



## Overcoming Obstacles: The Lived Experiences of MAPEH Teachers in Geographically Challenged High Schools in Samar Division

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### ABSTRACT

*This study explored the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in music, arts, physical education and health (MAPEH) in geographically-challenged high schools in the School Division of Samar, Philippines. The study utilized the qualitative approach particularly the method of phenomenology in understanding the experience of nine research participants who responded to an open-ended interview. From the data analysis, emerged the themes of challenges and struggles, aspirations, and coping mechanisms in perceived obstacles. Teachers who are devoted to their career and duty, find ways to overcome whatever pedagogical obstacles and challenges that may confront them; they develop contextualization and localization method to address difficult situations in geographically challenged work environments.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Among the many subjects offered by the Philippine Department of Education is the subject of MAPEH. MAPEH is an acronym for music, arts, physical education, and health, and it is offered as an integrated subject in Philippine high schools. Aside from its noble and useful content the MAPEH subject provides completeness to the multi-aspects of the human life as it provides a person's cultural, humanistic, and physical well-being. The latter aspect as exemplified in sports has an important role not only in keeping oneself healthy (Lopez, 2016) but also as a means to national and international linkages and cooperation through competition and collaboration.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution emphasizes that the state shall promote physical education and sports program, league competitions, amateur sports, including trainings for international competitions and to foster self-

discipline, teamwork, and excellence for a development of a healthy and alert citizenry (1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XV, Section 19).

Samar is one of the islands of the Philippines; it has moderate mountains and lush rainforest sliced through by rivers connecting the interior and the coast (Couttie, 2004). Most of its localities are found along the coast and also in smaller islands. The interior of the island is less populated compared to the coastal areas. In socio-economic and political terms, these areas are known as geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA). Due to their location, lack of transportation and communication services make it hard for the inhabitants thereof to avail of the necessary services in health, education and livelihood support. Schooling in these areas therefore suffers from such problems that disadvantage efforts for those engaged in the education process. Nonetheless, the Philippine government, through the Department of



Education shows determination in promoting education in those remote areas by sending teachers to teach students academics, civics, and MAPEH.

Despite the constitutional mandate to promote physical education and sports program in all schools, yet performance along this mandate remain poor. According to the national results on the consolidated mean percentage score (MPS) of 46.00 (Briones, 2018), the data manifests a low academic performance in Physical Education (Lopez, 2017) leading to the yearly decreasing performance of the country both in the Olympics and SEA Games. Generally, in the Philippines, Physical Education Program is beset with problems like scarcity of school facilities and number of classrooms and textbooks (Luistro, 2014) with 5,078 public secondary schools, and 1,589 of which are found in the GIDA (PSA, n.d.). In the Samar Division there are GIDA 33 schools or 40% of the total 83 secondary high schools. Due to their rough terrain and remote location, it is but common for the teachers to hike several kilometers while carrying book bags and other personal paraphernalia and report to school daily (Legaspi, 2012).

In the Philippine setting, research articles regarding the lived experiences of PE teachers rendering services in Sports development and Physical education program in GIDA places were very few (Abcalen, 2015). This study is a perfect avenue to explore the lived experiences through the lenses of teachers and in an understanding their coping mechanisms amidst challenges in teaching and learning environments.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The researchers utilized the qualitative method of Husserlian phenomenology in order to obtain insight into people's behaviors, attitudes, motivations, aspirations, culture, experiences, lifestyles and even knowledge (Spiegelberg, 1994). In this study, the method was used to explore the lived experiences gained by the MAPEH teachers from the geographically challenged high school in Samar Division in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of their activities and behavior. The researcher utilized an interview guide for the conduct of informal interview and observation. The entire procedure was recorded and documented. Experts in qualitative research as well as

teachers in MAPEH reviewed and validated the interview guide.

