

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

Rural secondary student incapacity to access the Senior High School program became a perennial problem in Katipunan, Zamboanga del Norte. That is why getting a decent education is not possible for them. Thus, the study aimed to determine the challenging issues in rural secondary education in the selected Barangays of Katipunan Zamboanga del Norte. The quantitative research method was used with the help of the survey questionnaire to gather the data. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were from rural areas. Poverty was the leading problem that the respondents faced. Thus, it is strongly recommended that government must provide senior high school programs near their locality and provide necessary subsidies such as food, school supplies, medicine, and clothing so the students not to become hesitant about going to school.

Keywords: barriers, senior high school, education, poverty, access

1. Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in transforming an individual's life. This will let everyone improve their knowledge, way of living as well as social and economic status throughout life. Barcelo (2019) said that education has been imparted for generations and is very significant to everyone. It continues to grow and change to be more inclusive of improving lives. Human education is the acquisition capital (intellectual and experiential) that allows the implementation of methodologies that put learning into action within the human resource development framework as part of a country's national policy (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p. 227). Bandura et al. (1963), as cited by Yao, Z., & Enright, R. (2018), stressed that the social cognitive theory that links social interaction with adults and adolescent conflict involves academic performance, health behavior, and organizational development as the motivational processes. The school year 2016-2017 marks the start of senior high school in

the Philippines as part of the K to 12 programs implemented by the Department of Education (Geleena et al., 2021). They said further that the two years of senior high school are envisioned to provide ample time to acquire sufficient knowledge and mastery of skills to prepare students for higher education and future employment. In Taiwan and many Asian societies, when children enter senior high school, school life becomes more important (Yao, Z., & Enright, R. 2018). They conceded further that most students immerse themselves in school for at least eight hours daily, so teachers spend the longest time with students than their parents.

Meaningful family involvement is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Research has found that when parents are involved, their confidence in their ability to help their children with classroom assignments increases (Nistler & Maiers, 2000), and they rate teachers higher in overall teaching ability (Caplan, 2000). Gender and ethnic/racial differences in career outcomes are likely due to differences in perceived barriers. In addition, several findings (Crosnoe, Mistry, & Elder, 2002; Farmer, Dadisman, et al., 2006; Johnson & Strange, 2007; Roscigno & Crowley, 2001) indicates that the poverty encountered by many rural youths substantially increases their risk for educational problems. Children of involved families also graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins-Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003). Several studies indicate increased academic achievement with students that have involved parents (Epstein, 2009; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Rumberger et al., 1990; Swap, 1993; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001; Đurišić et al., 2017).

One of the ongoing problems in the barangays of Katipunan, Zamboanga del Norte, is the need for rural secondary students to enroll in the Senior High School program. It is impossible for an individual in an underprivileged community to receive a good education. In actuality, education encompasses all aspects of life. Senior high School (SHS) refers to Grades 11 and 12, the last two years of the K-12 program that DepEd has been implementing since 2012 (DepEd Memorandum No. 76 s. 2016). To further explain, Republic Act No. 10533 or better known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, states that they will have to complete Kindergarten, from Grades 1 to 6 (elementary), Grades 7 to 10 (junior high school) and Grades 11 to 12 (senior high school)—in all 13 years before they can receive a high school diploma.

According to Hanushek & Woessmann (2008), cognitive skills, as opposed to years of schooling, are more robustly correlated with economic growth. They show that the share of basic literates and the share of high performers have independent and significant effects on growth and that these types of human capital complement each other. This research aims to investigate the perceptions of high school teachers and family heads about the challenging issues that hinder rural secondary students from accessing education. These challenging issues include poverty, environment, culture, curriculum, and health. The outcome of this study may provide direction as to the availability of free basic education to all Filipino children.

