

# Plight of Teachers in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order: Some Stories to Tell

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of the phenomenological study was to find out the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of teachers who were assigned in the area with unstable situation in the province of Agusan del Sur and Compostela Valley for the year 2015. In-depth-interview and focus group discussion were used in gathering the responses of 14 participants and key informants. The teachers expressed that they experienced disruption of classes, direct traumatic encounters, psychological distress, learner's vulnerability to the situation, development of character, opportunities for support and assistance and grievance. Coping mechanisms include education and training for disaster preparation, vigilance, collaboration and support mechanism, grace under pressure and belief in divine intervention. Finally, the teachers shared also some notable insights like impact to the learner's situation and the vital role of the teachers.*

**Keywords:** educational management, plight of teachers, unstable peace and order, stories to tell, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

In several conflict-affected countries, admission to good quality education is seriously endangered not only due to the direct effects of fighting, but also because schools, teachers, students and staff are vulnerable to severe attacks. Burning, shelling and bombing of schools, the occupation of schools by armed forces, the murder, torture, abduction and rape of teachers, students, education aid workers and school staff by armed groups or military forces, and the forced recruitment of child soldiers are common scenarios in the areas with unstable peace and order situation. Eventually, these harms lead to the death of teachers and students, the devastation of infrastructure, which resulted to severe psychological trauma to the students, parents and teachers (Cabrera, 2012; O'Malley 2007; 2010; UNESCO, 2011).

Moreover, in areas of armed conflict, teachers' performance in teaching is greatly affected, as well as their lives. It gives a grave danger to education and put their lives at risk simply by going to work and doing their job. Conflict in areas reduce the teaching performance, and hamper the growth of education and employment cycles, which has impact to the country's development as well (UNESCO, 2010; Kos, 2003; GCPEA, 2014). Teachers play a crucial role in enlightening and inspiring the next generation of leaders. They serve as the very influential people in children's lives, for they can make a real difference by using their both their inborn capabilities and those developed through the learning process and experiences within their professional work helping children. However, this mission is not fulfilled well due to the conflict in the areas where they are assigned (Kos, 2003).

Additionally, amidst the repeated incidents and threats of attack, children are afraid to go to school, parents were apprehensive in sending them to school and teachers have fear to go to work. Schools will be closed to prevent attacks and governments may be reluctant to reopen schools because

intimidation of attack may still be present. They will also find it hard to restore teachers in the areas targeted. These effects will have long term effects for the type and quality of schooling available to children in areas of violence (Mulkeen, 2007; Justino, 2010; Kos, 2003; UNESCO, 2013).

I am a school in charge of Candiis Elementary School. The area is an armed conflict area where several incidents of wars and bombings occurred many times in a year. Every time it happens, it is a nerve-breaking moment for me, considering that I, as the head of the school have the responsibility to protect the lives of the children and teachers. The situation and scenario have led me to conduct this study to describe the experiences of the teachers teaching in the armed conflict areas and to identify as well their coping mechanisms.

I browsed several studies that dealt about unstable peace and order situation, yet, I have not come across a study which is qualitative phenomenological in approach just like the study that I have undertaken. Therefore, this fills in the research gap, and considering the contribution it provided to the beneficiaries of the study, I consider this qualitative study of social relevance.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences of the teachers in areas with peace and order problem. This focused on their teaching experiences, challenges and their coping mechanisms in the school of Compostela Valley Province and Agusan del Sur for the school year 2015-2016. It has been noticed that teachers assigned in remote areas in which peace and order problem is observed share different experiences particularly elementary school teachers. This study found out the experiences of the teachers in areas with peace and order problem hoping that their experiences can contribute to the welfare of the teachers, school administrators, students and parents.

## Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are the following:

- 1) What are the experiences of teachers in areas with unstable peace and order?
- 2) How do the teachers assigned in areas with unstable peace and order cope with their situation?
- 3) What are the insights of teachers in areas with unstable peace and order?

