appended in Appendix D is the summary of the validation.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study used Colaizzi method of data analysis. This approach helped me interpret qualitative research data, to identify meaningful information and organize it into themes or categories. The approach follows steps in data analysis. Qualitative research used open-ended questions or loosely structured 31 interviews to uncover how people think and feel in certain situations (Shosha, 2012).

For In Depth Interview, I applied Colaizzi's steps to analyze the data that I collected in the interview. As a researcher, I read a description of each person that participated in the study- to gain the senses of my participants. Next, I extracted statements with significance to the research question, such as descriptions. To analyze the significant statements, I begin to become articulate and scrutinizing on what the statements mean and create themes from the meanings. I grouped similar categories together and organize them into themes. Lastly, I integrated the results into a comprehensive description of the topic and return them to each participant for the verification of the results regarding the study on the experiences of public – school heads assigned in remote area.

For Focus Group Discussion, I applied Colaizzi's steps to analyze the data that I collected in the interview during focus group discussion for triangulation. As a researcher, I read a description of each person that participated in the study- to gain the senses of my participants. Next, I extracted statements with significance to the research question, such as descriptions. To analyze the significant statements, I begin to become articulate and scrutinizing on what the statements mean and create themes from the meanings. I grouped similar categories together and organize them into themes. Lastly, I integrated the results into a comprehensive description of the topic and return them to each participant for the verification of the results regarding the study on the experiences of public school heads assigned in remote area.

Participants also review the findings of every interview session. According to Patton (2002), researchers can learn a great deal about the accuracy, completeness, fairness, and validity of their data analysis by having the participants described in that analysis react to what is described and concluded. Participant feedback confirms findings and assists in confirming that each summary of the interview session is accurate and ensures that the researcher is asking the right questions.

Using the fundamental techniques of data analysis described by Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) as reading, thinking, and writing; and rereading, rethinking, and rewriting, the researcher guarantees credible categorization, organization, summarization of the large quantities of data obtained from this study. As the researcher develops insights into the data examined and obtained documentation to support conclusions, scholarly research was accomplished. The goal of analysis is to develop a well-supported argument that adds to the understanding of a phenomenon, whether the understanding is phrased in descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory terms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the collected results and analyses on the topic concerning the travails of hinterland educators in facilitating modular learning modality for learners with special educational needs. Discussions were also provided to give a wide-range explanation of the themes that were created in lieu of the objectives proposed in this study.

Lived Experiences of Public School Heads Assigned in Remote Area

My analysis of the data generated me five categories of the experiences of public – school heads assigned in remote area. These are physical discomfort, emotional discomforts, teaching adjustment, environmental and community adjustments and work consolations. Under each category are the specific challenges experienced by the teachers. To refer to the teachers' quoted answers to the interview, P is used with its corresponding number as seen in the appendices.

Physical Discomfort.

The first category of experiences of public school heads assigned in remote area is physical discomfort. Public school heads struggle in reaching their respective schools and faced physical discomforts since the area in which they are assigned is far from their hometown and therefore they need to travel for hours and hours, hike up a mountain for another hour or so, then cross several rivers in order to reach their station. Moreover, they also encountered danger while they are on their way to school plus the weather condition that they also need to cope with. One noted discomfort of school heads assigned in remote area is dealing with tough terrain. School heads in far – flung community need to treak, climb, and sometimes encountered venomous animals while walking on their way to their respective schools.

The mode of transportation is another consideration on the physical discomforts in the experiences of school heads in a remote school. The road leading to the school is narrow and the only form of transport is a motorcycle. The teachers have the option of purchasing their own service motorcycle, rent a tricycle or risk the habal - habal ride. This ride is an innovation of using a single motorcycle as a form of public transport.