### Research Samples

The study focused on the lived experiences of all nine MAPEH teachers who were either specializing in MAPEH and those who were not. These were teachers assigned in Samar Division which includes Baquew National High School in Tagapul-an, Costa Rica National High School in Almagro, Birawan National High School in Daram in the island-localities, as well as Casapa National High School and Malino National High School in Jiabong, and San Andres National High School in Villareal in the interior part of Samar. They had been teaching the subject for two to 10 years.

### Data Collection

The researchers conducted informal interview and observation on the participants who were employed as teachers to the identified geographically challenged high schools. Participants were interviewed, and all of the interviews and observations were conducted by the researchers. All MAPEH Teachers (both major and non-majors) were the respondents who were engaged in the study.

### Validation of Instrument

The researchers used expert validation by presenting the interview guide to the research adviser, research teacher, panellist, and MAPEH teachers. Comments and suggestions served as bases for the researcher to finalize the instrument and were then incorporated to the interview guide.

### Data Analysis

Colaizzi's method of data analysis comprising of seven steps was utilized (Colaizzi, 1978, Sanders, 2003). Each transcript was read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content, for each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study were extracted. These statements were recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and lines numbers. Meanings were then formulated from these significant statements. Then, the formulated meanings were sorted into categories, sub-themes, and themes. The findings of the study were integrated into an



exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was described. Finally, validation of the findings from the research participants was compared to the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

### Ethical Considerations

The researchers made representations with the school in the conduct of the study. The researchers also sought for the waiver and consent from the participants in the interview, informing them of the purpose of the study and the benefits sought to be derived therefrom. Participants' anonymity was assured and safeguarded. They were also informed of the option to withdraw from the proceedings at their convenience or when they felt it was necessary.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data analysis, three themes emerged, to wit: (1) Challenges and Struggles; (2) Aspirations; and (3) Coping Mechanisms in perceived obstacles.

### Theme 1. Challenges and Struggles.

This is further described by sub-themes of scarcity of classroom, difficulty of access to learning materials, inadequate knowledge of the assigned MAPEH teachers, challenges in the pedagogy of MAPEH teachers in the isolated high schools, problems in handling students, lack of support system from the co-teachers and school heads.

**Subtheme A. Classroom Scarcity.** This is supported by the following responses:

*"Kinahanglan namon magborrow san room sa elementary para la ma accommodate amun students. An amun classroom mga makeshifts la mga turo pagud an atop so babaga an dire siya conducive for learning".* (We need to use classrooms in the elementary school to accommodate our students. We use makeshift classrooms where roofs leak and these are not conducive for learning - Teacher 1).

*"Danay tungod kay waray room, an 2 ka sections ig-uusa nala namun. Bali 84 tanan sa usa nga room, an iba waray lingkuran tapos waray electric fan mapaso sa sakob. An tendency, kasasakit sa but-ol nga maaringasa dire sira nahihibaro".* (Since there are no available classrooms, we need to fuse two classes so 84 students are congested in one classroom. Other students do not have chairs

anymore, and the room is very hot because there is no electric fan. I sometimes get sore throat. They do not pay attention that is why there is no learning at all – Teacher 2).

*"Nagkklase kami sa gawas since kulang classroom, peru ok la kay MAPEH mangud, kailangan talaga an activity".*

(We hold classes outside since we do not have enough classrooms, but it is fine since MAPEH requires more on activities – Teacher 6).

The scarcity of classrooms experienced in the geographically had challenged high schools in Samar Division. Most of the classrooms were borrowed from the nearby elementary and they tend to fuse the two sections in one classrooms which was not conducive for learning. (Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3).

Classroom environment is one of the most important factors affecting student learning. Simply put, students learn better when they view the learning environment as positive and supportive. A positive environment is one in which students feel a sense of belonging, trust others, and feel encouraged to tackle challenges, take risks, and ask questions (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2017).