## Theoretical Lens

This study was anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory which attempts to explain socialization and its effect of the development of the self. Social learning theory, looks at the individual learning process, the formation of self, and the influence of society in socializing individuals. Furthermore, social learning theory considers the formation of one's identity to be a learned response to social stimuli. It emphasizes the societal context of socialization rather than the individual mind. This theory postulates that an individual's identity is not the product of the unconscious (such as the belief of psychoanalytic theorists), but instead is the result of modeling oneself in response to the expectations of others. Behaviors and attitudes develop in response to reinforcement and encouragement from the people around us. While social learning theorists acknowledge that childhood experience is important, they also believe that the identity people acquire is formed more by the behaviors and attitudes of others (Crossman, 2011).

This is supported by theory of learning by Piaget, which stressed that learning is what results from both mental and physical maturation plus experience. That is, development preceded learning. In contrast, Vygotsky observed that learning processes lead development. Vygotsky maintained that learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions. In other words, learning is what leads to the development of higher order thinking.

Moreover, this is also parallel to the theory of social Interaction by Vygotsky stating that the two primary means of learning occur through social interaction and language. Language greatly enhances humans' ability to engage in social interactions and share their experiences. The most important fact uncovered through the study of thought and speech is that their relationship undergoes many changes. Initially, a child's new knowledge is inter-psychological, meaning it is learned through interaction with others, on the social level. Later, this same knowledge becomes intra-psychological, meaning inside the child, and the new knowledge or skill is mastered on an individual level (Dahms et.al, 2007).

I have chosen these theories for these have provided a full discussion of the teachers' behavior and attitudes through the influence of society. The theories have presented the root cause of the individual personality on the experiences they encountered in a certain society. This is related to what the investigation is focused into, for it documented the experiences, coping mechanism and insights of the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable situation.

## Significance of the Study

Teacher is the most important person in classroom setting. They served as the instrument in changing the lives of an individual in a community through education. Moreover, teachers accept the profession in the field with no regret even if they will be assigned in far flung areas or even in armed conflict areas respectively. The study on the teaching in armed conflict areas some stories to tell attempted to unravel and give a clearer insight on the different teaching experiences encountered by teachers in armed conflict areas. It gives also a vivid idea on the different reactions with regards to the teachers' profile; gender, age, and teaching experience. Furthermore, this also created a better perception on the students that have attempted to study education and to teachers who engaged in teaching profession and administrators as well.

The main reason that hinders teachers in teaching in remote areas and asking for immediate transfer is due to threat of insurgency. It is a critical area or else it feels more like a third-world country- there's so much violence, ignorance, drugs, poverty, etc.

The data gathered and analyzed in this study provided a deeper understanding on how teachers cope with the situation in the armed conflict areas. Further, this study aimed to establish factors that acknowledge and value the teachers in armed conflict areas.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined operationally for better understanding:

- ***Plight of Teachers.*** In this study, this refers to the dilemma or troubles experienced by the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order problem.
- ***Some Stories to Tell.*** In this study, it signifies the experiences, challenges and insights of the teachers who are assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation.
- ***Areas with Unstable Peace and Order.*** This refers to the areas in the province of Agusan del Sur and Compostela Valley which armed conflict usually occur.

## Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This qualitative study was delimited to discovering the views and experiences of teachers in the teaching profession identified areas with unstable peace and order situation. The data of this study were limited only to the responses and experiences of the seven teachers having different profile (gender, age, and teaching experience) from different schools in district of Veruela II, and in Laak North District where they are teaching based on the defined interview guide. Further, this study was confined to the results of the in-depth interviews of seven teachers.

There were few constraints in this qualitative study as the data and results gathered from the interviews and observations could not be used to generalize the entire population of teachers who are in the field of teaching in armed conflict areas. Furthermore, I cannot guarantee that the seven identified teachers answered and responded

sincerely to each of the questions I asked, hence, this is generalizable.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized and arranged in an order, which can be easily identified and comprehended by the readers. Below is the comprehensive presentation and discussion of the organization of the study.

Chapter 1 is the inclusive presentation of the introduction of the study, which includes some problem situations on the teaching experiences of teachers in armed conflict areas. It is followed by the purpose of study, which states the intention in the conduct of the study. Research questions which consist of interview guide questions that are formulated and validated in order to acquire responses from the informants to attain the aim of the study. It is followed by a theoretical lens, which compose of supporting studies and theories that the study is anchored to. Next, the significance of the study, which discussed who were the beneficiaries of the study, the definition of terms, which is operationally defined in order to give clear and comprehensive interpretations. It is followed by the delimitations and limitations of the study that is presented to show the parameters of the study. Lastly is the statement on the organization of this study.