Teaching has always been considered a noble profession that requires great passion. Being a school head in the Philippines most specially in most remote school is a far more interesting story to tell. The challenges abound and school head's passion can truly be tested, and if one prevails, a diamond in the rough emerges. Even with the lack of existing research and literature regarding this phenomenon most especially on international journal, it is important to note that the experiences of school heads in remote area is the living evidence on their desire of providing quality education to students regardless of their situations.
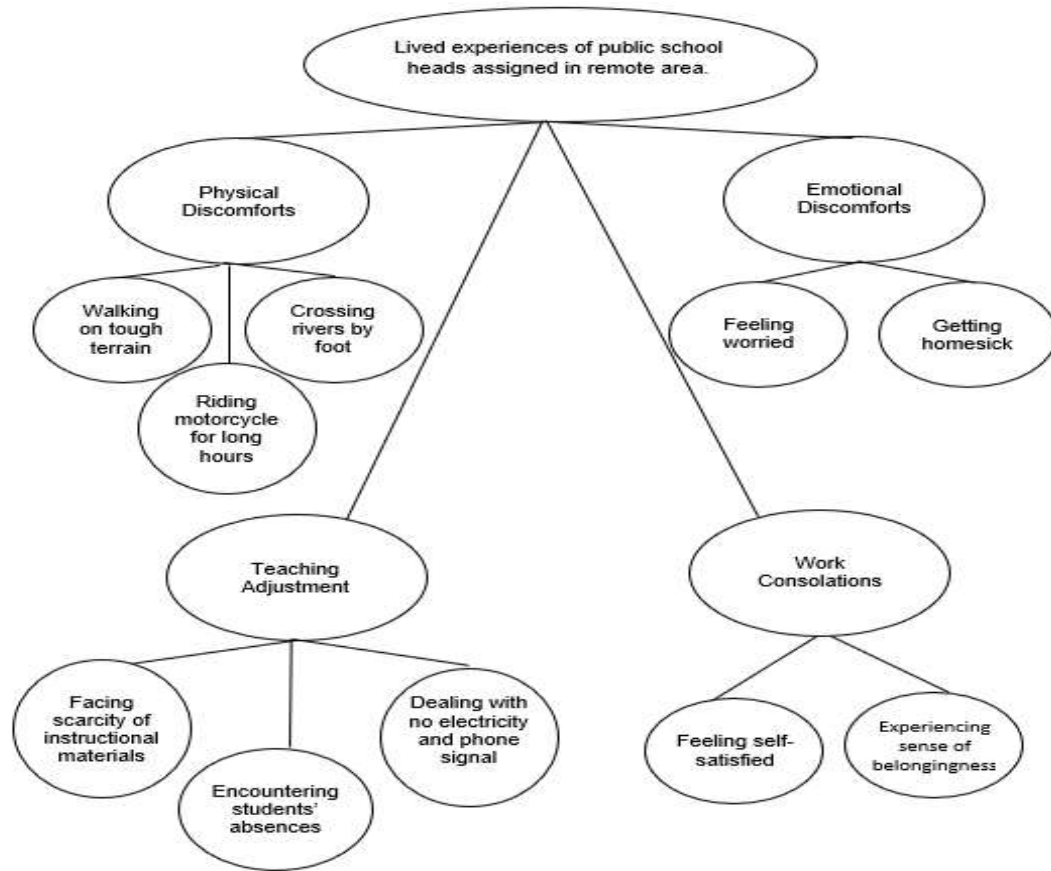

Figure 1. Lived Experience of Public School Heads Assigned in Remote Area

Walking on tough terrain. School leaders assigned to a remote school faced ongoing dilemma in delivering quality basic education. These difficulties arose as a consequence of a variety of reasons, directly and indirectly. Dangerous terrain is one of it. Participants have mentioned that they were able to encounter hard times in reaching their respective schools because of the tough terrain that they have to deal with.

It can be inferred from participants 1 and 3 that they experienced physical discomforts in reaching and serving far flung schools specifically on dealing with tough terrain. In their response they shared that they have a hard time on reaching the school especially when the weather condition is not good. They further shared that they also experienced encounterimg venomous animals. According to Barcena (2018) It's difficult to be assigned to distant places since you'll have to deal with a range of inconvenient modes of transportation, such as "Big jeepney," "habal-habal," and even the usage of an animal such as a horse and walking for a long time merely to get to the station. If the weather is not cooperating, it gets much more difficult. Because the river is too dangerous to cross, public school principals would resort to trekking, which is a difficult task for them

The experience of this participant is not at far from the response of the other participants I have interviewed. In his answer he shared that he encountered physical challenges in walking on tough terrain while serving remote school this includes the danger terrain that they need to face in reaching their station to serve the call of their profession. The danger that they faced is added to the long kilometers of walk and dealing with sticky muddy road due to rains.

