Research Article

Education Concerns in Public Secondary Schools of Division of Zambales, Philippines: An Education Response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020

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Abstract: The education priorities, implementation challenges at school, and practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities were the education concerns investigated in the present study as a response to COVID19 Pandemic of 2020. The respondents were the school principals/heads and their respective teachers from the public secondary schools in all the Zones of Department of Education, Division of Zambales. This study employed a descriptive research method, quantitative in its analysis and used a survey questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. The overall number of items/indicators on the survey questionnaire was restricted to forty five (45). The statistical treatment of this study utilized descriptive statistical tools and ANOVA was used as inferential statistics. Based on the findings of the investigation conducted, availability and appropriate utilization of funds for school operation and regulations to support the safety and well-being of students were very critical education priorities identified. The availability and adequacy of technology infrastructure and efficient and effective ways of managing of technology infrastructure were very critical challenges which have to be implemented at school during the crisis. The availability of effective on-line learning support platform at school and sufficiency of internet bandwidth were very critical to support the utilization of digital devices and other learning delivery modalities. The results of analysis of variance computation revealed a no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the education concerns that need immediate attention in response to the present health crisis or pandemic.

Keywords: Education Concerns, Implementation Challenges, Public Secondary Schools, Education Response, COVID19 Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential tool for social and economic growth of a country. Madani [1] stated that different nations of the world have declared that it is the right of every person. Education for Viner *et al.*, [2] is one of the strongest predictors of the health and the wealth of a country. In 2019, the coronavirus disease COVID19 outbreak caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was declared by World health Organization (WHO) [3] to be a pandemic. On March 18, 2020, WHO [3] estimated that 107 countries had implemented national school closures related to COVID-19. The scale and speed of school closures are unprecedented globally. It was unclear when it can be suppressed and when to return to school and conduct face-to-face classes again. Reimers & Schleicher [4] stressed that the limitations of movements and activities during a pandemic will likely limit the opportunities of students to learn. The long-term school closures can greatly impact educational outcomes, health of young people, future workers and professionals and productivity of the nation.

It is imperative that school principals and other school leaders immediately identify education concerns, issues, priorities and challenges in order to mitigate the educational impact of the pandemic. The cooperation of the school community and stakeholders can help assist school leaders in the planning and designing effective education responses. World Health Organization [3] stressed that successful implementation of adaptive COVID19 preparedness and education response strategies will depend on all of society being engaged in the plan, and strong national and subnational coordination. Different approaches have been utilized by educators of different schools around the world to achieve quality in education. For Royster *et al.*, [5], effective educational program have to focus on the improvement of learning environment. Postholm [6] pointed out that trainings aimed for improved methods of teaching, subject matter content and skills or quality instructions as a whole should be availed by teachers and school heads. Madani [1] stressed the importance of having an educational program that contains provision of new developed instructional resources/materials for every student.

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Today, children and young people are powerful agents of change and the next generation of professionals and workers. Any crisis prevents the opportunity to help them learn and be able to pursue their passions and dreams. Immediate education response to the crisis - COVID19 will help students continue acquire the knowledge, develop skills and adopt values to help them become lifelong learners and succeed in life. As the COVID-19 Pandemic ravages the world, it is essential to attend to the educational needs of children and youth during the crisis. This document is intended to support education leaders at various levels of educational governance, in public and private educational organizations, in formulating adaptive, coherent, effective and equitable education responses to a crisis that significantly disrupt educational opportunities globally. This study offered data on different education concerns such as education priorities, challenges and practices for learning delivery modalities, a guide in the development of education strategy during the pandemic. This can be used by the Division of Zambales (local) or national education networks.

Principals/School Heads, Education Specialists/Curriculum Planers of DepEd Division of Zambales would benefit from the result of the study for they would be more aware and would be provided with data of what their schools need, challenges faced, and how the schools are preparing cope with these challenges which can be in the form of faculty/professional development activities, appropriate technologies, and training resources accessibility. This study offers the opportunity to gather empirical evidences teachers' education concerns and priorities as well as professional development activities to aim to address the 'new normal' in education system. Students are assured of adequate support during the implementation of plans for alternative education. School systems can help parents succeed in this crisis and situation. Parents would be more assured of a good communication between them and the schools; share information on what parents can do to support learning at home; and provide concrete guidance and tools for parents to help their child's learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The research study aimed to present the education concerns in public secondary schools of Division of Zambales, Philippines: an education response to COVID19 Pandemic of 2020. The following specific questions are answered and

addressed. The research questions focused on the following:
1. Which of these education concerns need immediate attention, in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic?
   - Education Priorities in Response to the Crisis;
   - Implementation Challenges at School during the Crisis; and
   - Practices for Using Digital Devices and other Learning Delivery Modalities?
2. Is there a significant difference on the perceived education concerns that need immediate attention, in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic?

