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**UPLAND TEACHERS' RISK EXPERIENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES IN  
THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES: BASES FOR  
WELLNESS PROGRAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study sought to identify and understand the factors that contribute to the risk experiences and coping strategies of upland teachers in performing their duties. The findings served as the basis for a proposed wellness program for upland teachers in the 1st Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025–2026. The study involved eight (8) upland teachers who were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method based on the characteristics of the population and the purpose of the study. Data were gathered through the use of an interview questionnaire. Results showed that the psychological risks commonly experienced by upland teachers included mental stress and multiple tasks, while the emotional challenges they encountered involved learners' behavioral problems and unsupportive parents. In coping with these difficulties, teachers primarily relied on self-motivation and proper planning. Based on the findings, a wellness program was developed.

**Keywords:** *Upland Teachers, Risk Experiences, Coping Strategies, Wellness Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Teacher resilience involves a dynamic interaction among self-care practices, professional support systems, and supportive institutional environments that promote positive well-being. In this context, teachers play a vital role in the growth and education of children, yet their own well-being is often overlooked.

The demands and responsibilities faced by upland teachers can result in stress, burnout, and reduced overall well-being. Recognizing the importance of strengthening the resilience and well-being of both parents and teachers, this study seeks to examine the factors that affect their well-being and resilience, with the aim of developing a comprehensive wellness and safety plan that responds to their needs (Salvo-Garrido, 2025).

On the other hand, the challenges experienced by upland teachers have been widely documented. Research has shown that teacher stress and burnout may lead to negative consequences for both parents and children, such as reduced parental efficacy, weakened parenting practices, and behavioral problems among children (Leerkes et al., 2020).

According to Yap et al. (2021), upland teachers experience high levels of stress and encounter various stressors in carrying out their roles. These stressors may arise from work-family conflict, financial difficulties, parenting responsibilities, and the demands of managing multiple roles (Dinh et al., 2023). In the same way, teachers often deal with heavy workloads, classroom management concerns, professional demands, and limited resources, all of which contribute to high levels of stress and burnout (Johnson et al., 2020).

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Despite these challenges, research has also emphasized the importance of resilience in reducing the harmful effects of stress and promoting well-being. Resilience refers to the capacity to adjust and recover in the face of adversity (Masten, 2024). Studies further suggest that individuals with greater resilience are better able to manage stress and preserve their well-being.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the need to support teachers' well-being and resilience. Educational institutions, policymakers, and organizations have introduced various programs and interventions to address these concerns (Sánchez-Teruel et al., 2020).

However, there remains a lack of comprehensive wellness and safety plans specifically designed to address the needs of teachers assigned in upland elementary schools.

This study aimed to address this gap by exploring the factors that contribute to the resilience of upland teachers in the performance of their duties as a basis for a wellness program.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study. It includes the research method, research design, respondents of the study, research instruments, data-gathering procedures, and the statistical tools used for data analysis.

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## Research Method

The study utilized a qualitative research method to explore and understand the depth and complexity of human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena. This approach emphasizes the collection of non-numerical data in order to gain deeper insights into the meanings, interpretations, and contexts that influence the subject of the study. Qualitative research commonly involves the gathering and analysis of textual or visual data, such as interviews, focus group discussions, observations, documents, and artifacts. Through various interpretive techniques, researchers analyze these forms of data to identify patterns, themes, and narratives that lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, as cited by Norman, 2021).

## Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design to examine and understand the experiences, perspectives, and contexts of upland teachers in carrying out their duties as a basis for a wellness program. Within this design, two approaches were utilized: the phenomenological and interpretive approaches.

A phenomenological approach was used to gain insight into the lived experiences of parents and teachers, as well as their personal interpretations of resilience and well-being. This approach makes it possible to explore in depth the participants' perceptions, emotions, and the meanings they attach to their experiences (Creswell, as cited by Norman, 2021).

In addition, the study adopted an interpretive research approach, which focused on understanding the subjective experiences and meanings that teachers associate with the

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psychological and emotional risks they encounter. This approach allows for a more holistic examination of the participants' perspectives and the social and cultural contexts that influence their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2021).

The participants in the study were drawn either from a single population or from different populations with varying characteristics. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather detailed information about their experiences, challenges, ways of managing these challenges, and suggestions related to the resilience of upland teachers. The findings from these in-depth interviews were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify and determine the factors that contribute to the resilience of teachers, particularly those assigned in upland schools. This research method was considered most appropriate for the present study because it enabled a deeper understanding of the risks, experiences, perceptions, and contexts of teachers, thereby contributing to the development of a comprehensive wellness program.

### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of this study consisted of eight (8) teachers assigned in upland schools in the 1st Congressional District of Iloilo during the School Year 2025–2026.

The researcher employed purposive sampling in selecting the participants. This method was used to choose a diverse group of upland teachers who could provide rich and varied insights relevant to the study. The selection of the participants of the study depends on the objectives and questions of the study. The researcher set and eligibility criteria to ensure participants have relevant characteristics or experiences.

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## Research Instrument

The study used in-depth interviews to collect data on the factors, experiences, challenges, and perspectives that contribute to the resilience and well-being of parents and teachers.

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research method that involves a structured yet open-ended conversation between the researcher and the participant. Its purpose is to obtain detailed and comprehensive information about the participant's experiences, viewpoints, beliefs, and feelings concerning a particular research topic. These interviews are usually conducted individually and may take place face-to-face, by phone, or through video conferencing (Briggs, 2020).

### Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity is considered one of the most essential criteria in determining the quality of a test. It refers to the appropriateness, significance, accuracy, and usefulness of the interpretations and conclusions drawn by the researcher from the data collected. In terms of content-related validity, the content and format of the instrument must align with the defined variables and the group of subjects to be measured, and this also helps in evaluating the items included in the questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, as cited by Biddix, 2020).

The researcher developed three (3) interview questions, which were submitted to the thesis adviser for review and to a panel of experts for face and content validation. The panel examined each item in terms of appropriateness, relevance, clarity of language, and correctness of sentence structure. The corrections, modifications, and suggestions provided

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regarding the content of the questionnaire were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument before the study was conducted.

## Data Gathering Procedures

This study employed a qualitative approach; therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted.

The data needed for the study were gathered through a researcher-made interview questionnaire administered to the participants. The same set of questions was given to the upland teachers. The interview results served as baseline data in identifying the resiliency of upland teachers in the performance of their duties, as well as their views, insights, experiences, and challenges, which became the basis for developing a wellness program.

The data gathering procedure was divided into three stages: pre-interview, interview and post interview. All stages were done under the supervision of the research adviser.

The researcher obtained permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor of the 1st Congressional District of Iloilo to conduct interviews with upland teachers who served as participants in the study.

The researcher developed the interview questions to serve as the baseline data for the study. Specifically, a three-item interview questionnaire was prepared based on the objectives of the research. This instrument was submitted to the thesis adviser for review and to a panel of experts in questionnaire construction for face and content validation. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the participants of the study.

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The interviews were conducted with teachers assigned in upland schools. Before the interviews were carried out, the researcher presented a consent form to the participants. They were given sufficient time to answer the questions honestly and were made comfortable enough to share their views, insights, experiences, and life challenges that were relevant to the study.

The researcher recorded the conversations for data transcription. The gathered data were then analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. For the analysis, thematic analysis was used to identify, examine, and report patterns or themes within the data.

### Data Analyses

The researcher employed a phenomenological approach to examine the essential structure of a single phenomenon by conducting in-depth interviews with several individuals who had personally experienced it. From each participant's account, the researcher identified statements considered significant and grouped them into themes. These themes were then synthesized into a narrative description of the phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, as cited by Biddix, 2020).

The data collected in the study were analyzed and interpreted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This involved a step-by-step process that included familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

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## Ethical Considerations

Written informed consent was secured from both respondents prior to the start of the study. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw their consent and discontinue involvement at any point. Participation in the inquiry was optional.

Furthermore, all information gathered from the research was treated with the highest level of confidentiality, and no names were disclosed in any publications or presentations.

## DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSES

This chapter presents the descriptive-qualitative analyses on upland teachers' resiliency in the performance of their duties as basis for wellness program in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District of Iloilo during the School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study sought answer to the following questions:

1. What are the risks experienced by upland teachers in the performance of their duties in terms of psychological and emotional?
2. How do upland teachers cope with the risks experienced by them in the performance of their duties?
3. What wellness program can be proposed based on the results of the study?

## Risks Experienced by Upland Teachers in Terms of Psychological

According to Aronson (2023), stress and burnout remain persistent problems among teachers worldwide, often contributing to anxiety and depression. Although teaching is both

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demanding and highly rewarding, several factors are associated with teachers' experiences of stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression. In this regard, implementing a school-based awareness and intervention program is essential to address the early signs of teacher stress and burnout and prevent more serious problems in the future.

