

STAYING AFLOAT IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN THE FACE OF COVID-19: REALITIES FACED BY VIRUS-CONTRACTED TEACHERS

IVY L. PACATE

Teacher I Marciano Marciano Integrated School, Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, Philippines

ABSTRACT

COVID 19 has been known to impact the education sector whereas its mediums were greatly affected. Given the underlying threats, teachers apparently contracted the virus upon fulfilling their responsibilities of being knowledge providers. They also serve as the front-line defense of education where they were most likely to be exposed to the virus. In this regard, this study was conducted to identify the lived experiences of teachers, highlighting the challenges they experienced after acquiring the virus. It also discusses the mechanisms employed by teachers to cope, their significant realizations pertaining to their experiences, and their suggestions on the interventions to be taken to counter the effects of the pandemic through an in-depth interview and focus group. Conversely, this study employed a qualitative – phenomenological design where a total of 17 participants were selected through purposive and criterion-based sampling. It was conducted within the area of Kidapawan City with the supervision from Kidapawan City District Office. Thematic analysis was then conducted where two themes emerged from the lived experiences of teachers. These are: depressing point of life and worrying about their condition. Four themes then arise on the coping mechanisms of teachers identified as: anchoring faith in God, taking vitamins and eating healthy foods, and linking with family members. Additionally, two themes emerged from the significant realizations of teachers namely: teachers' vulnerability to COVID 19 and prioritizing one's mental and physical health. Hence, another four themes emerged on the suggestions of teachers such as provisions of health kits, strict implementation of health protocols, allowance for teachers, and regular disinfection of school's premises.

KEYWORDS: *Teaching Profession, COVID-19, virus-contracted teachers, Kidapawan City*