Chapter 2 presents the reading of different related research studies on the views and experiences of teachers on teaching in armed conflict areas and the coping mechanisms in facing the challenges.

Chapter 3 consists of the methodology employed in the study. This methodology includes research design, role of researcher, research participants, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness and credibility, and ethical consideration.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the interview results of the in-depth interview of the study, the detailed responses of the five participants based on the two research questions, and different themes generated from the various answers of the participants.

Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the results based on the essential themes with supports from various authorities. It also presents the implications for education practice and the concluding remarks of the researcher.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

This part presents some related literature and studies that run parallel to this research for comprehensive discussion in terms of area of concern and nature of study. These provide the researcher some insights and directions to the problem, to the researcher's instrument and on the deliberations of the various topics included in this paper. Features that have bearings to variables under study provide a background and framework for this present investigation.

### **Teaching in Areas with Conflict**

Teaching profession is a noble one. Part of the teachers' responsibility is to ensure that their students are well

protected from any harm and danger. When a teacher is assigned in areas even far from their families is considered a call of their profession. Thus, a teacher has to accept and live with it, for in the teaching career, the goal of the teachers is nurture and mold students, even at the risk of their lives. In areas where there is conflict, the challenge of the teachers is to connect to the different linkages in the government and non-government organizations so that in any untoward incident, he/she can immediately report so that the safety of the students is well protected and cared (Fountain, 2000; Malley, 2007; Jaffer, 2013).

There are numerous declarations on the importance of having peace education. This is to ensure that the various organizations are aware of their basic responsibilities in protecting the community. Peace education has now become a right which is increasingly emphasized by peace researchers. There are also a recent meshing of peace education and human rights education provided to the schools and academic community that should be shared also to the stakeholders particularly the students. It is also believed that the parents should reinforce appropriate gender role behavior by preparing and inculcating to them their responsibilities in the future (Sharma and Khadka, 1996).

Almost 50 million children and young people living in conflict areas are out of school, more than half of them primary age, and reports of attacks on education are rising. Civil war in Syria has contributed to the sharp increase in reported incidents of children being stopped from accessing education, physically attacked for trying to go to school or having their school bombed, or recruited by armed groups. One particularly damaging, but often ignored, effect of conflict on education is the proliferation of attacks on schools, said the report, as children, teachers or school buildings become the targets of attacks. Parents fear sending their children to school. Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. The 3,600 documented attacks on education last year included violence, torture and intimidation against children and teachers, resulting in death or serious injury, the shelling and bombing of schools, and the recruitment of school-aged children by armed groups (Brakman et al., 2004).

The reality is that no conflict is completely internal. Its causes may be internal and the protagonists may be nationals of the same state. But the consequences of their conflict invariably spread beyond that state's borders. Regional security is undermined; flows of refugees are created; communications and trade are interrupted, especially if sanctions are imposed; environmental damage can be caused. Civil wars had direct and indirect impact on basic education, affecting infrastructure, human and material resources, budgeting, planning and administration, and teaching and learning process. Equity in basic education was a serious problem among refugees due to poverty. Assistance from relief agencies to the affected areas included building and repairing schools, digging wells, providing seedlings and planting trees (Patricia, 2009).

Violent conflict is one of the most important development challenges facing the world today. Although the incidence of civil wars has decreased in recent years, the economic,

political and social consequences of civil wars are immense. War displaces population, destroys capital and infrastructure, disrupts schooling, damages the social fabric, endangers civil liberties, and creates health and famine crises. Any of these effects will have considerable consequences for long-term development outcomes, including the educational attainment of populations exposed to violence. Yet, while there is a growing consensus that development interventions and the promotion of democracy worldwide cannot be disassociated from the restrictions caused by violent conflict (Harbom & Wallensteen 2009).