2. Methods and Materials

The descriptive method was used in this study with the aid of the questionnaire constructed by the researcher. It was referred to the experts and research consultants for the

correctness and suitability of the instrument. It contains two sets of questionnaires, one for the household respondents and another for the teacher respondents. The descriptive method determines and describes the challenging issues in rural secondary education affecting the access to Senior High School programs in the selected barangays with high schools in Katipunan, Zamboanga del Norte. The questionnaires were filled up and completed anonymously by teachers and family heads in the different designated schools and barangays.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1

Family income

Family Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1000 – 1999	3	8.33
2000 – 2999	19	52.78
3000 – 3999	14	38.89
4000 – 4999	0	0.00
5000 – 5999	0	0.00
Total	36	100

As shown in table 1, 8.33 percent of the respondent has an income range of 1000-1999 Php, 52.78 percent has an income range from 2000-2999 Php, and 38.89 percent has an income range from 3000-3999 Php. The percentage was zero percent for the income of 4000-4999 and 5000-5999. Thus, this implies that most respondents have a monthly income of Php 2000-2999.

Table 2

Poverty as a Challenging issue in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
A. INCOME	3.61	Often
1. The students go to school on an empty stomach.	3.75	Often
2. Inability to pay school obligations.	3.56	Often
3. Inability to buy school uniforms.	3.22	Sometimes
4. Unable to provide students' needs and projects.	3.83	Often
5. Insufficient budget for the fare.	3.69	Often

Table 2 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of poverty. As shown in the table, poverty has a mean of 3.61. The (5) indicators of poverty, "The student going to school with an empty stomach" has a mean of 3.75 and has the description "often", "Inability to pay school obligation" has a mean of 3.56 and has the description "often", the third, "Inability to buy school uniforms" has the mean of 3.22 and has the description "sometimes", the fourth one "Unable to provide student's needs and projects" has the mean of 3.83 and has the description "often," lastly "Insufficient budget for fare" has the mean of 3.69 and has the description "often". The findings revealed that most of the descriptions were categorized as "often". This implies that family heads had insufficient income that could not sustain the needs of their children.

Table 3

The environment as a Challenging issue in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
B. ENVIRONMENT	3.58	Often
1. The students get tired of going to school due to the long distance from home to school.	3.92	Often
2. The students cannot go to school because of some environmental occurrences	3.72	Often
3. Lack of teaching and learning materials in school.	3.44	Often
4. Tardiness, undertime teaching hours practices.	3.25	Often
5. School drop-out due to early pregnancy and bad habits.	3.56	Often

Table 3 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of the environment. As gleaned in the table, the environment has a mean of 3.58 and a description of often. The (5) indicators of environment, "The student gets tired of going to school due to long distance from home to school," acquired the mean of 3.92 and has the description "often," "The student cannot go to school because of some environmental occurrences" which has the mean of 3.72 and has the description "often".

The third one, "Lack of teaching and learning materials in school," has a mean of 3.44 and has the description often. The fourth one, "Tardiness, undertime teaching hour practices." has a mean of 3.25 and has the description often. Moreover, the last one, "School drop-out due to early pregnancy and bad habits," has a mean of 3.56, and its description is "often". Based on the data being worked by the statistician, most of the description falls too often. The table showed that the environment plays a pivotal role in the pursuit of the student to access education.

Table 4

Culture as a Challenging issue in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
C. CULTURE	3.36	Sometimes
1. The students have difficulty interacting with peers due to the use of language.	3.67	Often
2. The students are afraid to go to school because of discrimination from classmates.	3.50	Often
3. The students are uneasy about going to school because of their way of dressing.	3.53	Often
4. The students don't want to go to school because they cannot adapt to the ways how their classmates think, act, and interact.	3.28	Sometimes
5. The students don't want to be exposed to the social gatherings of the school.	2.83	Sometimes

As shown in table 4, culture has a mean of 3.36. The (5) indicators of culture, "The students have difficulty in interacting with peers due to the use of language," has a mean of 3.67 and falls to the description "often", "The student is afraid to go to school because of discrimination from classmates" has a mean of 3.50 and falls to the description often.

