

Quality of Work Life of Public Secondary School Teachers in Far-Flung Areas: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract: The primary goal of this mixed method study was to determine the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas using the convergent approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected, analyzed separately, and then merged. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to test whether the quality of work life of selected 400 public secondary school teachers using an adapted survey questionnaire differ when grouped according to age, sex, and length of service. Also, the quality of work life through their lived experiences were extracted from seven participants during the in-depth interview and ten for focus group discussion. Adapted survey questionnaires were given to a sample of 400 teachers from public secondary school teachers in the region. Results showed that the status of quality of work life was rated high in the quantitative phase; these were then merged and converged with responses in the qualitative phase as being expressed by teachers in far-flung areas. Moreover, the teachers in far-flung areas may participate in the intervention program, which is the output of this study, abbreviated as SHAS for Seminars, H for help from the LGUs and assistance from other stakeholders, and A for ask assistance from more experienced teachers to assist in trainings.

Keywords: education, far-flung areas, mixed methods, Philippines, quality of work life.

I. INTRODUCTION

The problematic issue of quality of work life has become critical in the last decades not only in business but also in many professions and fields (Akdere, 2016). Chaos, weariness, and resentment are common factors that create disappointment among teachers. Dissatisfaction with work life leads to underperformance (Walton, 2014). Ever since the concept quality of work life (QWL) was first used over 30 years ago, ranges of definitions and theoretical constructions have been proposed, mitigating the many problems facing this concept (Martel & Dupuis, 2016). Today, the problems of human societies, and consequently, the problems of organizations are increasingly more sophisticated, more extensive, and more diverse, and their solution requires a better and more holistic thinking (Zakerian, Abbasinia, Mohammadian, Fathi, Rahmani, Ahmadnezhad, & Asghari, 2014). Quality of work life (QWL) is a method by which a society answers to its personnel's needs for enhancing a device that enables them to give fully in creating decisions that design their life at the place of employment (Sivaramakrishna & Kannaji Rao, 2018).

The significance of quality of work life is to extend jobs and working conditions that are outstanding for teachers as well as for the economic strength of the organization. It refers to the level of motivation, satisfaction, commitment, involvement of employees appraising of the best performance of the employees as per organizational objectives which individuals experience with respect to their work (Garg, Agarwal, & Rastogi, 2017). An extraordinary quality of work life (QWL) is important for an organization to pursue attracting and retaining workers (Sandrick, 2016). The achievement of any corporation relies on how it magnetize, employs, inspires, and keeps its employees. Companies require to be more transparent to improve their skilled workers and their dedication. Therefore, companies are obliged to keep employees by

directing their work life problem (Kumar, 2015). With the exclusion principally of Japan, Asia has pointed out QWL to a far level compared to North America and Europe. In the Philippines, Executive Order 307 passed by the president on November 4, 1987 “Establishing the Occupational Safety and Health Center in the Employees’ Compensation Commission” as joint agency of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) exposing a wide range of challenges on employees’ health and safety needs in the workplace (Bagtasos, 2015).

The importance of this research is that the quality of work life withstands its social values from the fact that companies began concentrating on specific social obligations and understand that directing on profit alone is not enough to face the organizational problems. Enhancing in QWL is regarded as important because it influenced to organizational competence, assists to lessen employee’s undesirable behavior and is also demanded by justice and fairness. Furthermore, the termination of this social obligation by organizations does not simply indicate to some end but is an end in itself. Within this context this research aimed to discuss the quality of work life of teachers in far-flung areas. Although there is existing literature on the quality of work life, those studies were done only in a quantitative or qualitative manner. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are applied which makes it unique compared to other researches. I plan to present this study in an international conference so that teachers will be aware of the importance of quality of work life. This study encapsulates the different interventions of QWL considered in the past researches and the outcomes of those researches. This will provide a guide for future researches.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE

Research Questions:

The study was conducted to find out the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status of the QWL of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas?
2. Is there a significant difference in the QWL of public secondary school teachers when analyzed by sex, age, and length of service?
3. What are the lived experiences of public secondary school teachers on their QWL?
4. How does the grouping analysis define the experiences of public secondary school teachers on their quality of work life?
5. What results emerged from comparing the qualitative data with the quantitative data on QWL of public secondary school teachers?
6. What intervention scheme can be crafted from the results of the study?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant differences in the quality of work life when analyzed according to: sex, age, and length of service.

Methodology:

This chapter presents the research design, research locale, research participants, instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, sequence, emphasis, mixing procedures, figure of procedure, anticipated methodological issues, trustworthiness of the study and ethical consideration of this study.

Research Design:

This study utilized the mixed methods design in a research study specifically the convergent approach wherein a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches, viewpoints, data collection, analysis and inference techniques for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration of the study (Creswell, 2012; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Data Collection:

For the quantitative method, survey using an adapted questionnaire was employed while for the qualitative method, interview and focus group discussion was utilized using semi-structured interview guide.

Quantitative Strand

In collecting the quantitative data from 400 participants through survey questionnaires, the following steps were undertaken. After the approval of the panel members, the researcher sent a letter to the office of the DepEd Caraga Regional Director, asking his permission to conduct the study in the eleven schools divisions in the region. The said request was properly noted by the researcher's adviser. After the approval of the Regional Director, the letter was forwarded to the ten Schools Division Superintendent asking their permission to conduct a study on the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas.