According to Diaz (2015), one of the biggest challenges of heading a far-flung school is its physical aspect, its location. He further states that Most of the school heads and teachers assigned in these areas live in the city – or near the city and traveling to far-flung schools will take its toll on their health, especially when they must cross several rivers and mountains to reach the school.

He further mentioned that another problem these public school principals encountered is the lack of instructional materials to be used so school heads therefore used their own money to buy whatever the school needs.

Emotional Discomforts
The second category of the experiences of public school heads assigned in remote area is emotional discomforts. Since school heads who were assigned in remote area are far from their home, they are also far from their family in which most of them are not used to it. Some of the participants stressed out that they sometime encounter emotional discomforts because they missed their families and loved ones at home. Considering that they seldom went home and be with their families.

Feeling worried. School heads assigned in remote area faced struggles in emotional aspect particularly on the first years of their career in uphill. School heads felt anxious about their family and loved ones left at home. This scenario adds up to their challenges in continuously providing quality education to students.
It can be inferred from Participants 5, 2, and 4 that they felt worried about their loved ones left at home while they are serving far flung schools because they seldom went home.
In the study of Rotas and Cahapay (2020), it reveals that teachers face emotional health struggles because of the demand of their profession which sometimes lead to overthinking and end up feeling sick.
The experience of this participant is common to other school heads I interviewed. In their statement, they mentioned the reasons why they sometimes feel mental discomfort while they are serving their station in remote area. Such reason is that they are far from their families.
Many of these school professionals have never lived in remote or isolated communities where social support networks such as family and friends are scarce, social norms such as drinking alcohol are prohibited, access to their favorite sports and cultural activities and hobbies, as well as medical, dental, and allied health services, is limited, and housing and weather conditions are harsh. (Buetel, Adie & Hudson, 2011).

Teaching Adjustments.
The third category of the experiences of public school heads assigned in remote area is teaching adjustments. Aside from the physical and emotional challenges encountered of public school heads they also have to adjust on teaching aspect. It is also mentioned by the school heads that they faced various adjustments in teaching. Adjustments to teaching includes innovation of instructional materials due to scarcity of educational resources.

Facing scarcity of instructional materials. To date, research revealed that some remote schools in the Philippines still faces scarcity of teaching resources and teachers are continuously challenged in delivering quality basic education. This is also not at far from the experiences of the school heads I interviewed. Instructional materials are aid of teachers in deliver classes to students.
It can be inferred from the response of the participant 4 that he experienced lack of instructional materials and tend to innovate the available materials in far flung area into a learning materials in order to present a much more meaningful learning experience to the students. As mentioned by Quejada and Orale (2018), Teachers and school administrators must trek, resources must be innovated, and the students in the rural school in Samar are really impoverished. Absences became an issue since, no matter how young they are, most students need to assist their parents at home or labor in the fields to produce food.

Work Consolations
The fourth category of the experiences of public – school head assigned in remote area is work consolations. Despite the challenges of public – school heads in remote area, participants have not denied that they have found comfort in serving. As they continue to serve, they find their journey in remote area as self – fulfilling for they have found their true mission in the world of academe. They found new family with their peers, colleague, and community. And mold them to be an artistic educator for they make use of their extra talent in order to bring quality education for all.

Feeling Self – satisfied. Despite their unpleasant experiences these school leaders in remote area have found the true meaning on their journey. Serving remote schools is a joy for them for they felt that they found their significance of

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teaching service. According to Durisic and Bunijivac (2017), reaching out to the students and making a difference in their lives was important in deciding to remain in the teaching profession.

It can be interpreted from the response of Participant 2 that he was able to attain self-fulfillment in teaching career because he and his team was able to shape the mind of the students to a better life view. Goldberg (2014), perceived that the benefit of remaining in the teaching profession was seeing students succeed. He indicated that when former students return and tell him that they are graduating from high school, attending college, or doing other things (i.e., working), is satisfying. Moreover, based on the study of Javilla and Fabilla (2009), participants of the said study shared that they felt that their contribution to the school and to their students are very much appreciated and the love of students to them are very much visible.