While progress has been made in reducing the number of out-of-school children around the world, millions of children and youth living in countries affected by conflict and emergencies are missing out on an education. In conflict areas, 30 million children and 20 million adolescents remain out of school in conflict areas with an additional 8.5 million children out of school due to natural disasters. The proportion of out-of-school children is on the rise – from 42% in 2008 to 50% in 2011. Children and youth trapped in areas of conflict or natural disaster face many barriers to education. These range from schools simply not being available in the worst-affected areas of the country, to the difficulty of recruiting sufficient numbers of teachers. As schools close, children may be recruited and forced to fight as child soldiers, and are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. If children are able to attend school, the quality of education is severely diminished as a result of poor learning environments, disrupted attendance, limited supplies of instructional materials, and ongoing psychosocial effects of the crisis (UNESCO, 2002).

### **Effects of Unstable Situation**

Violent conflict results in deaths, injuries, disability and psychological trauma to men, women and children. These outcomes of violence may often be enough to push previously vulnerable households below critical thresholds. These may become impossible to overcome if the household is unable to replace labour or capital, and may last across generations if the impact on children's education and health is significant (Case & Paxson 2006, Maccini & Young 2009).

Violent conflict may affect considerably the level and distribution of returns to education across social groups and gender. Returns to education in turn play a large role in households' decisions. Due to destruction of industries and infrastructure, job opportunities for skilled labour in conflict-affected countries generally become scarce. Households may respond to job scarcity by redistributing their resources away from investments with lower returns. In wartime contexts, this may mean investing more in the education of boys rather than girls as boys may have a higher probability of finding better paid jobs (Shemyakina, 2007).

Fear plays an important part in explaining the removal of children from schools during violent events. A recently reported fighting strategy in Afghanistan has been the direct targeting of school children on their way to or from school. More than 100 children were killed in this way between 2006 and 2008, according to UNICEF. This tactic for spreading fear has resulted in the closure of around 670 schools in early

2009, depriving around 170,000 children of access to education (IRIN 2009). In contexts of violent conflict, rape and other sexual violence has become common behaviour amongst fighting groups (Ward, 2002).

In addition, displaced children do not attend school because their labour is needed to contribute to household income. Boys are employed in farming and other activities, while girls are needed to help with domestic work, childcare and agricultural tasks. For those that do manage to get schooling while still working, there are losses in the quality of their education due to chronic fatigue and stress, where students are too exhausted to realize their potential (Glad, 2009).

The recruitment of children into armed groups and armies has considerable impacts on their educational attainment, with consequences on the level of human capital and consequent economic growth of countries affected by armed conflict. Poverty in turn can serve to exacerbate conflict if individuals have more to gain from soldiering when peacetime economic opportunities are limited (Grossman, 2002; Sambanis, 2004; Walter, 2004). In particular, participation in armed groups affects negatively the long-term economic performance of child soldiers in terms of skills, productivity and earnings because military activities are not good substitutes for the benefits of education and work experience. Boys and girls exposed to conflict may also experience severe psychological effects that continue long after the war is over and will affect their educational outcomes.

Fear of physical attacks and sexual violence is likely to hinder the ability of children, particularly although not exclusively girls, to enroll in schools. In such contexts of fear and terror, households may attempt to protect vulnerable members by keeping them at home or sending away to relatives and friends in more secured locations. In several conflict-affected countries, access to good quality education is seriously imperiled, not only due to the direct effects of fighting, but also because schools, teachers, students and staff are often targeted by violent attacks. The types of attack include the burning, shelling and bombing of schools, the occupation of schools by armed forces, the murder, torture, abduction and rape of teachers, students, education aid workers and school staff by armed groups or military forces, and the forced recruitment of child soldiers (Shemyakina, 2007).

Motives for these attacks on schools, students and staff vary according to circumstances. In some cases, schools are the only visible symbol of government rule, making them easy targets for rebel groups. Attacks are also used as a form of control of the population to impose religious, linguistic or cultural identities (Human Rights Watch, 2006), and to recruit personnel, or provide shelter for troops. Teachers are also perceived as leaders of communities. Threats and attacks to teachers tend to take place due to their opposition to the forced recruitment of children by armed groups, their positions of leadership in the community, and accusations they face by armed groups of collaborating with opposing groups.