Qualitative Strand

The researcher personally conducted among seven participants the IDI (in-depth interview) and 10 participants the FGD (focus group discussion). The interview started with a broad question and was followed by more specific ones. The interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim (Frost, 2011).

Trustworthiness of the Study:

Any research, whether quantitative or qualitative needs to test and show that their studies have validity and reliability. Even as validity and reliability are treated separately in quantitative researches, it is not so in qualitative inquiries. A term that covers both is used instead and term is trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003).

Ethical Consideration:

In the interest of ensuring that the ethical guidelines in conducting the research was observed, the researcher made use of Macleod's (2009) seven key principles of ethical research namely: informed and voluntary consent, respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality, minimization of risks, truthfulness, benefits, recruitment and the avoidance of conflict of interest.

Conclusion of Complete Research:**Status of Quality of Work Life of Public Secondary School Teachers**

In answer to Research Question No. 1 What is the status of the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers, the overall status of quality of work life is high, meaning, quality of work life is oftentimes manifested. This is revealed in all indicators namely, work environment, organization culture and climate, relation and cooperation, training and development, compensation and rewards, job satisfaction and job security, autonomy of work, and adequacy of resources.

Work Environment. The high level obtained under this indicator is indicative that the items in quality of work life are oftentimes manifested. This implies that teachers' work environment and working condition is good and highly motivating. This is facilitated by the school being able to provide enough information to discharge teachers' responsibilities. This finding is congruent with the statement of Knox and Irving (2018) which posited that good and motivating school work environment plays an important role in determining quality of work life. Condition of the work environment should be given more attention because it affects job performance towards the organization. In addition, Ahmad (2016) stressed that the core pillar of quality of work life is to create a work environment that employees can work cooperatively with each other in order to achieve to organization objectives.

Organization Culture and Climate. The high level obtained for this indicator was oftentimes seen in the teachers' cooperation among all the departments for achieving the goals. This is because teachers communicate every change that takes place. The result is similar with that of Martel and Dupuis (2016) who stressed that a model of quality of work life consists of a complex set of organizational interventions and a type of work life by employees.

Relation and Cooperation. The result on this indicator was high, due to the teachers' strong sense of belongingness in the organization, which was oftentimes manifested. This indicates that they have harmonious relationship with colleagues. The finding is congruent with the study of Hackman and Oldhams (2016) and Tiongson and Gempes (2018) who claimed

that reflective practice, teacher engagement, and relation and cooperation satisfy employees' personal needs and were considered to provide a positive interaction that leads to an excellent QWL. Furthermore, Walton (2014) indicated that social integration in the work organization corresponds to aspects of self-esteem and personal relationship, incorporating the sense of community, fellowship, social equality, social mobility, prejudice, and information exchange.

Training and Development. The high level response obtained for this indicator was attributed to the following items which were oftentimes manifested among them: feeling that the training programs should be conducted frequently, and the training program aiming at improving interpersonal relationship among employees. The finding is in consonance with the pronouncement of Scully, Kirkpatrick, and Locke (2015) who said that training and development and skill discretion have also proven to have a positive effect on job satisfaction and reduced job stress, leading to a better QWL; and with respect to learning, training and development enhances the acquisition and utilization of knowledge whilst greater participation is held to promote cognitive growth via increased knowledge transfer among employees (Davis, 1983).

Compensation and Rewards. The high level finding on this indicator implies that teachers' quality of work life was oftentimes manifested in that the school is doing a good job of linking rewards to job performance. The participants were also given an adequate and fair compensation for the work being done, and promotions were being handed fairly as well. This finding is congruent with the statement of Mirvis and Lawler (2014), said that compensation and rewards are motivational factors, the best performer is given the rewards, and this builds competition among the employees to work hard and achieve both organizational and individual goals.

Facilities. The high level response of the respondents in the context of facilities was attributed to the following items: good welfare activities and fringe benefits being provided by the school. In addition, the school adopts good safety measures and provides social security benefits like medical reimbursement while in service. These were often manifested and experienced by the respondents. The finding is similar to the result of the study of Walton (2014) and Fernandes, (1996) who found out that facilities and healthy working conditions reduce the risk of accidents and health problems.

Job Satisfaction and Job Security. The high level rating on this indicator means that the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers assigned in far-flung areas is oftentimes manifested. This suggests that the teachers are quite secured about the job. It also means that teachers are feeling comfortable and satisfied with the job. This is in relation to the articulation of Drobic and Prag (2010) who posited that permanent employment provides security to the employees and improves their quality of work life.

Autonomy of Work. The result means that the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers is oftentimes manifested. This signifies that teachers are ready to take additional responsibilities with the job. It also means that teachers are allowed to get work done at home. The finding confirms the study of Wang and Lee (2019) who expressed that employer increases employee's responsibility by allowing the employee to operate independently and to manage his/her own work. This psychological power raises job satisfaction and motivates an employee to do a better job.