**Subtheme B: Access to Learning Materials is impossible to reach in the far – flung schools.** This is supported by the following narratives:

*"As a MAPEH teacher, waray available nga mga modules ngan materials danay nakukurian kami...since waray kami liwat internet connection an school ngan signal sa lugar kinahanglan pa namun kumadto sa Catbalogan para la mag download".* (As a MAPEH teacher, one problem is the absence of modules and materials that is why it is very hard for us. Since our school does not have both internet connection and signal, we need to go to Catbalogan just to download our materials – Teacher 1).

*"An MPS san MAPEH ansya an pinakahamubo sa ngatan nga subjects kay kulang kami libro as reference materials".* (The MPS of MAPEH is the lowest among all the subjects because we lack books as reference materials – Teacher 2).

*"Waray kami books, Grade 7 kay diba amo kasi adto an pinaka syahan, so waray kami hadto mga books nga pwede namun magamit, so an curriculum syempre an mga competencies man didto an aton susundan, so nakukurian kami kay waray books, then an competencies niya hirayo hinduro labi na san mga books nga*



*ginhatag*". (We don't have books for Grade 7 to be used, and it is hard for us to follow the competencies in the curriculum because sometimes the competencies are unattainable – Teacher 3).

*"Makuri amon teaching experience didto kay waray libro, waray reference kailangan pa ig research tos kuri pa kay waray internet ngadto kay waray signal. Waray liwat kmi san school igprovide san CG's and TG's".* (I have a very difficult teaching experience because we don't have books, no references to be used, no internet connect, no signal. The school does not provide us CGs and TGs – Teacher 4).

*"Advantage sa mainland kasi during san PE Class or music, pagkadi sa music teaching ada na an mga instruments san ira available where as did kinahanglan man gud an local or an contextualize teaching".* (It is an advantage for the mainland schools to have their instruments ready for their Music and PE classes, while we need to use local materials and contextualize our teaching – Teacher 5).

*"I struggle talaga hin text books, we only have 10 textbooks peru akun klase is 60, so kakuri".* (One struggle I face is the lack of textbooks. We only have 10 available textbooks for a class with 60 students, and it is very difficult – Teacher 6).

Most of the respondents do not have modules and they cannot access to the internet hence the schools were located in the isolated areas and most of their learning materials were downloaded coming from the cities (Teacher 1, Teacher 4, and Teacher 2). Others perceived about the content in the curriculum and that it irrelevant to the learners' situations and at times unattainable competencies (Teachers 3 and 5).

The importance of Instructional Materials or Educational resources is to improve students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, to monitor their assimilation of information, and to contribute to their overall development and upbringing. It also clarifies important concepts to arouse and sustain student's interests, give all students in a class the opportunity to share experiences necessary for new learning, help make learning more permanent (Marbas, 2017).

**Subtheme C. Knowledge inadequacy among of the handling MAPEH.** This is evidenced by statements like:

*"Pagnagpapakadto ako sa Catbalogan, nagdownload gud ako mga music nga magagamit ko gud, kay may ada kasi sa libro mga ginpaparefer nga ha youtube meada sira ginhahatag sa urhi na dapat iplay sa klase".*

(When I go to Catbalogan City, I see to it that I can download music which I can use in my classes. Some books suggest materials from Youtube as a reference that can be used in class – Teacher 1).

*"Maiha kami maka proceed san next topic kay diba English an MAPEH so kailangan namun nga warayun talga para la maintindihan talaga".* (We cannot proceed immediately to the next topic because MAPEH use English as a medium of instruction, so I still need to code switch to aid in understanding – Teacher 2).

*"Sa music kaurugan itun nga akun na propoblemahan kay an mga kabataan kasi pag – abot sa music minsan dire nakakaintindi kay mga classical music na bobored. Ginrrelate ko nala sa yana nga mga singers".* (One problem in teaching music is the students' understanding of classical music because it bores them. What I do is to relate the lesson to the present singers that we have – Teacher 7).

*"We have four components in MAPEH, and I found out nga an pinakamakuri is an Music talaga".* (We have four components in MAPEH, and I found out that Music is the most difficult component – Teacher 9).

