

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARD COVID-19 PANDEMIC SAFETY, HEALTH PROTOCOLS, AND VACCINATION IN ZONE I DIVISION OF ZAMBALES

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are transitioning through an uncertain period in terms of their professional and personal lives. Apart from the obvious risks to physical health, the psychological impact of COVID-19 also carries significant threats and dangers to mental health and well-being as higher levels of anxiety and stress are further exacerbated by the ongoing uncertainty of the situation. The present study determined the attitude of teachers toward the COVID-19 pandemic safety and health protocols and vaccination among public-selected elementary school Teachers in Zone I Division of Zambales during the pandemic. The research study utilized a descriptive survey design with a survey questionnaire as the tool to collect information that best describes the existing problem by asking respondents about their perceptions about their attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic safety and health protocols and vaccination. Based on the findings conducted, the researcher concluded that majority of the respondents are typically female, young adults, whose area of specialization is English, married, Roman Catholic, with units in master's degree, teacher 1, and more than a decade in teaching. The respondents strongly agreed with the implementation of safety and health protocols at home, at the school, and community. Furthermore, the respondents strongly agreed with the implementation of vaccination of teachers as to the timing of vaccination, process of vaccination, and place of vaccination. Moreover, the attitude of teachers towards the implementation of safety and health protocols at home when grouped according to academic rank or position profile variables was significant, at the school when grouped according to civil status and number of years in teaching profile variables, at the community when grouped according to civil status and religious affiliation profile variables were significant. And lastly, the attitude of teachers towards the implementation of vaccination of teachers in terms of place of vaccination when grouped according to civil status profile variable was significant. The researcher provided the following recommendations based on the findings of the study: the school may provide complete protective equipment/material for COVID-19 and ensure that all their teachers will be vaccinated; schools should continue educating their teachers, students, and parents by providing seminars about the COVID 19 disease and the vaccine; school should plan or design a program/mechanism to achieve a sustainable safety and healthy school environment for teachers to work; a teacher should continue implementing Safety and Health Protocols in the community, school, and their home and provide correct information about the vaccine to the community; and a similar study may be conducted by adding other variables which are not addressed in this study.

Keywords: *Safety, Health Protocols, Vaccination*

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as an illness caused by a novel coronavirus, now called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV). According to Zisis Kozlakidis (2020) COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory infection that was first discovered in December 2019, in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China. SARS-CoV-2 belongs to the larger family of ribonucleic acid (RNA) viruses, leading to infections, from the common cold, to more serious diseases, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). The main symptoms of COVID-19 have been identified as fever, dry cough, fatigue, myalgia, shortness of breath, and dyspnea.

COVID-19 is characterized by rapid transmission and can occur through close contact with an infected person. The details of the disease are evolving. As such, this may not be the only way the transmission is occurring. COVID-19 has spread widely and rapidly, from Wuhan city, to other parts of the world, threatening the lives of many people. By the end of January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a public health emergency of international concern and called for the collaborative effort of all countries, to prevent its rapid spread. Later, the WHO declared COVID-19 a “global pandemic”.

Following the WHO declaration, countries around the globe have been leaning on response plans to respond to the pandemic and contain the virus. Following the confirmation of its the first case of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV, now COVID-19) in the Philippines was confirmed on 30 January 2020, in a 38-year-old woman who arrived from Wuhan. Two days later, the Philippines recorded the first death outside China on 01 February 2020.

The Philippine government declared a health emergency on 09 March, following a spike in new confirmed cases and local transmission.

The move will release funds to local governments and healthcare officials to handle any further surge in cases. The COVID-19 Code Alert system was revised upwards to Red Sublevel 2 on 12 March. Under normal circumstances, drugs and vaccines are reviewed for approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under a period of six months. President Rodrigo Duterte to fast-track the government's medical response to the pandemic signed an executive order on December 2, 2020 which allowed the FDA to grant emergency-use authorization (EUA) to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. An EUA for a particular vaccine would authorize the government to buy said vaccine and allow to use the same for the



vaccination program. An EUA would not authorize the commercial use of such vaccines or consent the use of the vaccine for personal use.

The call to prioritize teachers in COVID-19 education responses is not new. As early as March 2020, the International Taskforce on Teachers for Education 2030 launched an international Call for Action on Teachers to highlight critical measures that countries should take to support teachers in the global pandemic, including the protection of teachers' and students' health, safety and well-being.