Adequacy of Resources. The high response of the respondents was attributed to the following items: communication and information flowing among the departments being satisfactory, school providing resources to facilitate performance, and having well-defined channels for information exchange and transfer. The result means that teachers' quality of work life was oftentimes manifested. The result is aligned with the findings of Chelte (2016) who stated that adequacy of resources has to do with availability of sufficient time and equipment, adequate information and help to complete assignments.

Significance of the Difference on Teachers 'Quality of Work Life

In answer to Research Question No. 2 Is there a significant difference in the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas when respondents are grouped by sex, age, and length of service, the following are discussed:

When Analyzed by Sex. There is no significant difference in the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers when analyzed according to respondents' sex which implies that sex does not have any bearing with the performance of teachers. In other words, male and female groups are on equal footing in the manifestation of quality of work life measures. The result is inconsistent with the findings of the studies of Daskalova (2009) which reveal that culturally, men are in more privileged positions at work while women who are given less privileged positions were found to be committed

to the organization. This gender difference in experiences of quality of work life is most observed in the areas of autonomy, job satisfaction, supervisor support, and job security.

Likewise, this study is also incongruent with the study of Pugalendhi (2010) which divulged that there is a significant difference between male and female in terms of their perceptions of levels of quality of work life in the teaching environment. Males were found to be privileged in work areas than females. Also, in investigating the quality of work life between men and women, Rao (2009) found that there were significant higher composite qualities of working life scores for men than for women employees. Men employees have significantly higher scores for the items opportunity to learn their skills, challenge in job, and discretionary elements in works. Gabr (2017) also reports a conflicting observation citing that in the Arab world, because of gender roles imposed and expected on people in the workplace, women's potential for self-actualization is met with varied social and personal barriers. The possibility of a woman achieving work life balance is hampered by the cultural expectations imposed on her. However, equality on gender was found in the study of Royuela, Lopez-Tamayo and Surinach (2008) on the quality of work life of the university teaching employees.

When Analyzed by Age. There is a significant difference in the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers when analyzed according to age implying that age really has bearing on the performance of teachers. Compared to the younger group, the older group aged 41 and above had had more training programs in school which helped them achieve the required skill for performing the job effectively. Likewise, these training programs contributed to an improved interpersonal relationship among teachers and staff.

This result relates to the study of Bhavani and Jegadeeshwaran (2014), which concluded that the respondents belonging to different age groups differ in their experience and opinion on quality of work life. Also, Sivarethinamohan (2012) found out that there is significant association between the respondent's age and various dimensions of overall quality of work life. The study of Richert-Kaźmierska and Stankiewicz (2016) reported that older employees tend to be more able to maintain work life balance. They claim that there are no equal opportunities among workers of varying age groups to enjoy work environment changes employed to make sure work life balance is achieved by all. The present study's findings, however contradict this. There is a significant difference in the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers when analyzed according to age implying that age really has bearing on the performance of teachers. Compared to the younger group, the older group aged 41 and above had had more training programs in school which helped them achieve the required skill for performing the job effectively. Likewise, these training programs contributed to an improved interpersonal relationship among teachers and staff. This result relates to the study of Bhavani and Jegadeeshwaran (2014), which concluded that the respondents belonging to different age groups differ in their experience and opinion on quality of work life. Also, Sivarethinamohan (2012) found out that there is significant association between the respondent's age and various dimensions of overall quality of work life. The study of Richert-Kaźmierska and Stankiewicz (2016) reported that older employees tend to be more able to maintain work life balance. They claim that there are no equal opportunities among workers of varying age groups to enjoy work environment changes employed to make sure work life balance is achieved by all. The present study's findings, however contradict this.

When Analyzed by Length of Service. There is no significant difference in the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers when analyzed according to length of service. This implies that the number of years a teacher has spent in service has no bearing on the quality of his or her work life; meaning, those with longer number of years in service and those with less are on equal footing in terms of chances of living a work life with quality. Furthermore, this means that work environment, culture and climate, relation and cooperation, and such other indicators of quality work life are not necessarily tempered or improved as teachers stay longer in the service. This result runs counter with the pronouncement of Schon (2013) that novice teachers need to learn their practice consciously, while avoiding cognitive overload (Abad, 2006). Moreover, Merkt (2016) emphasized that it is empirically proven that academic teaching skills require longer periods of time to develop.

Lived Experiences of Public Secondary School Teachers on their Quality of Work Life: A Priori and Emerging Themes

In answer to Research Question No. 3, What are the lived experiences of secondary school teachers on their quality of work life, the following discussion is presented. Based on the responses of the ten participants of focus group discussion and the seven of in-depth interview, the following themes emerged: self-fulfillment; personal privation; work

environment; relation and cooperation, facilities, job satisfaction & job security, autonomy of work; and adequacy of resources. The first two themes were emergent while the last six were a priori.

Self-Fulfillment. This emergent theme is borne from the testimonies of teachers who expressed that even amidst challenging work environment and homesickness being assigned in the far-flung areas, they were happy because students of diverse orientations and culture were eager to learn from them and were proud they were their teachers. To impart knowledge and to see their students learning was reward enough for them. In addition, the participants who had each other found delight in being respected and given high regard by the people in the community.

The finding is aligned with Walton (2014) who observed that fulfillment of self-springs not only from meeting physiological needs but more so from social integration in the work organization. This corresponds to aspects of self-esteem and personal relationship, incorporating the sense of community, fellowship, and information exchange. In line with this, Singhal (2014) pronounces that quality of work life stems from meaning people in an organization or community find from living together harmoniously with their social needs satisfied (Costelo & Sang, 2014).