Based on the results of the study, the risks experienced by upland teachers in terms of psychological were mental stress and multiple tasks.

### **Mental Stress**

Mental stress is the psychological strain resulting from taxing situations that exceed an individual's coping capacity and being overwhelmed. It triggers hormonal responses affecting the entire body, leading to symptoms like irritability, insomnia, cognitive difficulties, and physical pain (Henderson & Milstein, 2023).

According to Participant 1, "Psychologically, I faced stress from handling multigrade classes, especially because many of my learners are non-readers and non-numerates."

Participant 2 added, "Stress and mental fatigue due to different terrain, limited resources, and long travel."

On the other hand, Participant 3 explained, "As a teacher in upland school, one of the common psychological risks I experience is mental stress. Managing multiple responsibilities such as lesson planning, classroom management, paperwork and meeting the different needs of the learners."

Further, Participant 7 also said, "I feel mental fatigue and pressure as I go to my station, handle paper works and big responsibilities."

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This infers that upland teachers always face psychological stressors that combine typical pedagogical demands with extreme challenges due to their working conditions.

However, the welfare of teachers is crucial for their own quality of life and their ability to effectively support children’s development and education which highlighted various factors influencing well-being in these populations.

For instance, a study by Rothrauff et al. (2021), found that high levels of job satisfaction and work-life balance were associated with higher levels of well-being among teachers.

### Multiple Tasks

Teachers in an institutional setting hold multifaceted responsibilities that extend beyond instruction to include curriculum planning, learner assessment, classroom management, and mentorship. Additionally, they manage administrative duties, subject coordinators, engage in professional development, continuous communication with parents, and often participate and support extra curricular activities of learners even without financial support from the parents (Siddiqui, 2020).

According to Participant 5, “I have encountered mild stress because of the multiple tasks given to me by my school head which at times leads to fatigue and difficulty concentrating in my other task especially in teaching profession.”

Meanwhile Participant 6 said, “I have difficulty in reaching my station for I have to travel for almost 3 hours to reach my station. Besides, I have multiple tasks delegated to me.”

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Finally, Participant 8 said, "As an upland teacher, I face psychological risks such as handling-multigrade classes."

This infers that upland teachers often face a complex, multi-tasking environment driven by educational challenges. Due to shortages of teachers, they were assigned subjects outside their field of specialization.

Teachers assigned in upland schools hold a vital and influential position in the educational landscape, particularly in upland schools, where they serve as a cornerstone of the nation's future. The effectiveness of teachers is a critical factor influencing students' performance and the attainment of high-quality education. The success of educational endeavors hinges significantly on teachers' commitment to their professional duties, as they strive to achieve their educational objectives, ultimately shaping the lives of their students (Upland Elementary School, 2022).

### **Risks Experienced by Upland Teachers in Terms of Emotional**

Upland teachers, often working in remote, resource scarce, or culturally distinct environments, face unique emotional risks due to the convergence of high-stakes emotional labor, and demanding working conditions. The emotional risks they face must constantly regulate their emotions to maintain which leads to emotional depletion (Keller, 2024).

Based on the results of the study, the risks experienced by upland teachers in terms of emotional were learners' behavioral problem and unsupportive parents.

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## Learners' Behavioral Problem

Learners' behavioral problem in upland schools often exhibit a mix of negative, disrespectful behavior towards teachers which resulted for being denied in the community. People with a learning disability whose behavior can be challenging are highly a risk of their behavior being attributed to internal causes (Siddiqui, 2020).

According to Participant 1, "Some of the learners in my class have behavioral problems inside and outside the classroom."

Participant 2 added, "Due to unlimited resources, learners failed to read and understand well the lessons learned. I have emotional exhaustion, frustration and feelings of isolation caused by learners' absenteeism and challenging living conditions."

Moreover, Participant 5 further said, "Sometimes I am disappointed when one of my learners make troubles with other learners in the classroom. I am emotional sometimes."

Additionally, Participant 6 said, "Having behavioral problem learners is a challenge to me."

This infers that learners' behavioral problem creates emotional stress and affect teachers' performance and also becomes difficult for them to manage classroom efficiently.

According to Pal (2025), learners' behavioral problems in remote areas affect the overall environment and create significant challenges for both teachers and students.