Coping mechanism of Public – School Heads Assigned in Remote Area
Being a head teacher is already hard, but it gets even more difficult when there aren't enough learning resources for students. They still must innovate and make materials to make sure that the students will still learn even though the school doesn't have enough resources. This situation is already common in many public schools across the country, but it's not as bad as the hardships head teachers face when they teach in far flung schools. This is because remote communities have more problems. Their coping techniques also include on the ways of handling difficulties encountered while they are traveling from their hometown to their respective schools. Even with the challenges encountered they find ways and reasons in their hearts why they are still in service.
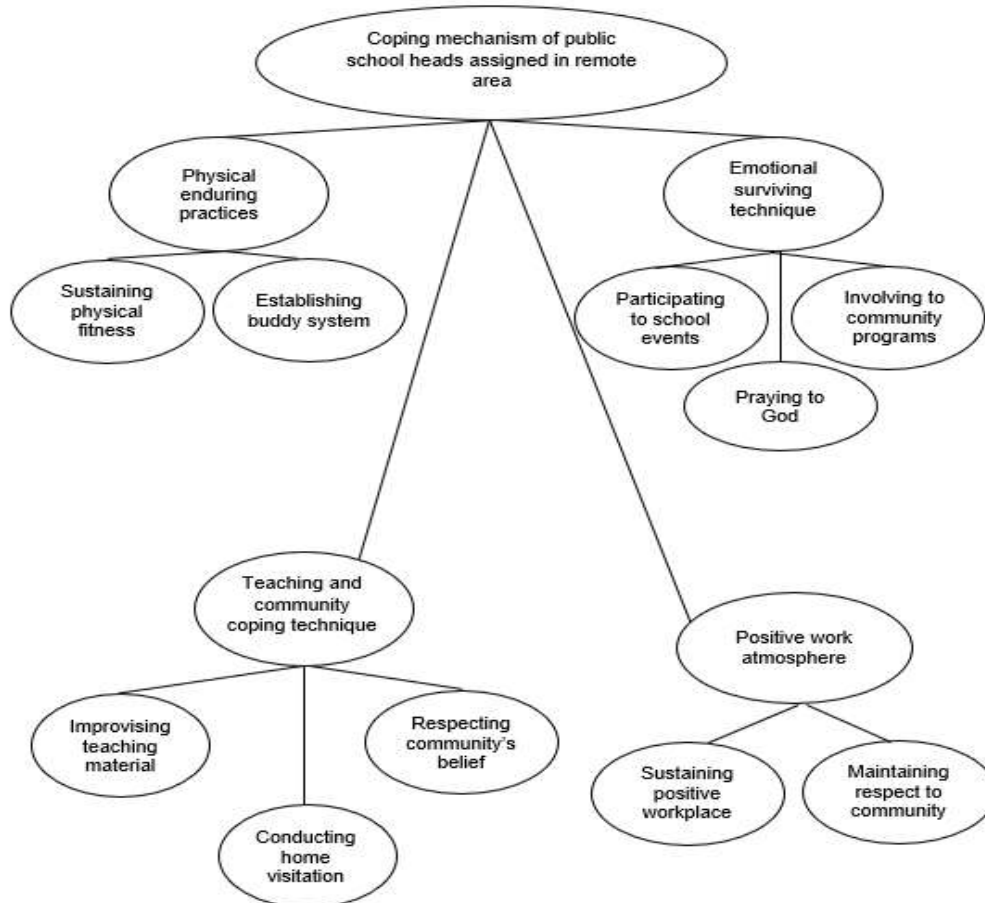

Figure 2. Coping Mechanism of Public School Head Assigned in Remote Area

Considering the four categories of the coping mechanism of public school heads assigned in remote area which are physical enduring practices, emotional enduring practices, teaching coping method, and positive work atmosphere.

Physical enduring practices
        The first category of coping mechanism of public – school heads assigned in remote area is sustaining physical fitness. Teaching is the noblest profession, as the adage says. We cannot deny the fact that this adage is affable because aside from nurturing students who are soon to be engineers, teachers, doctors and other professionals, school heads sacrifice and go extra miles just to teach students even those who are living in the remote areas and manage to find reasons and motivation to continue their service despite the physical conditions that they undertake.

Sustaining physical fitness. School heads assigned in remote area manage to maintain physical fitness. To cope with the different several physical challenges that they confront while reaching the school they were assigned, they should be physically fit.
        In their response, they mentioned how important physical fitness in order to cope with the physical challenges they encountered in reaching remote area. The physical activities they have done to be fit, includes daily exercise, and eating green leafy vegetables. The role of physical activity in general health and well-being of teachers should be important also, as it has been found that those teachers performing more exercise during leisure time, or in a more autonomous way, may prevent easier physical and mental health problems (Bogaert et al., 2014).