Teachers struggle a lot because of the integration of classical music to the curriculum and other foreign music (Teacher 7 and Teacher 9). The subject also used English language making it hard to understand among the learners and the teachers need to download learning resources in the nearby city (Teacher 1 and Teacher 2).

Supelveda (2018) emphasizes that language barriers can be a great hindrance in teaching process. The use of long sentences and unfamiliar words can be a great struggle in teaching. Martir (2018) also highlights that subject content must be relevant to the learners for them to fully understand the concept of the subject. The availability of the learning resources also helps the learner in comprehending things, for without it teaching – learning process will be unmanageable.

**Subtheme D. Challenges in the pedagogy of MAPEH Teachers in the Isolated High Schools.** This is amplified in the following statements:

*"Tungod kaya di kami sa harayo ng lugar bibihira la an nakadi so danay maski dire ko major gintututduan ko nala".* (Because of the remote location of our school, we are often visited by the supervisor that is why even if it is not my major, I am forced to teach the subject – Teacher 1).



*“Ginkarawat ko kay magalang an mga students makuri pag adjust kay makuri sira tutduan kay halipot la ira attention, plus waray pa libro and teachers guide”. (I accepted the job because the students are polite. It is very hard to adjust because they have short attention and we also do not have books and teacher guides – Teacher 2).*

*“As a teacher san harayo nga school, danay overload na kami kay tag walo amun subjects, kapot ko an Grades 7 and 10 meada ako subject nga MAPEH, araling panlipunan ngan ESP. Makuri talaga igmanage an 80 plus nga mga students in one classroom, iba – iba an attitude, mahirap e control.” (As a teacher in a far flung school, sometimes I am overloaded because we are handling eight subjects. I am handling Grades 7 to 10. I teach MAPEH, Social Studies and ESP. It is indeed very hard to manage more than 80 students in one classroom especially that the attitude of these students is uncontrollable – Teacher 3).*

*“In terms san sports, waray kami equipments nga ginpoprovide an school, like for example an throwing events, sa running event naman an pinaka place is dire patag makuri kaya da mismo siya sa Baranggay, dire ine appropriate for training delikado”. (In terms of sports, we don’t have enough equipment because the school cannot provide for them such as for the throwing events. In the running event, the place (topography) is very bumpy and it is difficult to have it the barangay, it is a not appropriate for training; very dangerous.– Teacher 6).*

*“As a non MAPEH major, nakurian ak sa katikangan because dire man ak talaga MAPEH major, since ginhatag sa akun an MAPEH, ginkarawat ko itun labi na san nahibaro ako nga upat ngean itunnga components tos upat nga computations”. (As a non MAPEH major, I struggle a lot in handling this subject because I am not really trained for this. Since they have given me the subject, I just accepted it. It has added to my burden when I found out that the subject is composed of four areas and that it requires four computations – Teacher 7).*

*“Bilang isang MAPEH teacher ay isang mahirap na gawin sympre dapat flexible kami. Pagmaghimo kami san amun lesson plan, an grades kay 4 components gud itun hiya, makadi sa music paano mo man ito igtututdo? Makuri talaga igtutdo an music kay you know what dire gud ak madati ha music, maaram ako kumanta maaram ako kun paano ito ipahibaro sa ira an mga different notes, an mga pitch names peru pagbasa nah an mga notes doon ako nagkakaroon ng problema.” (Being a MAPEH*

teacher is a hard job simply because we need to be flexible. When we make our lesson plans, the grades should be in four components, in music how could I able to teach? Music is indeed a very hard component you know why? I could hardly understand it. I know how to sing. I also know how to transfer the knowledge to my learners such as the different notes and pitch names. However, when it comes to reading musical notes, it gives me the problem. – Teacher 8).

