

CHALLENGES IN ENHANCING THE CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOL-HEALTH ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: This study determined the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment, during face-to-face classes. The descriptive research method was used. The subjects of the study were the public elementary school teachers in Isabela City Island District 1. A questionnaire was the instrument used in this study. The findings of the study were: 1. The teachers considered the ‘challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes, as ‘Great’ challenges. 2. The public elementary school teachers considered as a ‘Very Great’ challenge ‘for their school to have a feeding program for malnourished children’ in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes.

Keywords: Challenges; Child Friendly School; Face-To-Face Classes; Health Environment; Health and Well-Being; Public Elementary School Teachers; Safe and Protective Spaces.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine government imposed on March 16, 2020 strict quarantine measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19. This disrupted the resumption of classes and forced the country to adopt alternative learning modalities, such as online classes and self-learning modules. Classes only opened on October 5, 2020 for grade school and high school students, while face-to-face classes are still prohibited (Manila Bulletin, 2021). On September 20, 2021, the Department of Education (DepEd) announced that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has approved the pilot implementation of limited face-to-face classes in low-risk areas (DepEd, 2021).

Recently, this policy was implemented in schools in the different parts of the country, especially those located in areas with low risk of COVID 19 infections. The public elementary schools in Isabela City Island School District 1 included in the plan later being in a low-risk area, as per Inter-Agency Task Force (AITF) Alert Level Metrics (Freeman, 2021).

The operational guidelines on the pilot implementation of the limited face-to-face learning modality prepared by DOH and DepEd with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), provide health and safety standards, and that their main concern focuses on children’s health (DepEd, 2021). That is, as defined in the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO, 1948) as cited by Svalastog, Donev, Kristoffersen and Gajović (2017), health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

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As a guide for the health-related assessment, the 'Child Friendly School (CFS) Model', laid out by UNICEF and adopted by DepEd, will be appropriate to utilize. The Child-Friendly School System Model has seven indicators which include children's health and well-being, and safe and protective spaces for children, which are dimensions of the school health environment (UNICEF, 2006).

Hence, this study to determine the challenges in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1 during face-to-face classes is essential in educational planning in the implementation of child-friendly school system.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study was conducted to determine the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes. Specifically, answered the following questions:

1. What is the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents, in terms of:
 - a. Gender;
 - b. Highest Educational Attainment; and
 - c. Experience?
2. To what extents are the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes, in terms of:
 - a. Health and Well-Being; and
 - b. Safe and Protective Spaces?

THE RESEARCH METHOD

This study sought to determine the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes. In describing the nature of the situation, as it exists at the time of the study, the descriptive method was appropriate to use. Thus, this study used the descriptive research design.

THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

When factual information is desired, a questionnaire is used when it gives an opportunity for establishing rapport, explaining the purpose of the study, and explaining the meaning of items (Best and Kahn, 1998). A two-part survey questionnaire was used in this study.

The first part drew information about the socio-demographic profile of the teachers, which includes: gender, highest educational attainment, and experience.

The second part of the questionnaire determined the extents of the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes, in terms of Health and Well-Being, and Safe and Protective Spaces.

THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument utilized in this study was subjected to a validity process thru a panel of three experts. An inter-item analysis generated a Cronbach's Alpha value that was referred against the DeVellis Reliability Guidelines (1991) in interpreting the Cronbach's Alpha value. This score fell in the "very good" scale category according to guidelines by DeVellis (1991).

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

To determine the extents of the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment, the Weighted Mean and Ranking were used.

III. THE EXTENTS OF THE CHALLENGES THAT WILL BE ENCOUNTERED BY THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ENHANCING THE CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOL-HEALTH ENVIRONMENT

Table 1 shows the summary of means, descriptions, and ranks of the ratings on the extents of the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes, in terms of Health and Well-Being, and Safe and Protective Spaces.

Table 1: Summary of Means, Descriptions, and Ranks of the Ratings on the Extents of the Challenges in Enhancing the Child Friendly School-Health Environment

DOMAIN	MEAN	DESCRIPTION	RANK
A. HEALTH AND WELL- BEING	3.77	Great Extent	2
B. SAFE AND PROTECTIVE SPACES	3.88	Great Extent	1
OVERALL	3.82	Great Extent	NA

The teachers considered all the domains as challenges to ‘Great’ extents. They are great challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, in preparation for face-to-face classes. These are as ranked:

1. Safe and Protective Spaces
2. Health And Well-Being

Overall, the teachers considered the challenges to ‘Great’ extents. They are great challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes.

The teachers considered the following as the top five (5) challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes:

1. For their school to have a feeding program for malnourished children.
2. For their classrooms to have proper ventilation and lighting, and enough space for the pupils to practice social distancing.
3. To consult, discuss, and confer with the school’s stakeholders (pupils/parents/employees/community/ government officials) on COVID-19 and health - related issues and concerns.
4. For their classrooms, facilities, and premises to be regularly maintained, kept clean, and sanitized.
5. For their school to practice proper waste disposal, especially used face masks, and other personal protective equipment (PPE).

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the hypothesis that the challenges that will be encountered by the public elementary school teachers in enhancing the child friendly school-health environment in Island District 1, during face-to-face classes, are to moderate extents, is rejected, on the basis that the teachers perceived to encounter them, to great extents.

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