Establishing buddy system. School heads assigned in remote area cope their physical challenges encountered by establishing buddy system. A buddy system is a type of safety management practice in which individuals are paired or teamed up and given responsibility for ensuring each other's safety. It usually describes a mutual arrangement in which both parties are conducting the same hazardous work and have equal responsibility for each other's safety.
In the shared experience of these Participants, it can be construed that they use buddy system as their way to cope physical challenges while reaching their schools. Buddy system help them to feel safer as they travel from their school to their houses and vice versa. Cruz and Kwinta (2012) stated that the idea of promoting interaction through the "Buddy System" was based on the assumption that teachers could work well when they have someone to work on.
        Jochems, Kirschner, and Kreijns (2012), revealed that social interaction is important for establishing a social space in which a structure can be found that encompasses social relationships, group cohesion, trust and belonging, all of which contribute to open communication, critical thinking, supportive interaction, and social negotiation.

Emotional Surviving Technique.
The second category of the coping mechanism of public – school heads assigned in remote area is emotional surviving technique. School heads interact to everyone, workplace plays an important role in employee satisfaction, motivation, collaboration and coping strategy to all the challenges they encountered while they are serving remote area.

Participating to school events. One of the emotional coping technique of the school heads assigned in remote area in indulging into school events. Their participation to school events together with their students had helped them cope the emotional challenges they encountered. The bond that they had formed in the event eventually made them realized how important their roles as school heads in remote area.
        According to Suson et al. (2019), educational managers are the main administrators at educational institutions. The principal or school head is the most common type of educational managers. Whang (2021) stated that school heads have various areas of responsibilities including human resources, financial resources, educational activities of students and teachers, external relations, well-being of students and teachers, and teaching students.

Involving to community programs. Teachers play very important roles not just in a student's life but more so in the society in general. Accordingly, they are the assets of the community as they serve as living catalysts to uphold values, instill dignity, develop integrity and protect the rights to education of every individual. School heads in remote area engage to community programs and use that as coping mechanism. Moreover, this engagement led to develop better community relationship among school and parents.

Teaching and community coping technique.

The third category of the coping mechanism of public – school heads assigned in remote area is teaching and community coping technique. School heads never look at the scarcity of teaching resources as hindrance for them to deliver quality basic education. Despite the fact that these schools faced scarcity of instructional materials school heads still find time and transform deficiency into sufficiency in order to provide better quality education for the students. Moreover, school heads also conduct home visitation as one of their coping mechanism for students who faced multiple absences and find interventions to this problem.

Improvising teaching materials. Instructional materials are meant to stimulate learners' interest in the classroom for meaningful learning to take place. But this is at far for educators sent to remote area for they faced scarcity of instructional materials. Despite a scarcity of learning resources, teachers are devising new approaches to deliver the education that our students seek

The response of these participants is also the response of the participants I interviewed. In their experienced they shared that they became more innovative in order to produce quality education to remote students despite the challenge of scarcity of instructional resources. School heads also experienced some barriers in attaining effective education, such as insufficient resources, insufficient financial support, and parents' lack of interest in their children's education (du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Teachers need to live with the different barriers that they faced. Some of them even shared some of their resources for their students. They shared a portion of their salary to provide learning materials for their students (Castigador, 2019)

Conducting home visitation. Home visiting program is basically teachers visiting learners in their homes and talk with the parents to identify the problems why their child is no longer attending school. by doing home visitation, teachers gather more of the students' and family's background. Home visitation is one of the coping mechanisms that teachers used in order to know the reasons of students' failure to go so school.

Positive Work Atmosphere.

The fourth category on the coping mechanisms of the school heads assigned in remote area is a positive working environment. School heads always think that work environment can greatly influence how you feel about your job. This is also one of the reasons why they cope with a positive working atmosphere.

Sustaining positive workplace. School heads always strive to maintain positive workplace to bring happiness, increase productivity and motivation. In sustaining positive workplace, respect, trust, and cooperation is highly needed

The response of these participants is also the response of the other participants I interviewed. In their response they mentioned that their must be respect with each other in order to sustain positive workplace. Positivity in organizations accentuates that which is flourishing and life-giving to discover and promote the best of the human condition, exemplified in the recent focus on positive practices, behaviors that enhance positive affect in employees and lead to organizational performance (Geue, 2018).