Schools can build a setting that promotes learning and personal growth by fostering a supportive and cooperative atmosphere, encouraging positive reinforcement, and practicing active listening.

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## Unsupportive Parents

Unsupported parents sometimes display emotional neglect, constant criticism, or conditional love, which can leave children feeling unloved. These parents may have unrealistic expectations to provide a nurturing environment. According to Regina (2023), parents who are unsupportive may demonstrate their lack of support in different ways, and such behaviors can have lasting effects on a child's emotional, psychological, and even physical well-being.

According to Participant 3, "There are times that parents are uncooperative, unsupportive parents in meeting the needs of learners can be mentally exhausting. There are times when I feel pressured to meet the needs of the learners."

Participant 4 added, "Emotionally, it can be challenging when learners cry, feel anxious, or struggle to adjust, carefully to the existing problems which is unsupportive parents."

Meanwhile, Participant 7 said that as an upland teacher, I always suffered from being alone in the classroom, because parents of the learners are uncooperative."

Finally, Participant 8 said, "I always faced emotional problems inside and outside the four walls of the classroom especially if the parents were uncooperative. There are times that parents were non-cooperative. I am always emotional and compassion fatigue."

This infers that teacher's emotional stress indicates that parents struggle to provide academic support to their children who require more guidance from school.

According to study, in the Philippines, unsupportive or disengaged parents often due to poverty, demanding work schedules, or, in some cases, broken family dynamics severely

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hinder learner academic performance, creating issues with focus, motivation, and emotional well-being. Low parental involvement, specifically in school-based activities and meetings, results in poorer student grades, higher anxiety, and increased rates of depression (Nigussie, 2023).

### **Coping Strategies of Upland Teachers**

Richardson and Watt (2021), upland teachers often employ adaptive coping mechanisms to manage stress. found that problem-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support, engaging in self-care, and participating in professional development, can enhance teacher resilience in challenging situations. Techannen-Moran and Hoy (2021) propose that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to persevere through adversity and maintain their enthusiasm for teaching, ultimately benefiting their students.

Based on the results of the study, the coping strategies of upland teachers were self-motivation and proper planning.

#### **Self-Motivation**

Self-motivation refers to the inner drive to achieve success and accomplish one's aspirations. Individuals with a high level of motivation are self-driven and capable of starting and completing tasks without being pushed by others. Having self-motivation is essential in reaching one's goals and attaining success in school, work, and other areas of life (Martin, 2026).

According to Participant 1, "I was able to manage the psychological and emotional through self-motivation by focusing on my purpose and the impact I make on my learners."

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Participant 5 said, "Self-awareness which regularly assess thoughts, biases, and stress that triggers to recognize when mental load is high or focus is shifting."

Further, Participant 6 explained, "I really do my best to balance my time. I always motivate myself to overcome the challenges encountered in the exercise of my duty as teacher assigned in upland school."

Finally, Participant 7 said, "I manage by practicing self-motivation, self-awareness, and stress management. Taking short breaks, maintaining healthy routine and ensuring proper rest."

This infers that upland teachers often set goals and create an action to accomplish those goals. They can take risk by stepping out of their comfort zone.

Baldwin and Gonzales (2026) explained that self-motivation is the ability to start and complete a task without being compelled by others. It plays an important role in helping individuals achieve their goals and succeed in schoolwork as well as in other areas of life. Self-motivation is valuable because it enables a person to accomplish desired objectives.

### **Proper Planning**

Proper planning is a principle emphasizing that thorough, proactive preparation is essential to achieve success and avoid failure. It highlights that dedicating time to organize, strategize, and prepare in advance reduces stress, minimizes mistakes, and ensures higher quality results in work, sports or life (Baker, 2026).

According to Participant 2, "I manage stress through proper planning, task prioritization, positive mindset, and seeking support from colleagues."

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Participant 3 also said, "I try to organize my tasks and my tasks through careful planning. Proper time management helps me reduce mental overload."

Much when Participant 4 said, "I remind myself that teaching in upland school needs careful planning not only for the learners but also to my co-teachers and school heads where I feel overwhelmed."

This infers that upland teachers are willing to compromise and manage their time more effectively and let go of things outside their control and focus on their own reactions.

Maniano (2024) confirm that safety plans within educational institutions are paramount to ensuring the physical security of both teachers and students. Measures such as emergency response protocols, violence prevention strategies, and a safe physical infrastructure contribute to creating an environment where teachers and students can focus on learning.