These meaningful and interesting experiences of teachers had helped create for them a work environment that helps them find some quality in their work life. Ahmad (2016) and Sirgy et al. (2016) stressed that the core pillar of quality of work life was to create a work environment that employees can meaningfully and cooperatively work with each other in order to achieve organization objectives which includes programs related to the work environment which in this context includes ethical corporate culture, decentralized organizational structures, and teamwork.

Personal Privation. This second emergent theme reveals that participants assigned in far-flung barrios found themselves not having the essentials for human well-being. Aside from the fact that they were far from the markets and malls for their food and daily needs, they felt deprived of physical time with loved ones and/or contact with loved ones due to poor network signal. These teachers revealed they have less time for their kids and miss important family events. Likewise, participants found it more difficult to be assigned in the barrios since travel is risky and bad roads cause body aches. Also, teachers were affected and had feelings of being disconnected from the base so that feelings of being outdated on new department orders, division memoranda, and events due to late arrival of notices overtake them. When sick, no one takes care of them while in the area of service.

This finding is aligned with the studies of Kumar and Deo (2014), Kaur (2010) and Tambe (2017) which found out that stress related to work can cause job anxiety making it difficult to achieve quality work life and balance of work and personal life. According to them, more privation had been experienced in the areas related to teachers' professional and personal growth where teachers are deprived of quality of work life enjoyed by teachers who are supposed to be the change agents in the society.

Work Environment. Under this a priori theme, it was found out that participants admitted hardships in the work environment. Work area was too far from their residences so they had to sacrifice seeing their family on a weekly or monthly basis. Their work place is critical, and safety and security issues are a concern. On top of that, travel is risky and expensive and getting to school whisked them into classrooms (if there were any) that were shabby and in poor condition. Culture was different and students speak different dialects or even language, too. All these seemed to the teachers the opposite of what they expected and dreamed of their work places. The challenge was for them to make do with whatever was available and/or come up with things essential for both teachers and students so as to carry on their teaching responsibilities. This also implies that they had to learn the language of the community to be able to discharge of their duties efficiently. The only thing that they felt lucky about in their assigned station was the amazing ambiance of nature.

All employees are found to have issues with their work environment of whatever kind according to the study of Robak and Słocińska (2015) supporting this present study. Robak and Słocinska (2015) argue that the desire of acquiring a quality work life should propel each worker to take good care of the work environment in order to benefit the self, the fellow workers, and the organization.

Similarly, the study of Fapohunda (2014) showed that workers experience all sorts of hardships in their work environment affecting the quality of their work life. However, the trend is that measures are implemented to facilitate quality work life by creating options and necessary arrangements and make these available on a customized and personalized manner such

that workers will be able to spend more time with the family and self. This is made possible nowadays on a flexible working arrangement.

This finding is likewise congruent with the statement of Knox and Irving (2018) which posited that good and motivating school work environment plays an important role in determining quality of work life. Condition of the work environment should be given more attention because it affects job performance towards achieving the goals of the organization

Relation and Cooperation. Under this next a priori theme, the participants disclosed people in the community were fun to be with. The participants enjoyed the simplicity of the people around and the generosity of students bringing whatever produce they have from their farms while many times teachers also had to resort to cooking root crops for everyone's lunch. This was to encourage children to be in school even if they had nothing for subsistence, especially when harvest time was still months away. Sometimes their hearts melt when parents bring them farm produce like fruits and vegetables. Working with less privileged but cooperative and supportive parents in Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) project implementation was one other area that brought them joy and made the teachers more enthusiastic at helping the school community as much as they can. At the end of the day, the teachers declared they love living a simple life in the area with down to earth people and a less expensive life style, having fun with fellow teachers especially in special school events and finding delight in meeting with community people who were hospitable and worthy of trust.

The finding finds bearing in the study conducted by Khan, Ara, and Bhat (2016) with results showing that quality of work life is correlated with the healthy interrelationship of the employers and employees at work which contributes to making quality the work life. Katzell (2015) and Sharma and Sharma (2017) observe that this quality work life which springs from positive feelings towards job, positive attitude towards colleagues and the stakeholders points to the success of the organization. It is then possible that work life fits well with private life to afford a worker the balance between the two in terms of personal values.

Facilities. Another a priori theme is facilities which was brought about by the responses of participants who revealed that work life in the far-flung area of service is very challenging. Often, the only means of transportation is a single motorbike cab locally called "habal-habal" which is very risky to take especially during rainy days. At other times, a horse ride is a treat. This is far from the ideal that the school is to provide good transportation facilities. Meanwhile, some work areas do not have potable water, making the teachers more vulnerable of contracting water-borne diseases and causing them to spend more for safe water. Many times, teachers had to live in simple houses in the community which rarely offered comfort and safety away from home. Sometimes, though, a bunk house within the school facility was made available for teachers. In addition, participants revealed that interaction in the teaching and learning is hampered by the lack of functional classrooms thus affecting performance. If there were classrooms, they were too small for everyone to work about. There was also no internet access.