Maintaining respect to community. School heads in remote area also value the community they served by maintaining respect on them as they also give respect and value to the teachers serving in the remote community.

Insights of Public – School Heads Assigned in Remote Area

Based on the experiences shared by the participants, it was revealed how challenging for school heads to be assigned in remote schools. From the moment they accept the job, they knew then that they will be out of their comfort zones. Despite the challenges encountered, these school heads manage to motivate their selves in order to bring quality basic education in order to cater everyone needs and in act the oath of the profession. Intentionally, this study seeks to ask the participants their insight that can be drawn from their experiences of the school heads assigned in remote area inter connected to third final themes of this study which is the Professional Realization, Social Realization, and Personal Realization.

Professional Realization

Many research revealed that Teaching is a high-stress profession, and many teachers are exposed to high levels of emotional distress at the workplace. How much more for school heads assigned in remote area. Borrowing the words of Quejada and Orale (2018) *"Teaching in a far-flung area is not easy, especially when you do not know who*

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you are with, the people, kind of pupils you will have, and location of the school. But I am here today in this field because I am called to touch millions of young minds, though it took miles away from my home, and it sometimes exceeds my expenses. There are instances I visited a lending company to sustain my weekly allowances. Everything is paid off every time my pupils learn from me and when I see some changes in their behaviors.” This vignette speaks of the present dilemma that school heads in remote area in society are facing. It is extremely difficult to be assigned in a remote school. Teachers would be confronted with a wide range of inconvenient modes of transportation. There have been several instances where teachers have not only committed their time but have also made self-sacrifices to fulfill their commitment to the delivery of learning.
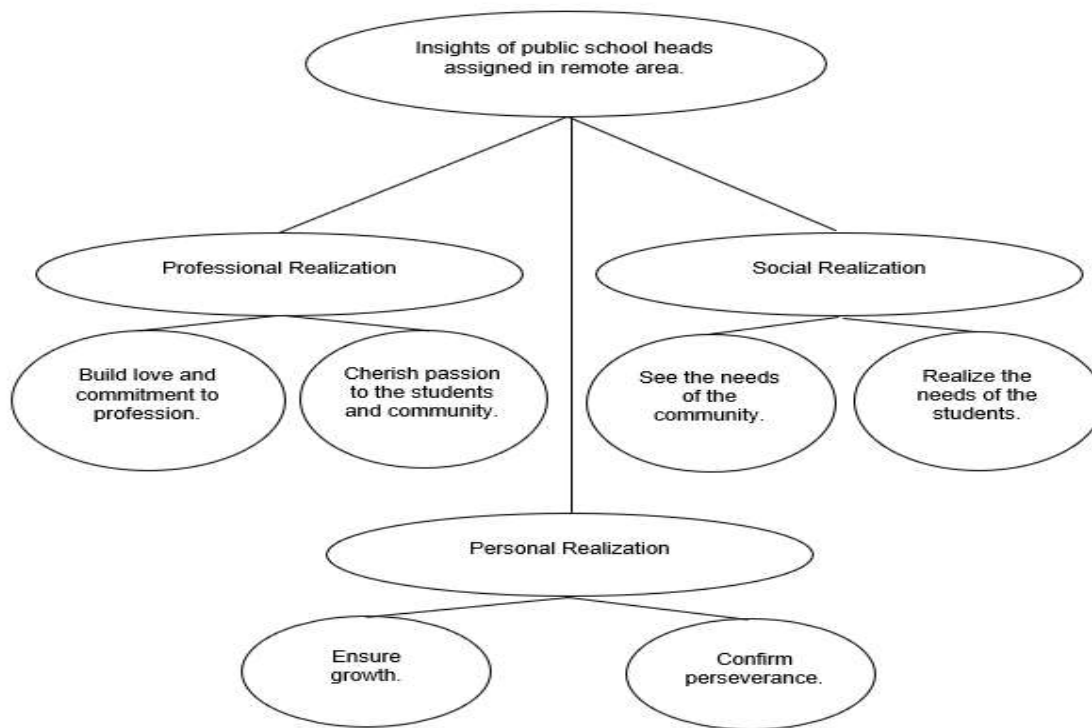

Figure 3. Insights of Public School Heads Assigned in Remote Area

Social Realization
The second major category presented in the insights of school heads assigned in remote area is social realization. To succeed the first thing to do is fall in love with your work. If you are in teaching profession, this means that you must be willing to go through along a period of preparation and continuing professional development. You must strive for excellence, commit yourself to moral, ethical and religious values and dedicate yourself to public service. It is our way of rendering service to humanity.