Very often however, education is viewed as a long term post-



conflict development aim and does not constitute a central element in emergency interventions. However, violent conflict and resulting displacement can last decades leaving whole generations without access to education and the social structures provided by schools and teachers. Much greater attention therefore needs to be paid to understanding and overcoming the barriers that populations affected by violent conflict face in accessing their right to education.

Across many of the world's poorest countries, armed conflict continues to destroy not just school infrastructure, but also the hopes and ambitions of a whole generation of children. Given that armed conflicts vary in duration, intensity and localization, educational systems are affected in different ways. The 2010 UNESCO report *The "Hidden Crisis"* pointed out the significant negative impact of conflict on the proportion of the population with formal education, the average years of education attained, and the literacy rate. This legacy of conflict is visible at the national and subnational level in household survey data for 19 out of the 25 conflict affected countries that UNESCO analyzed. The trends for most countries demonstrate that cohorts that were of school-going age during a time of conflict have lower educational attainment that persists over time, indicating that these children generally do not resume their education after a conflict.

The number of children out of school has fallen, from 60 million in 2008 to 57 million in 2011. But the benefits of this progress have not reached children in conflict-affected countries. These children make up 22% of the world's primary school aged population, yet they comprise 50% of children who are denied an education, a proportion that has increased from 42% in 2008. Of the 28.5 million primary school age children out of school in conflict-affected countries, 12.6 million live in sub-Saharan Africa, 5.3 million live in South and West Asia, and 4 million live in the Arab States. The vast majority, 95%, live in low and lower middle income countries. Girls, who make up 55% of the total, are the worst affected, as they are often victims of rape and other sexual violence that accompanies armed conflicts (UNESCO, 2013).

Teaching children about peace education and peace building movement technique needs attention, emotion, and mind resolution to promote collaboration and respect to individual differences. It also promotes greater awareness and deeper understanding of the commitment and peace development. The teacher should also teach that peace starts from the family, and whatever is taught in the family is carried over into the behavior and attitude of the students (Fountain, 2000; Sambanis, 2004).

The teaching of peace education in the schools is to prepare students to be good citizens and become aware of their roles as responsible citizens. This is also to raise their awareness on human rights and their participation in the decision making. This is to stress on their social behavioural symptoms of conflict resolution and management. It is believed that the approaches of peace education start from the insights of the community. In the areas where peace and order is not stable, the community tends to be apprehensive on what the day to day living would be. Children go to

school without assurance that they cannot meet trouble and sometimes, peace and order situation has become the reason of dropping out, for students are not interested anymore in going to school because of fear and insecurity of their lives. Parents, as well, have to keep their children at home and schooling will no longer be a priority of the family. Thus, drop-out rate in the area with unstable peace and order situation is high (Justino, 2010; Jaffer, 2013).

Unstable peace and order situation has an ill effect to the psychological, emotional, economic and physical aspects of individuals. In areas where peace and order situation is threatened by the armed conflict, the plans and activities of the community, particularly in the school setting cannot be fully materialized and implemented. People in an organization will become apprehensive and fear will linger in their minds as they do their day to day living. The situation will lead into half-baked teaching learning process, and teachers will prioritize the safety of the learners rather than the cognitive development of the students (Malley, 2010).

### **Teaching in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order**

Teaching is a hard work and noble profession which entails sacrifice to fulfill its mission to educate children. Great teachers are those who do their duties tirelessly to institute a challenging, nurturing classroom environment for their students. Great teaching is about imposing values toward the students rather than imparting knowledge and skills through teaching the subject, to the learners. Teachers are the inspiration to students, coupled with his passion for education for their children to grow as competent individuals. Whatever it takes, teachers are always on the line to care and protect the children at all times (Orlando, 2013; Zhou, 2014).

Teachers play a vital role in enlightening and educating children for them to become desirable constituents of their respective communities. The state therefore, should provide hard work and resources to keep teachers secure and in good condition so that they can also perform well their duties as teachers (Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2014). The present scenario, in some areas is that children and schools today are situated in the areas where there is armed conflict or insurgency. Schools are bombarded, classrooms are utilized as quarters, teachers are endangered and killed, and children are enticed to become soldiers, servants, and slaves. Eventually, there is an increasing fear among children to attend school, among teachers to teach classes, and among parents to send their children to school. Female students become vulnerable to sexual violence during conflict, and the teaching as well is affected by the said conflict (Fountain, 2000; Jaffer, 2013).