Teachers in the GIDA schools are struggling to teach MAPEH due to its location (Teacher 1) and the over loading of subjects being taught since there are only few teachers in the school (Teacher 3). Shortage of learning materials (Teacher 2) and the unavailability of sports facilities (Teacher 6) hinders the teachers in teaching the subject. For the non MAPEH majors, they were not fully trained in handling the subject (Teacher 7) likewise for the MAPEH majors, it was also a challenge for them because the components were not relevant to the learners’ current situations (Teacher 8).

According to Majoni (2017), distance and the overloading of subject loads greatly affect the quality of teaching. Similarly, the absence of materials and equipment also affects the pedagogy. Mupa (2015) also believes that in order for the learners to understand the concept and become aware of the lessons it should be relevant to them.

**Subtheme E. Problems of the Teachers in Handling their Students.** This is illustrated in the following testimony:

*“Nakaka encounter ako mga estudyante nga naato talaga sa imo, itun nga imo ginsasaway peru gindadaku-an ka la boses ngan ginduduro ka la...may ada liwat, waray kami mga students every Thursday kay adto nagtatrabaho. Ginsusugu sira san ira mga parents pamalit or else waray sira kakaunon.” (I have encountered students who will actually fight back. There are times when you ask them to behave, but they will just shout in return. There are times when we don’t not have any students on Thursdays because they are working in the farm while others are being tasked by their parents to buy in the mainland or else they do not have any food – Teacher 4).*

*“Usually teaching special students or those with special needs. Kay there are some nga kailangan mo gud pakisabutan peru dire mo la lalabtan san tiupay nga an pagdisiplina dire the same san regular students kasi didi sa island meada gud kita mga students nga may special needs and we do not have special teachers nga kinahanglan maghandle sa ira.” (Usually teaching special students or those with special needs*



really challenges me a lot because there are some that you need to please. I discipline these students differently from my regular students. In this island, I have students that need special attentions and we do not have special education teachers to handle these kinds of students – Teacher 5).

*“An mga kabataan nga ira behaviors nira nga mga agresibo mga pasaway. Meada ako 3 out of 50 students’ nga dire talaga sira makafocus, tos nagdidiscuss ako. I think there is a slight insanity peru dire koi to gin-iisip kay you know what special hiya sa akun peru gin –iintindi ko hiya kun ginpapaano ko hiya mapapa –amo an iya mga classmate yan kun paano liwat siya magbebehave sa eskwelahan kay iya mga classmate gin sasakitan kay kakaiba siya, so gin kakaestorya ko iya nanay kun ano ba talaga ine iya problema, nasiring an nanay nga paiba – iba kuno itun iya mode, so ine nga bata is meada bipolar disorder, nalaman ko liwat nga may problema sa ira balay in terms san ira pagkaun, kay itun nga bataa ginsusugo man ngean ito pagpakabuhi.”* (The students’ behaviors are very aggressive and hard headed. I have three out of 50 students who could not focus on the discussions. I think there is a slight insanity, but I never thought of that because I treat them as special or close to my heart. I am trying to understand them, and how I could be able to please them. I wanted to know how they should behave in my class because their classmates keep on bullying them for the reason that they are different from the regular students. What I did was to conduct home visitation and even talked to the parents. According to the mother, he showed different attitudes and modes. In my observations, this student has a bipolar disorder. I also discovered that even in their own home there are problems encountered by this student. For example, they are tasked to do a work for a living to have food – Teacher 8).

Aside from the problems on the curriculum, the teachers also face from their students, wherein they encountered students with aggressive behaviors, undisciplined and student with special needs in the GIDA schools, where the access to education was limited. According to Sun, Daniel, and Shek (2012) research findings have shown that school misbehavior not only escalated with time but also lowered academic achievement and increased delinquent behavior, most of the learners who were misbehaving were the results of problems in family and mental or emotional problems specially in the remote places where medications seems impossible to reach.