The results of the study of Nigade and Bhola (2014) are similar with the present findings bearing that workers' level of quality of work life is significantly low as they are more vulnerable to poor working conditions and exploitative working environment resulting to low level quality of work life and low level quality of life.

In the same vein, Hyde (2009) observes that poor working conditions and facilities cause workers stress although for different reasons per worker; thus, lowering the quality of work life. The poor and inconvenient facilities render workers vulnerable to additional stress and fatigue especially because of the multiple roles they have at work and the kind of responsibilities they have in the home.

Job Satisfaction and Job Security. This third a priori theme was noted from the responses of teachers, revealing that despite the hardships, the scarcity and privation of the essentials in the work place, they confessed they were happy about being secure in their job. They also confessed that their salary in the public school is very reasonable as compared to how much they would likely receive teaching in private schools. Aside from this, they felt that they are secured about their teaching job in the public school with economic advantage, comfort and satisfaction regardless of the work area they were assigned at the moment. This implies they desired to be transferred to public school in their locality to be close to their respective family. The other side of the job satisfaction emanates from the joy they had when they see students enthusiastic about their studies. Teaching became fulfilling when students learn and are promoted to the next grade level revealing it was all worth the sacrifice and risks when they see their students learning a lot from them and their teachings.

Maslow's hierarchy of fundamental needs, proposed in 1943, is the epitome of this present finding. Safety and security needs, including safety and job security, employment, resources, and property is listed in the pyramid of needs next to physiological needs. Meeting these basic needs would help the teachers satisfy psychological needs of job satisfaction and job security in order to achieve quality work life.

This finding is congruent with the study of Walton (1973) and Fernandes (1996) which posited that opportunity for growth and security is related to the opportunity for professional growth, as well as security and job stability. The former is associated with development of capacity and knowledge, ascension opportunity for worker and the possibility to use new knowledge and skills. In the same view, Lewis, Brazil, Krueger, Lohfeld, and Tjam (2016) believe that supervisory practices along with wages and benefits are the key factors in employees' satisfaction. QWL has also been found to have a direct impact on human outcomes as it develops working conditions for people (Kanagalakshmi & Deveî, 2016), significantly minimizes absenteeism (Havlovic, 1991), decreases employee turnover and improves quality of professional life (Ruzevicius, 2020).

This finding is also related to the findings of the study of Bocheche and Bosire (2018) among public secondary school teachers' job satisfaction in Kenya. The result shows that job satisfaction and job security is a globally important factor in determining quality of work life brought about by organizational climate and subsequent worker productivity while job dissatisfaction evidenced by teacher burnout and the strikes had become a major concern.

Autonomy of Work. The fourth a priori theme showed teachers assigned in the boondocks had more opportunities to use their skills and abilities to create an inspiring learning environment for their less privileged students and for themselves who were somehow deprived of some comfort and human essentials in their work areas. Because of this, teachers had grown to be more creative and innovative in their daily undertakings. When there were no chairs for children to sit on, male teachers made them benches out of available sticks. Back pages of calendar magazines were used as notepads for drawing and writing of notes. They have become more imaginative, artistic, and original. Their classroom sometimes is nature around them and with a community diverse in culture, the young participants found joy and pride in displaying their multilingual skills in communicating with students and community. Teachers turned artists in their effort to capture the interests of students with diverse culture and language. Finally, teachers especially the males were ready to take additional responsibilities with the job. They become automatic carpenters, or plumbers or electricians.

In consonance with the work of Rethinam (2018), this finding describing the situation of teachers and their need for quality work life in the remote areas echoes the autonomy needed by workers such as teachers for that matter, similar with the results of Rethinam's (2018) study. He proclaims that in certain situations and autonomous work groups, employees are given the freedom of decision making, planning, coordinating and controlling work related activities. If the organization provides the appropriate authority to design work activities to the individual employees, then it is highly possible that the work activities can match their employees' needs that contribute to the organizational performance. In like manner, the participants had in their hands some degree of autonomy and freedom in deciding what needs to be done, how to do things in the midst of scarcity and least or no physical monitoring at all from the district.

The job becomes more enjoyable according to Rethinam (2018) if such freedom is given to the employees while exercising their duties. When autonomy is at play it intrinsically motivates and becomes the strongest predictor of overall job satisfaction. The activities related to autonomy are something not enforced by the external environment, but rather performed out of interest according to the same author.

Nguyen, Taylor, and Bradley (2003) as cited by Cabrita & Perista, 2016) claim that employees' job satisfaction is related to autonomy in the workplace, and, in return, job autonomy raises employees' job satisfaction. Employees who can manage their own work, for example, set the pace of work or working hours, are more satisfied than those whose autonomy is limited (Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Survey, 2015). De Carlo and Agarwal (2019) add that more autonomy in the work place increases employee's responsibility. In other words, the more independently an employee can work, the more he/she associates his/her efforts with an overall work outcome

The finding also confirms the study of Rick and Salokangas (2018) which claims that teachers in Germany and Sweden value autonomy in various domains and dimensions though in different areas but with many similarities. In instruction, that is, the educational autonomy domain, they perceive themselves to be very autonomous, in particular in relation to

choices of content and method. They added that autonomous work in the classroom arena is also seen as the very core of the teaching profession. Overall, male German teachers perceive themselves to be significantly involved in more areas of their work, and they refer much more to decisions which are to be made. This is quality of work life in teaching.