Attacks on education happen around the world, both inside and outside of situations of armed conflict. In many regions, armed groups primarily consider the schools, teachers, and students as their targets. Attacks on school infrastructure, teachers and students, the occupation of schools by the police and military; harassment and threats against teachers, parents, and students; and the recruitment of children from schools to become soldiers are observed common situations in the areas with unstable situation. As a result, disturbance

on teachers and other educators has become a common and serious threat to education conflict which weakens teachers' morale: due to the disintegration of administrative systems. They may be forced to work without pay and many are maltreated or the victims of aggression (Sheppard, 2009; GCPEA, 2014; Ryder, 1996).

In addition, a study showed that daily lessons have been delayed in school as there are no teachers to handle classes. The government has recruited new teachers but they are apprehensive due to their fear of the conflict which depressed them to engage on their duty in the places affected by conflict. Immense psychological pressure to keep them safe in the place is felt by the teachers and students, and parents as well, which eventually affected the condition of the school community. Scenes like bombs going off near their school, attack on school bus, burning of tires in the streets and dead bodies shown in TV channels have great psychological torment on pupils, teachers and parents (Sharma & Khadka, 1996).

### **Effects to Teachers Affected by Peace Crisis**

There are some core concerns on teachers who are directly affected by conflicts and crises in areas with unstable peace and order situation. These are: displacement of teachers and high levels of mobility and absenteeism is evident in response to the security situation and immediate needs of their families; teachers' professional growth and development is hindered particularly in the context of prolonged conflict, resulting in low levels of education or training for them resulting to limited knowledge on pedagogy and strategies. Moreover, teachers need psychosocial support due to their condition which will greatly affect their intellectual and social capacity. Lastly, teachers play an important role in alleviating the impact of conflict or crisis on learners situated in areas with unstable situation (Zakharia & Bartlett, 2014).

On the other hand, Republic Act No. 4670, stressed the promotion and improvement of the social and economic status of public school teachers which include their living and working conditions, their terms of employment and career prospects so they can work favorably with the existing opportunities in all walks of life. Further, they also attract and retain in the teaching profession more people with the proper qualifications by providing recognitions to advance their education, qualifications and ability to deal with the responsibilities and functions accorded to them as professionals, particularly those who are living in the areas with armed conflict or unstable peace and order situation.

Furthermore, the bill seeks to provide more benefits and greater protection to teachers and non-teaching personnel all over the country by enhancing and amending certain provisions of Republic Act No. 4670 or the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers. Teachers play important roles in the society for their mission in molding the values and character of the young generation of the country cannot be overestimated. Aside from educating our children, teachers are also considered as the most dependable and committed public servants for they are being constantly called upon by officials of the local and national governments to support and

assist in various extra-curricular and civic activities which supplement the welfare of the community and the country. The most notable of which is when they perform their functions as members of the Board of Election Inspectors during election period and to collaborate as well the National Statistics Office in gathering data from households in all parts of the country, even those situated in remote areas (Magna Carta for Public School Teachers, 1966).

Likewise, Violence Against Women and Children (2004) also declared that the state shall value the self-esteem of women and children and guarantees full respect for human rights. The state also considers the protection of the family and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security. With this provision, the state shall exert efforts to address violence committed against women and children in keeping with the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments of which the Philippines is a part. Similarly, GCPEA (2013) stated that the Philippine legislative bodies have enacted several laws and policies in order to protect either directly or indirectly education personnel from any harm or violation (Violence Against Women and Children, 2004).

The exclusion on the use of schools as military base for command posts, barracks, detachments, and supply depots is stressed in RA 1992. It also establishes that the delivery of basic social services such as education shall be kept unhampered. The act targets children, as it recognizes education as a necessary protective system, of which teachers are a critical part the school environment. A number of provincial and municipal entities issued similar ordinances subsequent to the banning of the use of schools for military purposes in the national legislation (Republic Act 7610 Special Protection of Children against Abuse; Exploitation and Discrimination Act, 1992, 163 Section 22).