**Subtheme F. Lack of Support system from the Co – teachers and School Head.** This is expressed in the following narration:

*“Amon kasi school head, parang wala siyang focus pagdating sa sports, sabi pa nya walang nagagawa ang sports sa mga bata kasi ang focus niya is academics, as a result nawawarayan na gana. As a MAPEH teacher, masakit yun, because dapat ansya iton an imo pinakagamit sa school. Our target as a MAPEH major is hindi lang madevelop mentally but physically as well imo mga bata.”* (Our school head doesn’t support sports activities. According to her “sports could not do anything when it comes to the learning of the students”. Her focus is purely in academics. As a result, I have lost my eagerness to contribute to the school. As a MAPEH teacher, it is very painful because it is supposedly your purpose in school. Our target as a MAPEH major is not only to develop our learners mentally but also their physical well-being – Teacher 3).

*“In terms of choosing an athletes, sometimes nagkakmeada discrimination kay mead mga mag iha na nga teachers tos naghahandle nira MAPEH liwat, sko being the only 1 MAPEH major in CASAPA tos babaye pagud, dire sira namamati sa akun.”* (In terms of choosing athletes, sometimes there is discrimination because there are teachers that handle MAPEH for a long time. Being the only MAPEH major and it happens that I am the only girl in our school; they don’t listen to all my suggestions and ideas – Teacher 4).

In most schools that the researchers visited, “seniority” becomes an issue to the teachers, they cannot fully express their opinions during school conferences. The school heads also seldom visited the school (Teacher 3 and Teacher 4). Most of the stress that teachers encountered in workplace was because of the peers and the school head. In the study, work-related stress was due to peer discrimination and lack of support coming frothier superiors (Agai-Demjaha et al. 2015).

## Theme 2. Aspirations.

This is described further in sub-themes of facilities and equipment, Curriculum Content of DepED. Thus:

### Subtheme A. Facilities and Equipment.

*“Dapat an depEd igprovide an mga materials like CDs or downloadable videos para magamit san mga bata ngan MPAEH teachers sa ira klase kay para mas madali an teaching process...para maging globally competitive an mga bata dapat modernize na an tanan maski an classroom.”* (DepEd should provide the materials



like CDs or downloadable videos so that the learners and MAPEH teachers could use it in their respective classes. This would also ease their teaching process. To produce globally competitive learners, our classrooms should be modernized - Teacher 1).

*“Dapat an government magprovide additional building tos mga facilities and equipment’s para mas ma enhance pa namun an amun teaching ngan ma experience san mga bata. Harayo han duro amun school so dire kami amaaram san mga nahihitabo sa mailand.”* (The government should provide additional buildings, facilities and equipment so that we could enhance our teaching and students would be able to experience new things. Our school is very far and we are not updated about the latest in the mainland – Teacher 2).

*“Sana po tagaan kami san buildings kay overcrowded gudman kami, waray kami covered court para san mga PE activities and internet connectivity.”* (We are hoping that we would be able to have buildings because our classes are overcrowded, and we don’t have covered courts to conduct PE activities. We also do not have internet connections – Teacher 3).

*“Dapat unahon san gobyerno nga ayuson anay an transportation kay maiha na ito nga ginrereklamo. Tapos an facilities and materials kay ako personally an napalit, imbes nga para san akun mga anak ngan pamilya nahihingadto nala sa akun mga needs for school.”* (The government should prioritize first fixing the issue on transportation because it has been a complaint for a long time. We also need some facilities and materials because I provide them personally. Instead of using the money for my sons and family, I just use it for my needs in school – Teacher 4).

*“Didi sa island dapat tagan san government an school san mga motorboat para dire malate an mga bata kay nagbabaktas pa sira for an hour.”* (The government should provide schools in the islands with motorboats so that students will not become late because they walk for an hour just to be in school on time – Teacher 5).

*“Since an depEd kay nag iimplement san sports dapat igprovide nira mga equipments para magamit sa mga activity. As a teacher dire man natun maprovide ngatanan kay limited la atun salary. Dire la sa sports, sa ngatanan nga aspeto, libro most specially.”* (Since DepEd is implementing sports, they should provide schools with equipment for us to use it in the activities. As a teacher, I cannot provide everything because we have a very limited salary. This should be

done not only in sports but also in every aspect especially books – Teacher 6).