Adequacy of Resources. The final a priori theme culled from the responses of the participants divulged that in the desire of helping students achieve quality learning that results from quality teaching, teachers found it difficult to provide the necessary learning resources because the chance of acquiring and providing them is limited. Since there were no shops and malls around, teachers make do with what they can find locally and maximize their use. Teachers when able to go down from the mountains gather whatever used learning materials and books they can get from friends and generous donors. Learning resources, too, either soft or hard were very limited. Sometimes, because of their enormous distance from the division office, teachers miss out on latest updates and activities. This situation somehow lessens the quality work life of teachers assigned in the remotest areas in terms of adequacy of resources.

The result is related to the statement of Adeogun and Osifila (2004) that every organization is established to accomplish predetermined goals and objectives which cannot be realized in a vacuum. One of the fundamental conditions for effective realization of a school organizational goal is the adequate provision of educational resources. With the rapid increase in the number of schools at almost every level of the educational system, and given the limited financial, human, material and physical resources, the concern of educationists, lay citizens, government agencies and international bodies has been with the quality of education being offered in these institutions.

Moreover, Lewis et al. (2017) posited that resources should match with stated objectives otherwise, employees will not be able to attain the end result. This results in employee dissatisfaction and lowers quality work life of teachers.

Quality of Work Life in the Context of Sex, Age and Length of Service

In answer to Research Question No 4 How does the grouping analysis define the experiences of public secondary school teachers on their quality of work life, a detailed treatment is hereby presented.

When grouped by Sex. The experiences on the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers assigned in the far-flung areas in the contexts of work environment, relation and cooperation, facilities, and job satisfaction and job security when participants were grouped in terms of sex showed that both male and female participants oftentimes manifested the items in quality of work life. This implies that male and female groups do not differ in implementing measures to establish quality of work life confirming the result in Table 2. It was found out that both male and female participants, both the young and old groups, and both old and new in service were all at par in admitting hardships in the work environment. Area is too far, place is critical, travel is risky and expensive, classrooms are shabby and in poor condition, and culture is different.

Regardless of sex, all employees are found to have issues with their work environment of whatever kind according to the study of Robak and Słocińska (2015) confirming this present study. Robak and Slocinska (2015) argue that the desire of acquiring a quality work life should propel each worker, male or female to take good care of the work environment in order to benefit the self, the fellow workers, and the organization.

Similarly, the study of Fapohunda (2014) which showed that both male and female equally expressed they experience hardships in their work life. To facilitate quality work life, options and necessary arrangements were made available on a customized and personalized manner such that men were encouraged to spend more time with the family while women can avail of flexible working arrangement.

This does not relate with the studies of Swapna (2015) who suggested that companies shall frame HR policies based on the gender, so that a good QWL can be established to enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment. He found that the higher age group showed higher status of QWL, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. He also concluded that there exists a significant difference on the work experience level and their perception towards QWL, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

When Grouped by Age. When participants were grouped by age, the different sides of training and development confirm the results in Table 3. This indicates that the older group of 41 years old and above had attended more training programs

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in school than those of age 26-30. These trainings helped the participants achieve the required skill in order for them to perform efficiently and to develop interpersonal skills.

Young and old participants were on par in claiming that they enjoy the generosity of students and sometimes parents bring them farm produce like fruits and vegetables. The finding is borne in the study conducted by Khan, Ara, and Bhat (2016) with results that show that quality of work life is correlated with the healthy interrelationship of the employers and employees at work no matter the age. This quality work life results to success of the organization.

The study of Bhavani and Jegadeeshwaran (2014) concluded that the respondents belonging to different age groups differ in their opinion and experiences on quality of work life.

When Grouped by Length of Service. The experiences of the participants that define the quality of their work life in the contexts of autonomy of work and adequacy of resources reveal that both the new in service and the older counterparts were on the same level when analyzed in terms of length of service as confirmed in Table 4. Both groups were in agreement that their teaching job challenges them to use their skills and abilities. Likewise, both new and old in service confirmed their teaching job in the far-flung areas is quite stressful. Finally, both groups of new and old in service confessed that they feel their earnings were way reasonable when compared to others who are teachers in private schools.

However, participants new in the service were found to be more artistic than those already old. Teachers new in service quickly blended and turned artists in their effort to capture the interests of students with diverse culture and language.

The findings of Merkt (2016) emphasized that it is empirically proven that academic teaching skills require longer periods of time to develop. This is why training sessions based on methodology alone are less sustainable because they are limited to the teacher's performance. In addition, Schon (2013) articulated that novice teachers need to learn their practice consciously, while avoiding cognitive overload. On the other hand, the research of Tabassum (2012) concluded that teaching experience of less than one year is more positive about their QWL and its related dimensions compared to experienced teachers.

Data Integration of Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In answer to Research Question No 5 What results emerged from comparing the quantitative and qualitative data on the status of quality work life of secondary teachers, the following salient findings are drawn. Six indicators in the quantitative strand emerged as a priori themes in the qualitative strand. Self-fulfillment and personal privation were two themes that surfaced in addition to the a priori themes. In the area of status of QWL of public secondary school teachers, the nature of data integration is first, merging-expansion. In the convergent mixed methods, the process of data integration is generally merging since the two databases are brought together for analysis (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013).