MATERIALS AND METHODS
This study employed a descriptive quantitative research method, According to Driscoll [26], the major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Borg & Gall [7] stated that quantitative method includes the collection of data to test the hypothesis and to answer the questions concerning the present status of the study. This study described the education concerns as perceive by school administrators and teachers; a response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020.

The respondents of the research study were the School Principals/School Heads and Teachers of selected Public Secondary Schools of Zone 1, 2, 3 and 4, Department of Education (DepEd), Division of Zambales, Philippines offering Junior and Senior High Programs. The four (4) Zones are composed of Districts or Municipalities where the Secondary High Schools are located. Zone 1 with 6 schools; Zone 2, 13 schools; Zone 3, with 4 schools; and Zone 4, with 3 schools. A total population of 27 Principals were chosen to represent the principals/school heads and a total of 349 were teacher-respondents (grand total of 376 respondents). Total sample of teacher-respondents were selected using Sloven's formula sampling technique.

The study's research instrument was a survey questionnaire which contains two general questions to clarify the objectives of the study. The researcher reviewed the works of Reimers & Schleicher [4] and Zhu & Liu [8] to complete the contents (items/indicators) of the survey questionnaire for the present study. The survey questionnaires were administered to the School Principals/School Heads and Teachers of public secondary schools of Zone 1, 2, 3 & 4, DepEd, Division of Zambales, Philippines. The survey questionnaire constructed contains forty five (45) key items/indicators which have two (3) parts. First Part: Education Priorities in Response to the Crisis;

Second Part: Implementation Challenges at School during the Crisis; and Third Part: Practices for Using Digital Devices and other Learning Delivery Modalities The respondents answered within a scale ranging from 4 (very critical), 3 (Critical), 2 (Somewhat Critical), to 1 (Not Critical At All).

To test the validity of the research instrument, a set of subject matter experts (e.g., selected School Supervisors and Education Specialists in the Division of Zambales) reviewed and checked the items/indicators of the research instrument for clarity of objectives and directions, structure and consistency to lessen errors and misinterpretations. In order to assess the reliability of the research instrument, middle managers of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU), Iba were invited as subjects for the pilot study. A pilot test will examine whether all instructions in the survey questionnaire are clear, the objectives are understood and the items/indicators are approved. The feedback (comments, suggestions and corrections) of the experts mentioned above and the results of the pilot study were highly considered for the finalization of the research instrument.

In the data collection, the first step which was undertaken by the researchers was securing an approval from the Schools Division Superintendent, Department of Education, Division of Zambales the conduct of distribution of the survey questionnaire to the respondents. The researchers administered the instrument personally to the respondents on October, 2020 and were retrieved after three (3) days. For ethical consideration, the confidentiality of the responses of the respondents was assured. The study used simple frequency counts, percentage and mean for descriptive statistics. ANOVA was used as inferential statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Education Concerns that Need Immediate Attention in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Education Priorities in Response to the Crisis
Table-1 presents the perceived education priorities that need immediate attention in response to the crisis by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 1: Education Priorities that Need Immediate Attention in Response to the Crisis

Education Priorities in Response to the Crisis	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
1. Ensures the continuity of academic learning of students	3.38	Very Critical	3
2. Flexibility of funds and regulations to support innovative ways to educate students during the pandemic.	3.39	Very Critical	1.5
3. Provides professional support and advice to teachers	3.26	Very Critical	11
4. Ensures the safety and well-being of teachers and staff	3.36	Very Critical	5
5. Ensures the safety and well-being of students	3.39	Very Critical	1.5
6. Supports students who lack skills for independent learning	3.35	Very Critical	6
7. Ensures the safety of parents/guardians/caregivers	3.37	Very Critical	4
8. Defines new curriculum priorities during the crisis	3.24	Critical	12.5
9. Ensures continuity/integrity of the assessment of students	3.27	Very Critical	10
10. Revises grade transition policy of the school	3.31	Very Critical	7.5
11. Provides resources to support the professional growth of teachers	3.31	Very Critical	7.5
12. Ensures provision of other social services to students	3.28	Very Critical	9
13. Facilitates teacher professional collaboration and learning	3.22	Critical	15
14. Continues to supply and support alternative delivery mechanisms	3.24	Critical	12.5
15. Maintains coherence of communications strategy at the entire school system during the pandemic.	3.23	Critical	14
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.31**	**Very Critical**	