Since MAPEH teachers were stationed in the Geographically Challenged High Schools, there were scarcity of equipment and learning materials for them to use. The learning materials that the teachers were using was obsolete and it does not fit in this modern world of technology (Teacher 1 and Teacher 6). Most of the far – flung schools were lack of classrooms and school buildings. Transportation problem was also pressing, teachers were worried to the possible hazard students might encounter on their way to school or back home (Teacher 2, 3, 4, and Teacher 5). According to Briones (2015) and Lapus (2011), the availability of materials which are fit and essential for the competency being taught and assessed is very vital in teaching, most specially that the Department of Education is aiming to produce globally competitive graduates.

#### **Subtheme B. Teachers Complaints about the Curriculum Content of DepED.**

*“Instead of music san ibang bansa, why not focus nala kita san atun nala music para nakakarelata an mga bata kun nanu talaga, para makafocus sira.”* (Instead of music from other countries, why not focus on our own music so that learners could understand it better, and they will be able to focus as well – Teacher 7).

*“Para makaproduce san quality education an mga teachers ngadto san ira mga estudyante, para maibulig ngadto san mga kabataan, kunta igsend kami ngadto san mga expert san music, expert san mga arts, PE ngan health, tagan pa kami exposure heto para kun magkanano man, we have enough knowledge to teach the students those who do not know to execute properly kun paano sira magbabasa mga notes.”* (To produce quality education, the teachers should be exposed to experts in music, art, PE and health. They should give us more opportunities so that we would have enough knowledge to teach students how to execute properly and how to read the musical notes properly – Teacher 8).

*“Igfocus anay kunta sa basic anay kay an ira kasi ginbutang sa curriculum is mga culture nagn iba – iba nga instruments nga dire man related sa atun...maghatag pa sira mga learning materials nga makakabulig sa mga bata.”* (DepEd should focus to the basics first because what they put in the curriculum are the culture and different musical instruments which are relevant in our country. They should also give learning materials which would help the learners – Teacher 9).



Teachers were struggling in coping with the curriculum content, hence it is irrelevant to the learners need and location. Music component in MAPEH was considered the hardest by the teachers in the GIDA schools because it was mostly about foreign music and that learners could hardly relate to it. Even the teachers as well as are hard to understand the concept because of the absence of trainings. In DepEd Curriculum Guide for MAPEH, the Philippine setting for Music, Art, PE and Health was mainly discussed in Grade 7 while in Grade 8 to Grade 10 discusses Asian Music, European Music and American Music. According to Abcalen (2015) even the teachers themselves do not know the basics in Music, and a little knowledge in the Philippine music, what more if the teachers will be discussing the Music of the world. The needs of teachers training in MAPEH was cited by Enriquez (2017), teachers must be trained even further and the idea of redirecting our curriculum and competencies to fully understand the concept must be considered by policy makers.

### **Theme 3. Coping strategies in perceived obstacles.**

This is emphasized in the sub-themes of contextualization of the topic and teacher initiatives in the flung schools in the Division, as the following statements portray:

#### **Subtheme A. Contextualization of the Topic.**

*“Amon ginbubuhay nagresearch pa kami, then an problema na liwat is maluya dinhi it internet, so bisan anhon amon pagresearch kay gagamiton unta namun sa klase dire namun magagamit so an akun ginhihimo is nagcocontextualize as long as parang related lang hiya san competencies nga aadto san curriculum guide.”* (What we do is we would research for more information about the topic but the problem is that internet connection is very slow so no matter how eager we research because we will be using it in our class, it is useless. So, we contextualize our topic as long as it is still related to the competencies and the curriculum – Teacher 3).