Meanwhile expansion occurs when the findings from the two sources of data diverge and expand insights of the phenomenon of interest by addressing different aspects of a single phenomenon or by describing complementary aspects of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). These themes which surface illustrate difference, yet have non-conflicting interpretations (Fetters et al., 2013).

In this study, the expansion is shown in the emerging theme of self-fulfillment borne out of the experiences of the participants seeing their rural students learning happily from them despite simplicity and scarcity in life, in addition to the respect and high regard paid them by the community. These were some of the things that helped them find fulfillment as teachers in the far-flung barrios even against the backdrop of personal privation, the other emerging theme. Things essential for human beings were scarce and lacking.

The expansion may have resulted from the unimproved process of establishing the interview questions, and possibly from the way the core ideas were collated and placed under major themes. Some core ideas highlighting the themes that surfaced may be construed as overlaps with some a priori themes like self-fulfillment with job satisfaction although in essence they are entirely different.

The second nature of data integration in the area of status of QWL is merging-confirmation. Confirmation occurs when the findings from both data confirm and validate each other (Fetters, et al, 2013). Confirmation is seen in the high level of QWL which was oftentimes manifested in good relationship of participants with the community highlighting relation and

cooperation, and their earnings being fair when compared to other teachers highlighting job satisfaction. Participants also resorted to using acting skills and multilingual ability to connect with diverse students highlighting autonomy of work implying strong manifestation of teachers' quality of work life.

The researcher believes that amidst the not so comfortable nor ideal teaching environment and situation, having their personal and family needs satisfactorily met through their teaching job, in addition to being able to express themselves by helping children in the far-flung communities—these perspectives were arrived at by the participants and reflected in their responses and confirmed in the interviews given.

Merging-discordance is the third nature of data integration in the area of the status of QWL. Conflicting interpretations known as discordance occurs if the quantitative and qualitative findings are inconsistent, contradict, conflict, or disagree with each other (Fetters et al., 2013; Molina-Azorin, 2017). Facilities, work environment, and inadequacy of resources were undesirable experiences which contradicted the high level result of these indicators in the quantitative strand indicating quality work life which is oftentimes experienced. The discordance may be traced from idiosyncratic perspectives of the QWL of teachers. What may be satisfactory work life to one may not be to another, and vice versa. Likewise, it is possible that self-report is an issue in responding to survey questionnaire where the participants have different ways of interpreting questions and scales and some responses may not be as nuanced.

In the area of significant difference of QWL the first nature of data integration was confirmation when sex, and length of service were used as the grouping variables. Quantitative data revealed that male and female participants, whether new or old in the service were given a lot of work empowerment to decide about own style and pace of work (code bearing work environment), having a harmonious relationship with colleagues and a strong sense of belongingness (codes connected to relation and cooperation), and felt comfortable and satisfied with the job (code highlighting job satisfaction and security). Qualitative findings confirmed these quantitative results as demonstrated by how these results were bear out the a priori themes of work environment, relation and cooperation, and job satisfaction and security.

It may be argued that work environment, relation and cooperation, job satisfaction and security were the most common grounds and are on top of the list in defining the quality of work life of teachers (male and female, new or old in the service) assigned away from places of their residences. This may be the reason that responses were always validating and confirming whether responding to a survey or giving an interview.

Discordance is the second nature of data integration found still in the area of significant difference in the grouping variables of sex and length of service. This is exhibited in the fact that males were more active than females in taking additional responsibility; their job lets them use skills and abilities (codes bearing context of autonomy of work). Also, males more than female participants were more vocal in expressing desire for school to provide them resources to facilitate performance (highlighting adequacy of resources). These are incongruent to the quantitative results of no significant difference.

The incongruous result may be due to the fact that generally by nature, males can easily adapt to a more challenging physical environment as compared to their female counterparts. In such tough work environments, males seem to be more useful than their female counterparts in doing things to better the poor physical conditions of their school. Climbing mountains and fetching water from the river and the like are tasks that may be are for them than for the ladies. To put up with a number of kilometers of hiking or take long rides in motorbikes through bumpy dirt roads to get to their workplaces may be too difficult to female teachers but will just be bearable to males. Also, teachers who are mothers may be too vulnerable to homesickness compared to male teachers. Finally, those new in the service were found to be more critical and vocal in expressing dissatisfaction regarding a poor school environment in the far-flung areas as compared to their older counterparts in the service who had been in the circumstance for years and perhaps were now able to accept realities of work life of teachers in the barrios.

The final salient finding in the area of significance of the QWL is a confirmation. Survey revealed that there was a significant difference in the QWL when respondents were grouped by age since different sides were disclosed in the context of training and development. This result was validated by the qualitative narratives disclosing that training programs helped them a lot in achieving the required skills for performing their teaching job effectively. The participants also revealed they have improved interpersonal relationship among colleagues through these programs. Both experiences

highlight the context of training and development. Anent to this, it was found out that the older participants have more experiences in training than their counterparts who were new in service. This confirmation may be seen in the fact that whether assigned in the lowlands or in the highlands, generally, more trainings for development will be experienced by teachers who have been serving for quite some time than those new in the service.