The two most important education priorities identified by the respondents (Principals/School Heads/Teachers) that are very critical and that necessitates immediate attention and action were indicator 2, flexibility of funds and regulations to support innovative ways to educate students during the

pandemic and indicator 5, ensures the safety and well-being of students (WM=3.39, rank 1.5 respectively). The respondents believe that their schools should prioritize the flexible utilization of funds and policies and regulations on (e.g. School Recovery and Readiness, School Learning Continuity, Strategic

Framework for Flexible Teaching and Learning, Alternative Learning Delivery Modalities from DepEd Memos, No. 012, 013, 017 s.2020) to support innovative ways to continue educate students during the pandemic and to ensure the safety and well-being of their most important clients, the students (e.g., implementation of School's Health Minimum Standard). School leaders should be proactive in mitigating on the impact of the pandemic and to prevent learning loss during school temporary closure.

The utilization of funds should support plans and regulations and infrastructure for on-line learning [4]. UNESCO IESALC [9] stressed the improvement of the access to equipment, internet connectivity to improve teacher and students technology capacity. For Allen, Hafen, Gregory, Mikami & Pianta [10], flexible funding should also devoted to teachers' learning opportunity, trainings, and sustained engagement in collaboration, mentoring. Johnson & Fargo [11] pointed out that states and districts can provide technology-facilitated opportunities for professional learning and coaching in the development program. UNESCO IESALC [9] favored developing the capacities of teachers, offering appropriate incentives and support, use of technological resources that can improve the quality of their work. The faculty development program approaches to support innovative ways to educate students [12]. Bayham & Fenichel [13] stressed that schools also prioritize students' well-being and mental health by providing guidance and protection.

Moreover, the respondents also highly considered that indicator 1, ensures the continuity of academic learning of students (WM=3.38, rank 3), indicator 7, ensures the safety of parents/ guardians/caregivers (WM=3.37, rank 4), indicator 4, ensures the safety and well-being of teachers and staff (WM=3.36, rank 5), and indicator 6, supports students who lack skills for independent learning (WM=3.35, rank 6) are very critical education priorities which secondary schools under DepEd Division of Zambales need to deliberate and consider in their school priorities and plans in order to face and resolve issues and problems brought by this present health crisis or pandemic. For the respondents, it is very critical that their respective schools also have to ensure continuity of students' learning of students; safety and well-being of teachers, staff, students and parents; and support to independent learning of students. Reimers & Schleicher [4], pointed out that during the pandemic, alternative education plan should be a school's priority and the school may also utilize other modalities of lower cost and easy to employ. UNICEF & Bender [14] suggested

that schools adapt flexible attendance scheme, encourage staying at home when sick and avail sick leave policies. Daniel [15] stressed information sharing about appropriate health protocols; disease situation; and follow guidelines from the national health and education authorities for prevention and control.

The education priorities that obtained the least weighted mean were indicator 8, defines new curriculum priorities during the crisis and indicator 14, continues to supply and support alternative delivery mechanisms (WM=3.24, rank 12.5 respectively); also indicator 15, maintains coherence of communications strategy at the entire school system during the pandemic (WM=3.23, rank 14) and indicator 13, facilitates teacher professional collaboration and learning (WM=3.22, rank 15) and were interpreted as critical. The respondents of the present study found that the school's new curriculum priorities; support and supply to alternative delivery mechanisms of the school; communications strategy; and teacher learning and professional collaboration are also crucial education priorities for immediate attention and response this 'new normal'. Most essential learning contents and performance in the curriculum should be determined first and foremost to serve as guide for the content of instruction and its delivery to learners. For Reimers & Schleicher [4], it is vital to identify and to define what the students should be learned and the means of education delivery during the period of distance learning and social distancing.

Sampat & Oommen [16] stressed the importance of supporting school leaders in this time of crisis and to face challenges if they want to lead a school successfully. School leaders according to Sampat & Oommen [16] should be the one figuring out plans for learning to continue since supplies and learning materials may be interrupted. Teachers and staff preparation and training are necessary according to Daniel 15] most especially if these activities are aimed for mutual support and division of work. For Postholm [6], teachers' professional training will improve overall teaching performance and ability to work effectively.