See the need of the community. One realization that the participants have on my interview is seeing the needs of the community. This implies that the community they are serving has high needs to quality basic education. The participants are able to sense that this community needs them and willing to support them in order to bring positive changes to the life of their children.

Conejos (2019) concluded in her study that the situation of teachers in mountainous schools is not easy. Teachers have adjustment and gratification of oneself but still have positive experiences. They also have encountered different experiences that made them become a better person and manifested the desire to stay and reach the poorest family in remote areas.

Realize the needs of the students. School heads assigned in remote area are able to see the needs of the students to access to quality education. This also infers that the students in their school are very eager to learn and at least acquire basic education

It can be construed from the response of the participant how he visibly saw the eagerness of the students in education. In his response he mentioned that the students will walk from their home to their classroom because these students put importance in education. Leadership in rural schools is multifaceted, place-conscious, and relationship-dependent; the needs and priorities of students, parents, and communities members require a leader who is knowledgeable about educational policies, yet receptive to the distinctive needs, perceptions, and culture of educational stakeholders of that rural community. Furthermore, because leadership in rural schools cannot be detached from the historical and social practices of the immediate community, rural principals must be able to nimbly mediate relations within the local community and the larger school system. The rural principal's ability to thrive under emotionally-charged, people-focused, school community conditions is critical to leadership success (Pashiardis, Savvides, Lytra, & Angelidous, 2011).

Personal Realization
The third major category presented in the insights of school heads assigned in remote area is personal realization. School heads assigned in remote area exerts effort to serve beyond the call of the profession. These school heads has served their respected institutions faithfully, and whole heartedly. In their service to education in far flung schools, they have gained personal realizations.

Ensure growth. Public – school heads assigned in remote area has attained personal growth. Their experiences both positive and negative gave them edge to develop a more profound views of their life in and outside the institutions they served. Positive experiences bring them joy and happiness while negative experiences provided them lessons on how to handle situations.

It can be inferred from the response of the participant that he attained personal growth because of his experience as school head in remote area. These experiences he has in far – flung area has mold him to be better in life. His undesirable experiences gave him lesson and made him grow. Richards and Farrell (2005) deemed teacher professional development as long-term personal growth that aids teachers' defining and making sense of their teaching practice and of themselves as individuals.

Bilbao (2012) considered that the varied experiences enable the school heads to realize the purpose of their job and life that would help spend passionately on teaching. The school heads are aware that these challenges are a means for them to be strong and better. Looking at the experiences of school heads in remote area, it can be described as paradoxical, a combination of challenging and fulfilling encounters. What made their experiences challenging are the distance and rugged road they need to travel, the state of the community, and the situations of the learners. On the other hand, they still find satisfaction in what they are doing because of the kindness shown by the people and fullfilment they feel accomplish their mission. Furthermore, I believed that it safe conclude that these school heads assigned in remote area possibly saw longer career lives in remote area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
This study aimed to describe the lived experiences of public – school heads assigned in remote area. The specific objectives aim to describe the challenges of public – school heads assigned in remote area and to draw out experiential realization of public – school heads assigned in remote area. To achieve these objectives, the study employed qualitative research design using phenomenological approach. Purposive sampling was used to identify the 12 interview participants of this study. They are public school heads who were assigned in remote are for more than five years. To ensure ethical standards, informed consent was accomplished. Data collection was with the aid of a researcher-made interview guide. Thematic coding was used in the analysis of the data from the interview transcription using Collaizzi method.

The analysis revealed that the experiences of public – school heads assigned in remote area were focused on physical discomforts, emotional discomforts, teaching adjustments, and work consolations. Discomforts tend to reveal the emotional and physical challenges of public – school heads while they are in their mission of providing quality education to students in remote area. Adjustments are the different ways a school heads experienced on their journey in remote area. And consolations are their positive experiences they have experienced in remote area.