The third one, "The students are uneasy about going to school because of their way of dressing," has a mean of 3.53 and falls to the description "often". The fourth one, "The students do not want to go to school because they cannot adapt the ways how their classmates

think, act and interact," has a mean of 3.28 and falls to the description "sometimes". The last one, "The student does not want to go to school because they cannot adapt the ways how their classmates think, act and interact," has a mean of 2.83 and falls to the description "sometimes". The findings revealed that only two descriptions fall into the sometimes category, while the rest falls into the description often. It implies that most of the students coming from rural areas had problems in their social life.

Table 5

Curriculum as a Challenging issue in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
D. CURRICULUM	3.43	Often
1. Subjects in School don't meet the learner's intellectual and physical capacity.	3.39	Often
2. The students feel boredom with the social activities.	3.50	Often
3. The students find the subjects in school challenging to learn.	3.44	Often
4. The teacher's approaches don't suit the learner's needs, interests, aspirations, and uniqueness.	3.39	Often
5. The students can feel irrelevance in what they learn in school.	3.44	Often

Table 5 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of curriculum. As shown in the table, the curriculum has a mean of 3.63 and has the description often. The (5) indicators of curriculum, "Subjects in School do not meet the learners intellectual and physical capacity," has a mean of 3.89 and falls to the description "often", "The student feels boredom with the social activities" has the mean of 3.50 and falls to the description "often".

The fourth one, "The teacher's approaches do not suit the learner's needs, interests, aspirations and uniqueness," has a mean of 3.50 and falls to the description "often". Lastly, "The student can feel irrelevance on what they are learning in school" has a mean of 3.61 and falls to the description of often. The findings revealed that all the indicators fall into the often category.

Table 6

Health as a Challenging issue in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
E. HEALTH	3.34	Sometimes
1. Regular medical check-ups and treatment.	3.42	Often
2. The student with poor health needs a long time of rest and medication that causes consecutive absences.	3.47	Often
3. The students suffer from a different illness that blocks their interest in going to school.	3.22	Sometimes
4. The student's losses focus on daily school activities due to the illness they had.	3.11	Sometimes
5. Health centers lack medical facilities and medicines.	3.50	Often

Table 6 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of health. As shown in the table, health has a mean of 3.34 and has a description of sometimes. The (5) indicators of health, “Regular medical check-ups and treatment” has a mean of 3.42 and falls to the description “often”, “The student with poor health need a long time of rest and medication that causes consecutive absences” has the mean of 3.47 and falls to the description “often”, “The student suffering from a different illness that blocks the interest to go to school” has the mean of 3.22 and falls to the description “sometimes”.

The fourth one which is "The student losses focus in daily school activities due to the illness they had," has a mean of 3.11 and falls to the description "sometimes", " Health centers lack medical facilities and medicines" has a mean of 3.50 and falls to the description "often". The findings revealed that three descriptions fall into the often category while the rest falls into the description sometimes.

Table 7
Income as perceived by Teachers.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
A. INCOME	3.27	Sometimes
1. The students go to school with an empty stomach.	3.54	Often
2. Inability to pay school obligations.	3.25	Sometimes
3. Inability to buy school uniforms.	3.04	Sometimes
4. Unable to provide students' needs and projects.	3.38	Sometimes
5. Insufficient budget for the fare.	3.13	Sometimes

Table 7 presents the mean distribution of the teacher as respondents in terms of poverty. As shown in the table, poverty has a mean of 3.27. The (5) indicators of poverty, "The student going to school with an empty stomach," has a mean of 3.54 and has the description "often", and "Inability to pay school obligation" has a mean of 3.25 and has a description "sometimes".

The third one, "Inability to buy school uniforms," has a mean of 3.04 and has the description "sometimes". The fourth one, "Unable to provide student's needs and projects," has a mean of 3.38 and has the description "sometimes", and lastly, "Insufficient budget for the fare." it has a mean of 3.13 and has the description "sometimes". The findings revealed that most of the descriptions were categorized as "sometimes". It implies that family heads had inadequate income to provide for the needs of their children.