## **Proposed Wellness Program Based on the Results of the Study**

### **Rationale**

The proposed wellness program was made based on the results of the study focusing on upland teachers' resiliency in the performance of their duties as basis for wellness program in the selected schools district in the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

The main purpose of a wellness program for upland teachers is to promote their overall fitness and well-being in all aspects of life. This implies that teachers, parents, and learners involved in the program should follow activities or procedures designed to support their mental and spiritual health.

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The principal is the key person responsible for initiating a wellness program for teachers assigned primarily in upland elementary schools.

With the support of such a program, teachers can plan, implement, and manage wellness activities in their respective schools, enabling them to perform at their best in their profession.

The absence of wellness programs may negatively affect the lives of teachers, parents, and learners. It can also influence the academic performance of learners, as teachers and parents may not be able to give their full support in the teaching-learning process.

### **Sustainability of the Program**

The provisions of sustainability of the implementation of the wellness program for teachers, parents, and learners were provided on targeted support to an institution with a development need or problem. It is an effective way for them in building the capacity of a human being.

Promoting sustainability helps foster a better environment where teachers, parents, and learners can flourish, while also preserving resources for future generations so that social justice and a high quality of life may be sustained.

### **Objectives**

1. Identify the needs, interests, priorities, and availability of teachers, parents, learners, and the community in order to determine whether there are existing gaps that require attention and action.
2. Understand the full complexity of needs that will support the wellness program of the school

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3. Establish the goals that are addressed primarily to the needs of the teachers, parents, and learners in order develop skills in the enhancement of their needs.

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations proposed by the researcher.

#### Summary

This study was conducted to determine the experiences of upland teachers in the performance of their duties as basis for wellness program during the school year 2025-2026.

A total of eight (8) upland teachers were utilized as participants of the study. Four (4) schools district in the 1st Congressional District of Iloilo was represented by two (2) selected teachers assigned in upland elementary schools.

An interview questionnaire was used to gather data in identifying the factors that contribute to the resiliency and well-being of upland elementary school teachers in the performance of their duties.

The data needed for the study were collected through a researcher-made interview questionnaire. The initial draft of the instrument was submitted to a panel of experts in question construction for face and content validation. The instrument was evaluated using the eight-point criteria of Good and Scates.

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Before establishing the validity of the interview schedule developed by the researcher, each item was subjected to review and revision by experts in research, testing and assessment, and English.

Purposive sampling design was used in this study.

Based on the results of the study, the risks experienced by upland teachers in terms of psychological were mental stress and multiple tasks. In terms of emotional were learners' behavioral problem and unsupportive parents.

However, based on the results of the study, the coping strategies of upland teachers were self-motivation and proper planning.

## Insights

Based on the results of the study, the following insights were drawn:

Upland teachers face various job demands with significant psychological dimensions due to the nature of their work. Their welfare is crucial not only for their own quality of life but also for their capacity to effectively support children's development and education. This underscores the importance of examining the different factors that influence the well-being of this population.

The emotions of upland teachers shape how they respond to situations, direct their attention, and interpret information. These emotional experiences play a vital role in cognitive processes such as decision-making and problem-solving, which, in turn, influence their teaching practices and professional experiences.

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To cope with the challenges they encounter, upland teachers need to employ a combination of emotional, cognitive, and social coping strategies to manage stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. The success of educational efforts depends greatly on teachers' commitment to their professional responsibilities as they work toward achieving educational goals and, ultimately, shaping the lives of their learners.

## Recommendations

In view of the findings and insights gained from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Teachers directly involved in this study should be provided with highly motivating training programs that will help them better understand, accept, and effectively respond to their present situations.

There is also a need to address the lack of facilities in upland schools by improving school buildings, providing adequate learning materials, and ensuring access to essential services. Where possible, better communication tools and technology should be made available to help bridge the isolation experienced by teachers in remote areas.

In addition, non-teaching or unrelated tasks assigned to teachers should be minimized so they can focus more on instruction and learner development. Training programs should also be organized specifically to address the unique needs of upland educators, particularly in the area of multi-grade teaching.

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Moreover, providing higher salary benefits, hardship allowances, and faster promotion opportunities may help motivate and retain dedicated teachers in remote areas.

A copy of the proposed In-Service Training Program may also be distributed to other schools and, when appropriate, implemented in their respective institutions.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies be conducted to explore other variables not included in the present study.



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