Physical enduring practices, emotional surviving technique, teaching and community coping technique and positive work atmosphere are the major themes of the second objective. Physical enduring practices are the techniques they have to their selves to remain cope with the physical challenges. Emotional surviving technique is the ways of the school heads to survive on the emotional stress that they encountered. On the other hand, teaching and community coping technique are the methods they used to surpass on the difficulties they faced in teaching and the community they served. Lastly, positive work atmosphere is the way on how they maintain a favorable workplace, this involves the community, students, parents and their co – teachers. In general, this reveals the techniques of the school heads in order to overcome the hardship of bring education to remote area.

While, professional realizations, social realizations, and personal realizations were the last three major themes for the third objective. This shows the different challenges that they overcome and have inspired them to go on in managing school in remote area. On the other hand, positive experiences can be good vibes or can bring motivation to them who felt of failing on the goal of the school. Positive experience is a meaningful experience that everyone wants to look back or experiences from the past that would be standard of setting of your future decision.

IMPLICATIONS

The result suggested that teaching in remote schools define the true meaning of teacher's life. They are teachers who are considered as the richest in terms of experiences because of their commitment and passion to their chosen profession. Base from the findings of the study, the following implications are obtained:

Participants reported that they truly put their lives and the lives of their families on the line to pursue their chosen profession, which is to expand the gift of education wherever and whenever the opportunity arises. School heads are present in the community not only to educate the students, but also to act as living catalysts for upholding the values, integrity, and rights of all people. School heads may instill in the minds of their pupils the value of a good education, good values, and the possibility of converting a person into a useful member of society as they educate their pupils. As a result, teaching might be regarded a vocation that demands love and passion to succeed. It is not only the career that everyone wants to pursue to continue living in this world, but it is also a career that only a select few can achieve.

Trainings and seminars on managing remote schools should be given to school heads prior to assigning them to manage remote schools. When there is lack of skills and background on the life ahead as school head in remote area, the school head will find it hard to cope on the different challenges he might encountered. This may lead to a poor school management and or hesitations to continue their task. If proper trainings and seminars will be given, they already have insights on what to expect on the schools they will be handling. Most of the school heads assigned in remote area developed intrinsic motivation; this motivation includes their passion and dedication to serving schools. With all the challenges they encountered, they remain resilient and survive. Working together as a family will produce a school climate that endorses positive student outcomes.

Majority of the school heads in remote area expresses their desires and most of them chose to continue their journey in remote school. Even though they have encountered so many uncomfortable experiences. Their drive and passion in service, to the students, and to the community has greatly contributed for them to stay as school head in remote area. Indeed, there are lots of reasons for them to quit their job or chose to be transferred. But, their hearts desire to serve the remote community. For them, the experiences of serving a remote school and community have been personally and professionally rewarding and often life changing.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Based from the implications, future directions have been identified and are presented in this section.

Officials from Local Government Unit may direct the barangay to create an ordinance to cover safety and security of the teachers in terms of road signs, road clearing and assigned officials or barangay tanod within the school vicinity.

The officials of the Department of Education. Aside from a separate orientation for the school heads assigned to remote school for them to understand contextually the culture of the school, community, and the work load they might face, they should also be provided with necessary incentives such as additional hazard pay or accident insurance. In addition, a policy on wellness programs on both physical and mental health may be organized by the respective DepEd districts particularly for destressing of the teachers assigned in remote areas.

The results of this study may be of great help to school heads to look for a coping technique from seasoned school heads assigned in remote area. With this, they may adopt the coping styles and continue their task as school

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leader in remote area. In addition, they may upgrade their ways of managing the school in order to cope with the different challenges they encountered by partnering with non – government parties that may help them to abridge the scarcity of teaching materials they faced.

Apart from being the agent of change, teachers must continue their undying dedication to service to foster an ambiance of good teacher – student relationship despite the challenges encountered. They should also be more creative in presenting lesson to bring back students' interest in school most especially in far flung community.

The result of this study suggests that students should maintain their interest of going to school because teachers sacrifice their lives to bring quality education to the community they belong. In like manner, they should also preserve a high respect to the teachers assigned in their respective areas.

Lastly, for future researchers, aside from the literatures that can be consumed from this study, future researchers may conduct a quantitative study to determine the factors of the school heads wanted to stay in remote area. This would help the planning and research team of the division office to create a program that would incentivize the efforts of the school heads in remote area. In same way, this would also attract other school heads to remain in remote school despite of the challenges. Another qualitative research may also be done to further assess the needs of teachers from other far-flung areas.

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