The Overall Weighted Mean was 3.31 with Qualitative Rating of Very Critical.

Implementation Challenges at School during the Crisis
Table-2 presents the perceived Implementation Challenges at School that Need Immediate Attention during the Crisis by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table-2: Implementation Challenges at School that Need Immediate Attention during the Crisis

Implementation Challenges at School during the Crisis	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
1. Availability of technology infrastructure	3.35	Very Critical	1
2. Managing of technology infrastructure	3.34	Very Critical	2
3. Achieving the balance between digital and screen free activities	3.29	Very Critical	3.5
4. Capacity of teachers to adapt to the changes required by the situation	3.26	Very Critical	7.5
5. Willingness of teachers to adapt to the changes required by the situation	3.23	Critical	11.5
6. Increased pedagogical autonomy of teachers	3.19	Critical	14.5
7. Strengthened public - private partnership	3.19	Critical	14.5
8. Introduction of technologies and other innovative solutions	3.21	Critical	13
9. Adequacy of communication with parents to coordinate curriculum-aligned learning.	3.28	Very Critical	5
10. Strengthened involvement and cooperation of parents	3.25	Very Critical	9.5
11. Availability of parents/guardians to support learning at home	3.27	Very Critical	6
12. Addressing students' emotional and mental health	3.26	Very Critical	7.5
13. Improvement in multi-sectorial coordination (Education-Health)	3.25	Very Critical	9.5
14. New platforms (virtual classrooms) so that teachers can continue to engage with students	3.23	Critical	11.5
15. Ensure medical attention of teachers and students affected by COVID-19	3.29	Very Critical	3.5
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.26**	**Very Critical**	

Another education concern examined in this study that is very critical and needs immediate attention and action during this health crisis was implementation challenges at school primarily indicator 1, Availability of technology infrastructure (WM=3.35, rank 1) and indicator 2, Managing of technology infrastructure (WM=3.34, rank 2). These indicators are very critical challenges during the implementation of new policies and guidelines in education during the preparations of schools for this coming school year of 2020-2021, for the utilization of flexible and alternative teaching and learning delivery modalities, and the assurance of continuity of learning.

To respond to education concerns during the pandemic, Reimers & Schleicher [4] recommends to schools to a feasible online education strategy or develop alternative means of delivery (e.g., radio broadcast, podcasts, TV programs, etc.). Hiring a professional team was suggested by Zhu & Liu [8] for providing faculty training and assistance about different on-line platforms and the conduct of on-line teaching. Royster, Reglin, Losike-Sedimo [5] recommended the improvement of the learning environment such as libraries, learning materials and other amenities. Sampat & Oommen [16] pointed out that computer, Internet access with a web browser and e-mail, telephone and Learning Management System (LMS) be secured, provided and formulated. For Zhu & Liu [8] it is important that communication system be in place at

school to permit technical, academic support system during the pandemic.

The respondents also found that indicator 3, achieving the balance between digital and screen free activities, indicator 9, adequacy of communication with parents to coordinate curriculum-aligned learning, and indicator 15, ensure medical attention of teachers and students affected by COVID-19 (WM=3.29, rank 4.5 respectively) were very critical challenges during this school year of 2020-2021 which have to be addressed by all secondary schools in the Division of Zambales to assure that the so-called continuity of learning and guarantee quality education most especially students and families who have limited capacity to gain from the implementation of the alternative plan for education. Enforcing school health protocols (e.g., regular hand washing with safe water and soap and alcohol rub/hand sanitizer) can help teachers and staff and parents safe at school. According to Bayham & Fenichel [13], guidance to students and families about the safe use of screen time/on-line tools to assure the well-being of the learners, and for Tingle, Corrales & Peters [17] mental health supports and protection from on-line threats.

School principals/heads should also consider that improved communication this time of pandemic is vital to maintain coherence and collaboration from the entire school community. Education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic was presented and recommended

by Reimers & Schleicher [4] which include creating of a website to communicate with teachers, students and parents about curriculum goals, strategies/activities and additional resources. For Brooks, Smith & Webster [18], school should prioritized on and enhanced communication and collaboration among students and parents/guardians to foster mutual learning and well-being.