*“I am teaching MAPEH for almost 5 years. Being a sport minded individual I focused mostly on teaching sports specially PE. Tungod kay harayo man gud an school, na-focus ako san individual sports specially san athletics nga pwede siya magkameada sn individual trainings unlike san mga team sports.”* (I am teaching MAPEH for almost five years. As a sport minded individual, I focused mostly on teaching sports specially PE. Because the school is far, we only focus on individual events especially in athletics so we can train our athletes individually unlike team sports - Teacher 6).

In the far-flung areas, the absence of electricity and signal for internet connectivity prompts the teachers to contextualize and localize teaching materials and even strategies (Teacher 3 and Teacher 6). According to Fernandez (2012) contextualized teaching and learning builds upon a similar concept of putting academic activities into perspective to achieve the best teaching and learning outcomes. As cited also by Leite (2017) the concept of localization and contextualization falls on the idea that students learn best when experiences in the classroom have meanings and relevance in their lives. Things students do and associate with them are the learning that last forever.

#### **Subtheme B. Teachers Initiatives in the far-flung schools in Samar Division.**

*“Sa equipment and facilities nagamit ko san mga students made instruments and innovations para waray gastos...danay nagdadara nala ak liwat instruments tikang sa mainland nga pwede ko magamit sa klase.”* (The equipment and facilities which I used are all student – made instruments and innovations. The advantage is we never spent that much. Sometimes, I would bring instruments from the city which I can use in my classes – Teacher 5).

*“Kun ano an available nga mga materials or equipments nga pwede magamit para maging model ansya nala akun gingagamit.”* (I use the available materials or equipment as a model to teach my students for them to understand better – Teacher 6).

*“Meada kami culminating activities nga ginhihimo, sa art ginhahayaan ko sira nga mag explore sira kun nano gud talaga ira skills, sa music imbes nga foreign music, I let them appreciate our own music.”* (We are conducting a culminating activity. In arts for example, I let them explore new possibilities until they develop their skills. In music, instead of foreign music, I let them appreciate our own music – Teacher 7).

Based on the utterances, the teachers used materials that were available in the community. Teachers even use local materials and student – made outputs to recreate the materials or equipment needed for the certain lesson (Teacher 5, Teacher 6 and Teacher 7). According to Mouraz (2016), students learn resourcefulness through the practice of being goal directed. Teachers provide environments that foster resourcefulness when they encourage students to plan, strategize, prioritize, set goals, seek resources, and monitor their progress.

The result of this study showed the emergence of three major themes that would





describe the lived experiences of MAPEH Teachers in the Geographically Challenged High Schools in Samar Division and these are: challenges and struggles, aspirations, and coping mechanisms in perceived obstacles. Secondary school teachers assigned in geographically challenged high schools in Samar Division experienced a lot of challenges and concerns. Teaching in remote areas of Samar and in many parts of the Philippines present great challenges for the teachers (Mutereko & Chitakunye, 2014; Javilla & Fabella, 2019; Quejada & Orale, 2018).

That teachers were able to face these overwhelming geographic, pedagogical and socio-cultural challenges, and not showing any feeling of retreat or surrender seems to be part of a sense of commitment in the teaching career despite the obstacles (Javilla & Fabella, 2019).

The extraordinary courage of this kind of professionals is supported by the work calling theory by Duffy, et al. (2018); Guinness, (2018), and their their knack to find means and ways to deal with these challenges is associated by work adaptation theory by Dovey & Fisher (2014), and cultural learning theory by Vygotsky (McLeod, 2014).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Teachers in geographically challenged areas in Samar, who are devoted to their career and duty, find ways to overcome whatever pedagogical obstacles and challenges that may confront them; they develop contextualization and localization method to address difficult situations in far-flung work environments. Despite these challenges, these teachers were able to surmount them through various forms of initiatives and contextualization strategies. These initiatives were bringing own instructional resources from the city, teaching local music rather than the foreign ones, making use of student-made project, or just utilized whatever materials locally available. For contextualization, teachers used this strategy due to lack of internet resources. In P.E. and sports classes, for instance, the teacher would emphasize instruction on individualized sports of athletics, rather than group games.

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