The Department of Education Order No. 44 recognizes the declaration of schools as zones of peace. Republic Act No. 7610 stipulates that all concerned personnel in the central and field offices are mandated to make necessary action to make all schools a place where children can receive utmost security and peace in order to immediately implement and comply the policy in keeping the school community safe from harm. Although this policy does not specifically address teachers, protecting education personnel is a necessary step if schools are to be considered places with utmost security and peace.

In addition, Presidential Executive Order Nos. 56 and 138 otherwise known as Adopting the Comprehensive Program Framework for Children in Armed Conflict, Strengthening the Council for the Welfare of Children and For Other Purposes (2013) issued orders and their subsequent memoranda for the establishment of monitoring, reporting, and response system for grave child rights violations in situations where peace and order situation is evident. The monitoring arm within the children in armed conflict program framework is led by the Council for the Welfare of

Children. This mechanism includes collecting and verifying data on attacks on education personnel and schools.

The basic infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and health units shall not be utilized for military purposes such as command posts, barracks, detachments, and supply depots. A Letter Directive 25 of 2013 stipulated among other guidelines and policies regarding the presence of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in schools. This emphasized that the school administration shall provide permission prior to military school occupancy for legal purposes or for civil military (The Armed Forces of the Philippines Letter Directive No. 34, 2009). An example of city-level policy is the Davao City Council Resolution (2012) which resolution has warned the military against setting up any more detachments or similar structures near schools and population centers. The Philippines' active civil society, including local and international NGOs and multiple teachers' associations, are coordinating in order to promote the rights and protection of teachers. For countries confronting election violence against teachers, the DERN program provides an important model. Similarly, the eight communities implementing LIZOP have successfully sheltered teachers and schools from attack since the announcement of their codes of conduct. Other conflict affected countries can consider application and adaptation of recommendations made by Philippines stakeholders (Cabrera, 2012).

The monitoring and reporting procedures implemented in the Philippines provide important lessons regarding the process of establishing a mechanism, the significance of confidence building measures for monitors, and the need to make certain the appropriate responses and confidentiality. The Philippines also provides several examples of legislation that protect teachers from attack, which could be educational to other countries in the drafting process. However, the challenge remains to improve both the implementation of existing policies at all levels of the country, as well as the accountability of the perpetrators of attacks on teachers (Sheppard, 2009).

The above-mentioned readings, concepts, insights and ideas from the different authors have relevance to my investigation since they served as the springboard in the conceptualization of the study as to the formulation of the research questions, anchored theories, and in the support to the various procedures I did in gathering the responses of my participants. Moreover, the Review of Related Literature provided support to the results and findings of the study, and finally, it will serve as the references for future study that maybe undertaken by other researchers.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in this qualitative study. This includes the research methods and design, role of the researcher, informants of the study, the method of data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and credibility, and its ethical consideration.

### Research Design

The qualitative phenomenological design was the method used in this study for it explored the structures of consciousness in human experiences. This is qualitative phenomenological since it found out the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the teachers assigned in the far flung areas of Compostela Valley Province and Agusan del Sur for the school year 2015-2016.

Phenomenology is a research strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2009). Also, phenomenology seeks meanings from appearances and arrives at essences through intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts, judgments, and understandings (Moustakas, 1994),

The operative word in phenomenological research is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. The phenomenologist is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved. A variety of methods can be used in phenomenological research that includes interviews and focus group discussion (Groenewald 2004).

Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, documents, and participant observation data, to understand and explain social phenomena. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive (Qualitative Research Consultants Association, 2015).

One form of qualitative study is in-depth interview (IDI). An in-depth interview is an open-ended and one of the main methods of data collection used in qualitative research (Legard, et.al 1999). One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended questions (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windbridge, 2009) and probing gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016), rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses (Husserl, 1982; Creswell, 2013; Baac, 2008). The goal of the interview is to deeply explore the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives (Gempes, 2008). One of the advantages of the in-depth interview is that there is time for the respondent, in peace, to further develop and give reasons for his or hers individual point of views - without being influenced by the opinions of other respondents.