Another sets of implementation challenges at school observed and experienced by the respondents and considered by them as critical and also need to be addressed were indicator 8, introduction of technologies and other innovative solutions (WM=3.21, rank 14), indicator 6, increased pedagogical autonomy of teachers (WM=3.19, rank 15) and indicator 7, strengthened public-private partnership (WM=3.19, rank 15). The respondents perceived that the introduction of teachers and staff to technologies and other innovations; to increase pedagogical autonomy of teachers; and to strengthen the public-private partnership are critical challenges in the 'new normal' in the educational system. However, innovation and technology have to be supported, provided and strengthened by schools because these are powerful ways to enhance teacher's opportunity to grow further professionally, hence improved competence to teach to learners. Strong school leaders know the needs of their communities well and can help effectively marshal the available resources to those who need them, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2018 [19]. UNESCO IESALC [9] supports international cooperation oriented to build alliances that promote the resilience of education systems and to share resources and technological solutions. Reimers & Schleicher [4] stressed re-prioritizing the curriculum goals to appropriately identify means of education delivery during the pandemic. UNICEF & Bender [14] pointed out a clearly define roles and expectations for teachers to effectively steer and support students' learning in the new situation.

The Overall Weighted Mean was 3.26 with Qualitative Rating of Very Critical.

School Practices for Using Digital Devices and other Learning Delivery Modalities
Table-3 presents the perceived school practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities that need immediate attention during the crisis by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 3: Practices for Using Digital Devices and other Learning Delivery Modalities that Need Immediate Attention during the Crisis

Practices for Using Digital Devices and other Learning Delivery Modalities	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
1. Availability of effective online learning support platform at school	3.42	Very Critical	1
2. Availability of sufficient qualified technical assistant staff at school	3.32	Very Critical	4.5
3. Access to materials/resources which can help design and prepare teaching-learning modules	3.32	Very Critical	4.5
4. Access to materials/resources which can help design and prepare other printed instructional packages	3.25	Very Critical	14
5. Awareness/familiarity with different models/designs of Blended Learning	3.26	Very Critical	12.5
6. Availability of video lectures or narrated slides of stand-alone topics/chapters	3.23	Critical	15
7. Sufficiency and availability of internet bandwidth or speed	3.34	Very Critical	2
8. Sufficiency and availability of computer software	3.32	Very Critical	4.5
9. Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in instruction	3.26	Very Critical	12.5
10. Developing new online platforms (virtual classrooms) so that teachers can continue to engage with students	3.28	Very Critical	9
11. Developing virtual classrooms so that students can engage in self-directed or collaborative learning	3.29	Very Critical	8
12. Sufficiency in terms of digital devices and gadgets of the school and of teachers	3.27	Very Critical	10.5
13. Sufficient time for teachers to prepare lessons integrating digital devices	3.32	Very Critical	4.5
14. Availability of effective professional resources for teachers to learn how to use digital devices	3.31	Very Critical	7
15. Provision of incentives to teachers to integrate digital devices in their teaching	3.27	Very Critical	10.5
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.30**	**Very Critical**	

The availability of effective on-line learning support platform at school (Indicator 1, WM=3.42, rank 1) and sufficiency and availability of internet bandwidth or speed (Indicator 7, WM=3.34, rank 2) are perceived by the respondents as very critical during the present health crisis or pandemic. These concerns (e.g., strong internet connectivity) necessitate attention and action for the school to be more efficient and effective in the usage of different digital devices this academic year, and for a successful utilization of learning delivery modes. It is vital to reinforce and strengthen the link between pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and technology in the 'new normal'. The paper of Brush & Saye [20] describes the importance of the practice of assisting teachers and effectively integrating technology in their classrooms. Eblacas' [21] study require the attendance of teachers to seminar, training and workshop aimed to improve skills and enhance knowledge most especially on the more technical of computer-based technology. Obana [22] pointed out that with the Covid19 crisis, schools are forced into on-line teaching, therefore, schools need to adopt an educational resource to support online learning as alternative to textbooks. The National Education Association [23], stressed that on-line teaching can provide an important venue to teacher learning. For OECD [19], on-line teaching and learning covers continuous communication among students and teachers through asynchronous or synchronous manners.

Moreover, results revealed that indicator 2, availability of sufficient qualified technical assistant staff at school, indicator 3, access to materials/resources which can help design and prepare teaching-learning modules, indicator 8, sufficiency and availability of computer software and indicator 13, sufficient time for teachers to prepare lessons integrating digital devices (WM=3.32, rank 4.5 respectively) are very critical school practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities and these need direct and concrete consideration and action to be able to respond to the present crisis. The Department of Education do not allow at this time a FacetoFace (F2F) teaching and learning, therefore schools resort to distance learning using modules with combination of online instruction. It

is important to note that these new practices and modalities requires manpower, skill and funding to complete the so-called technology infrastructure. Zhu & Liu's [8] study highly recommends that a school assemble a professional team for providing faculty-wide support such as online teaching implementation plan, online class management and supervision, and learning assessment. Sharing of knowledge and skills about different platforms and online training and the use of digital devices enhance teaching and learning [4]. The UNDP [24] suggests having a scheduled time for teachers to meet to share, and to develop instructional materials and approaches that use digital devices.