Intervention Design

Qualitative data are collected primarily to support the development of the intervention, to understand contextual factors during the intervention that could affect the outcome, and/or explain results after the intervention is completed (Creswell et al., 2003; Lewen, Glenton, & Oxman, 2009). The intervention program proposed in this study is labeled as “SHA-Seminars, Help, and Assist.” This is based on the issues gathered during the conduct of the study which garnered the lowest mean. These items are enumerated herein:

Being discriminated against on the job because of gender has a mean of 1.51 which is to be intervened with S which represents seminar and related trainings to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers regarding gender discrimination designed by education supervisors during the first year of teaching. Good transportation facilities being provided by the school with a mean of 2.51 is to be intervened with H which represents for help from the LGUs and other stakeholders for budget allocation for road maintenance. This is a partnership program for LGUs and the Department of Education.

Work being quite stressful with a mean of 3.45 which is to be intervened with A which represents ask more experienced teachers to assist in trainings like provide external access to education and hold regular meetings to discuss problems and other concerns. This is the work of the principal to the teachers during the first year of teaching. This is aligned with the findings of Reichert (2007) who emphasized that teachers determine the intervention’s effectiveness based on personal experience, advice given by other teachers, or having observed intervention in the classroom. These experiences support teacher’s choices of which interventions will be effective for them. Without these experiences, a teacher may be less inclined to use an intervention. The result of intervention design conformed to the study of White and Gunstone (2014) who stressed that improved teacher content knowledge helps expand their range of teaching practices. They added that if the teacher is poor, then his/her classroom practice is limited to lectures taken directly from the texts and demonstrations of solutions of standard quantitative problem.

Implication for Educational Practice

The result of the study may serve as lens to the top educators of crafting policies that would continuously improve the quality of educational system in the Philippines specifically the public secondary high school in far-flung areas. This is also important to the education supervisors who are in-charge of different learning areas to make it effective for all the students as their stepping stone of planning their future career. This study may be used as guide of the school leaders to select seminars and trainings appropriate not only to public junior high school teachers but to senior high school teachers as well. The intervention program crafted from the results of the study may bring encouragement for public junior high school teachers in far-flung areas to plan their professional development to attain the highest level of pedagogical competence as teachers. The results on data integration of quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas imply two important issues. On the status of quality of work life of public secondary school teachers, the finding implies that learners’ capabilities are essentials for the teacher to identify to devise curriculum and appropriate strategies. Furthermore, on the significance of the difference of QWL in terms of sex, age, and length of service, the integrated data indicates that teachers’ experiences are contributory for learning improvement as far as teaching is concerned

III. CONCLUSION

Based from the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section:

Level of quality of work life of public secondary school teachers. The quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far flung areas is oftentimes manifested. Specifically, the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers is oftentimes manifested for the nine indicators work environment, organization culture and climate, relation and cooperation, training and development, compensation and rewards, facilities, job satisfaction and job security, autonomy

of work, and adequacy of resources. This confirms the Herzberg theory of Ford (1966), Paul, Robertson, & Herzberg, (1969) which specifies that a job will enhance work motivation and satisfaction only to the degree that "motivators" are designed into the work itself. Changes that deal solely with "hygiene" factors should not lead to increase in employee motivation.

Significant Difference on Teacher's Quality of Work Life. There is no significant difference of teachers' quality of work life when analyzed by sex and length of service. However, there is significant difference on the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers when analyzed according to their age. These findings confirm to the job characteristic theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) which describes the relationship between job characteristics and individual responses to work. The theory specifies the task condition in which individuals are predicted to prosper in their work and mentioned that conceptual elements of QWL in relation to the association for work environment and employees personal needs.

Experiences of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas. Eight essential themes emerged from the responses: self-fulfillment, personal privation, work environment, relation and cooperation, facilities, job satisfaction, autonomy of work, and adequacy of resources.

Quality of Work Life in the Context of Sex, Age and Length of Service. Experiences of the informants/participants on QWL in the context of work environment, relation and cooperation, facilities and job satisfaction and security analyzed in terms of sex are on the same ground. The different sides of autonomy of work and adequacy of resources when analyzed by age confirm the results as to the significant difference in terms of age. The older group have more experiences than the younger group. Experiences of the informants/participants on QWL in the context of autonomy of work and adequacy of resources reveal different sides in terms of length of service contrary to the quantitative results of no significant difference. Male and those new in service exhibit more experiences than their female counterparts and those with longer service.

Data Integration of Salient Quantitative and Qualitative Results. It is concluded that the quality of work life of public secondary school teachers in far-flung areas is rated as high in quantitative findings which obtained similar responses in qualitative findings except facilities, work environment, and adequacy of resources which indicated undesirable experiences which contradict the high level of results of these indicators. Experiences of the participants on QWL in the context of autonomy of work and adequacy of resources reveal different sides in terms of sex and length of service contrary to the quantitative results of no significant difference.

Intervention Program. The intervention scheme offered is based on the three intervention programs from the acronym SHA- S for seminars and trainings; H for help from the LGUs and other stakeholders; and A for ask for assistance to more experienced teachers. As the job characteristic theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980) cautioned that teachers will still try to work hard to complete their task regardless of the workload when they find that their working environment is pleasant for them.

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