Table 8
Environment as perceived by teachers.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
B. ENVIRONMENT	2.65	Sometimes
1. The students get tired of going to school due to the long distance from home to school.	3.63	Often
2. The students cannot go to school because of some environmental occurrences.	3.00	Sometimes
3. Lack of teaching and learning materials in school.	2.29	Rarely

4. Tardiness, undertime teaching hour practices.	1.46	Never
5. School drop-out due to early pregnancy and bad habits.	2.88	Sometimes

Table 8 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of the environment. As gleaned in the table, the environment has a mean of 2.65 and has the description "sometimes". The (5) indicators of environment, "The student gets tired of going to school due to long distance from home to school," acquired the mean of 3.63 and has the description "often", "The student cannot go to school because of some environmental occurrences" which has the mean of 3.00 and has the description "sometimes". The third one, "Lack of teaching and learning materials in school," has a mean of 2.29 and has the description "rarely". The fourth one, "Tardiness, undertime teaching hour practices." has a mean of 1.46 and has the description "never". And the last one, "School drop-out due to early pregnancy and bad habits," has a mean of 2.88, and its description is "sometimes". Most of the description falls to sometimes.

Table 9
Culture as perceived by Teachers.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
C. CULTURE	2.27	Rarely
1. The students have difficulty interacting with peers due to the use of language.	2.33	Rarely
2. The students are afraid to go to school because of discrimination from classmates.	2.25	Rarely
3. The students are uneasy about going to school because of their way of dressing.	2.25	Rarely
4. The students don't want to go to school because they cannot adapt to the ways how their classmates think, act, and interact.	2.25	Rarely
5. The students don't want to be exposed to the social gatherings of the school.	2.25	Rarely

Table 9 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of culture. As shown in the table, culture has a mean of 2.27. The (5) indicators of culture, "The student has difficulty in interacting with peers due to the use of language," has a mean of 2.33 and falls to the description "rarely", "The student is afraid to go to school because of discrimination from classmates" has the mean of 2.25 and falls to the description "rarely". The third one, "The student are uneasy about going to school because of their way of dressing," has a mean of 2.25 and falls to the description "rarely". The fourth one, "The student does not want to go to school because they cannot adapt the ways how their classmates think, act and interact," has a mean of 2.25 and falls to the description "rarely". The last one, "The student does not want to go to school because they cannot adapt the ways how their classmates think, act and interact," has a mean of 2.25 and falls to the description "rarely". The findings revealed that most of the indicators fall to the description rarely.

Table 10
Curriculum as perceived by Teachers.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
D. CURRICULUM	2.18	Rarely
1. Subjects in School don't meet the learner's intellectual and physical capacity.	2.08	Rarely
2. The student feels boredom with the social activities.	2.00	Rarely

3. The student finds the subjects in school challenging to learn.	2.67	Sometimes
4. The teacher's approaches don't suit the learner's needs, interests, aspirations, and uniqueness.	1.88	Rarely
5. The student can feel irrelevance in what they are learning in school.	2.29	Rarely

Table 10 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of curriculum. As shown in the table, the curriculum has a mean of 2.18 and has the description rarely.

The (5) indicators of curriculum," Subjects in School do not meet the learners intellectual and physical capacity," has a mean of 2.08 and falls to the description "rarely", "The student feel boredom with the social activities" has the mean of 2.00 and falls to the description "rarely", "The student find the subjects in school difficult to learn on" has the mean of 2.67 and falls to the description "sometimes".

The fourth one," The teacher's approaches do not suit to the learner's needs, interests, aspirations and uniqueness," has a mean of 1.88 and falls to the description "rarely". Lastly, "The student can feel irrelevance on what they are learning in school" has a mean of 2.29 and falls to the description of "rarely". The findings revealed that most of the indicators fall into the rare category.

Table 11

Health as perceived by Teachers.

Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education	Mean	Description
E. HEALTH	2.54	Rarely
1. Regular medical check-ups and treatment.	2.17	Rarely
2. The student with poor health needs a long time of rest and medication that causes consecutive absences.	2.38	Rarely
3. The students suffer from a different illness that blocks their interest in going to school.	2.67	Sometimes
4. The student's losses focus on daily school activities due to the illness they had.	2.71	Sometimes
5. Health centers lack medical facilities and medicines.	2.79	Sometimes

Table 11 presents the mean distribution of the respondents in terms of health. As shown in the table, health has a mean of 2.94 and has a description of "rarely". The (5) indicators of health, "Regular medical check-ups and treatment" has a mean of 2.17 and falls to the description "rarely", "The student with poor health need a long time of rest and medication that causes consecutive absences" has the mean of 2.38 and falls to the description "rarely".

"The student suffers from a different illness that blocks the interest to go to school" has the mean of 2.67 and falls to the description "sometimes", "The student losses focus in daily school activities due to the illness they had" has the mean of 2.71 and falls to the description "sometimes", " Health centers lack medical facilities and medicines" has the mean

of 2.79 and falls to the description "sometimes". The findings revealed that most of the indicators fall to the description sometimes.

Table 12

The significant difference between Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education is classified in terms of poverty, environment, culture, curriculum, and health as respondents perceived by household heads and teachers.

Respondent Group	Poverty				Environment			
	Mean	t-comp	t-crit	p	Mean	t-comp	t-crit	p
Teacher	3.27	2.49	2.3	0.039	2.65	2.41	2.3	0.042
Household	3.61				3.58			

Respondent Group	Culture				Curriculum				Health			
	Mean	t-comp	t-crit	p	Mean	t-comp	t-crit	p	Mean	t-comp	t-crit	p
Teacher	2.27	7.41	2.3	7.514	2.18	8.9	2.3	2.003	2.54	5.75	2.3	5.75
Household	3.36				3.43				3.34			

Table 12 shows the significant difference between the Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education if classified in terms of poverty, environment, culture, curriculum, and health as respondents perceived by household heads and teachers. It is shown in the table that "Poverty," as an indicator, obtained a mean of 3.36 as rated by the household respondent, greater than 2.27 as claimed by the teacher-respondent. It is further seen that the t-computed value of poverty is 2.49, greater than the t-critical value of 2.3. Hence, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the household head and teacher as a respondent in terms of the poverty issue.

On the other hand, "Environment" as one of the issues obtained a 3.58 mean rate by the household respondent, which is bigger than the rate given by the teacher-respondent, which is 2.65. It is also shown that the t-computed value of this indicator obtained 2.41, higher than the t-critical value, which is 2.3. Thus, there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the household head and teacher as the respondent in terms of environmental issues.

Looking further in the table, the household respondent has a mean of 3.36 under the indicator "culture," higher than the teacher-respondent, who garnered a 2.27 mean, resulting in a 7.41 t-computed value higher than the t-critical value of 2.3. Thus, there is a significant difference in the Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education regarding culture as perceived by the household head and teacher as respondents.

Moreover, curriculum as one of the Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education rated by household respondents gained a 3.43 mean, which is still bigger than the rate of the teacher-respondent of 2.18, resulting in the t-critical value of 2.3 lesser than the t-computed value of 8.9. Hence, there is still a significant difference in the Challenging Issues in Rural Secondary Education as perceived by the household head and teacher as respondents.

Furthermore, upon looking at the table, the indicator "Health", has a mean of 2.54 as rated by the teacher-respondent lesser than the rate of the household respondent, which is 3.34, having a t-critical value of 2.3, lesser than the t-computer value of 5.75 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, there is a significant difference in the Challenging

Issues in Rural Secondary Education in terms of health as perceived by household heads and teachers as respondents.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of the heads had income ranges from 2000-2999. Poverty and health affect access to Senior high school programs. Poverty, environment, culture, curriculum, and health, as perceived by household heads and teachers as respondents, affect access to senior high school programs. Family monthly income and the number of family household members significantly affect the rural secondary student's access to education.

The government may provide senior high school programs near their locality in order for the students not to become hesitant about going to school, and the government must also give necessary subsidies such as food, school supplies, medicine, and clothing for the students to sustain and survive in their pursuit for education.

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