The respondents however considered indicator 4, access to materials/resources which can help design and prepare other printed instructional packages (WM=3.25, rank 14) and indicator 6, availability of video lectures or narrated slides of stand-alone topics/chapters to be critical (WM=3.23, rank 15) critical as school practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities which need immediate attention during the health crisis. The respondents may have or can access instructional resources and materials for printed instructional packages (e.g., modules) and can make or can easily avail video lectures or narrated slides of their subject matters/topics/chapters. An instructional strategy by Saavedra [25] should include video lectures or narrated slides of stand-alone topics/chapters. Faculty are encouraged to choose appropriate learning platforms they are familiar [8]. Madani [1] reported that teachers are receiving training on the new materials as part of their weekly workshops along with manual for references and guidance.

The Overall Weighted Mean was 3.30 with Qualitative Rating of Very Critical

Analysis of Variance on the Difference on the Perceived Education Concerns that Need Immediate Attention in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table-4 shows the difference on the perceived concerns that need immediate attention in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic by the respondents (principal/school head and teachers).

Table 4: Difference on the Perceived Education Concerns that Need Immediate Attention in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Between Groups	0.480	2	0.240	0.683	0.505	**Ho is accepted**
Within Groups	394.510	1122	0.352			**Not Significant**
Total	394.990	1124				

The significant value for perceived education concerns that need immediate attention in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (0.505) was higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the education concerns that need immediate attention in response to the present health crisis or Pandemic. The respondents who are Principals, School Heads and Teachers manifest likeness of knowledge, understanding, orientations and experiences on education priorities in response to the crisis, implementation challenges at school during the crisis, and school practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities. These are education concerns identified in the present study that need immediate attention in response to the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic in the education system, particular pubic secondary schools of DedEd Division of Zambales.

CONCLUSIONS

The education concerns in response to the COVID19 crisis which were investigated by the present study were the education priorities at school, the implementation challenges at school, and school practices for using digital devices and other learning delivery modalities. Perceptions of the school principals/school heads and teachers from public secondary schools in the Division of Zambales were solicited for they were among the members of the academic community who will directly respond to the so-called 'new normal' (changes, adjustments, issues and new priorities) in the basic education. School closures in the Philippines during the pandemic will not hinder the schools of continuous service and offering high standard of education to students.

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the respondents of the present study found that identifying Education Priorities in response to the crisis primarily the funds and regulations to support innovative ways to educate students during the pandemic and ensuring that the safety and well-being of students were very critical. The availability and adequacy of technology infrastructure and efficient and effective ways of managing of technology infrastructure were very critical challenges which have to be implemented at school during the crisis. The availability of effective on-line learning support platform at school and sufficiency and availability of internet bandwidth or speed were very critical to support the utilization of digital devices and other learning delivery modalities, hence need immediate attention in respond to the changes in the education system during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Moreover, the results in the computation of the analysis of variance revealed a no significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the education concerns that need immediate attention in response to the present health crisis or pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the abovementioned conclusions, the researchers recommends that:

1. The flexibility of funds and regulations to support innovative ways to educate students during the Pandemic and to help ensure and sustain the safety and well-being of students would necessitates immediate attention and action by the School Heads/Principals.
2. School Heads/Principals may prioritize addressing the primary challenges of availability of technology infrastructure and managing of this technology during this health crisis.
3. School Heads/Principals may prioritize the implementation of an effective online learning support platform at school and installation of internet bandwidth or speed to further the school practices for using digital devices and supplement the schools' program on learning delivery modalities.
4. School Heads/Principals may present a Framework/Program for education strategy as a response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020 to Education Specialist/Curriculum Planners of Department of Education, Division of Zambales for further review, critiquing, funding, and future implementation.
5. Conduct a follow-up study on the status of the education concerns of public secondary schools and the proposed framework/program

for education strategy as a response to COVID 19 Pandemic of 2020.

6. For validity purpose a study on how private secondary schools of Division of Zambales address education concerns and challenges during the pandemic is also suggested.

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