In my study, in order to achieve comprehensive descriptions of the study that included the viewpoints and experiences faced by the participants, I adopted the in-depth interview which questions were focused on the three research questions and the interview guide that were directed by the issues of teachers in armed conflict areas. The purpose of conducting an in-depth interview with the seven identified teachers in this study was to determine their views about the experiences in teaching in armed conflict areas and the coping mechanism in facing the situation (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windbridge, 2009; Creswell, 2013).



Qualitative research can be generalized. Analytic data can be generalized to some defined population that has been sampled, but to a theory of the phenomenon being studied, a theory that may have much wider applicability than the particular case studied. In this, it resembles experiments in the physical sciences, which make no claim to statistical representativeness, but instead assumes that their results contribute to a general theory of the phenomenon (Yin, 2003).

Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups of subgroups represented (Nkwi, 2001; Lochmiller & Lester, 2016). But focus group transcripts can be analyzed so as to explore the ways in which the participants interact with each other and influence each other's expressed ideas, which obviously cannot happen with one-to-one interview material (Patton, 2015; Lochmiller & Lester, 2016; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2016).

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this study, I played and I took the roles of designing, interviewing, transcribing, verifying, reporting, thematizing, and analyzing. As a researcher, I asked initial permission from school heads where I have identified to conduct my study. I asked verbally the identified respondents if they are willing to share their experiences and to be interviewed as my informants in my study to confirm their willingness to share their experiences, coping mechanisms and insights being assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation. In qualitative research, the need to ask the permission of the participants is a vital step that should be undertaken by the researcher (Patton, 2015; Lochmiller & Lester 2016).

As a School in Charge of Candiis Elementary School, province of Agusan del Sur, I have personally witnessed the armed conflict in the areas where several incidents of wars and bombings occurred many times in a year. The situation has disturbed the positive, peaceful and healthy environment which is supposed to be experienced by the teachers and the students. The situation and scenario have led me to conduct this study to describe the experiences of the teachers teaching in the armed conflict areas and to identify as well their coping mechanisms, hoping that I can be an instrument of sharing the results to the authorities for possible intervention program.

### **Research Participants**

In this study, the participants were the 14 teachers who were teaching in elementary schools in Veruela II District, Division of Agusan del Sur and the neighboring schools of Laak North District, Division of Compostela Valley for the school year 2015-2016.

I employed the purposive sampling method for it involved only the teachers who are assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation. Purposive sampling was widely used and popular in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 1990; Palinkas, 2015). I had

seven teacher informants for the in-depth interview and another seven for the focus group discussion to share their life experiences in teaching in areas with unstable peace and order and how they dealt and coped up with the situation having the same purpose. This is based on the concept of Creswell (2012) that participants may involve seven participants for the in-depth interview and seven for the focused group discussion.

The participants were recruited through personal contact with the interviewer. In qualitative research, the informants should be well informed of the interview to be done (Boyce & Neale, 2006), the time and place were set when and where the meeting to be done (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016; Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2013) and the interviewer's preferred place (Boyce & Neale, 2006) and time that the informants suggested to their own convenience (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016; Hancock, Ockleford, & Windbridge, 2009).

To protect the participants' confidentiality, their names were replaced with pseudonyms. The pseudonyms that I used were Manong Arnel, as informant number 1; Mr. Jay, as informant number 2; Manang Beth, as informant number 3; Mrs. Joie, as informant number 4; Mrs. Lyn, as informant number 5; Mr. Win, as informant number 6; and Mr. Eli, as informant number 7. Confidentiality of information has to be maintained to ensure that particular individuals can never be linked to the data the schools have provided (Mack et al., 2005).

### **Data Collection**

Before I set the in-depth interview and focus group discussion, I ensured that the steps to gather data were done properly. I made sure that the persons I wanted to interview were available and that I could get a direct contact with some participants. There are a variety of methods of data collection in qualitative research. The most common methods of research are interviews and focus groups. On the other hand, qualitative data collection methods involve providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results and assess changes in people's perceptions (Gil, et.al 2008).

First, I asked the permission to conduct the study from the fourteen identified teachers assigned in armed conflict areas. The participants were informed through the letter of communication and face-to-face encounter, and the flow of the interview. Participants were given a chance to read the purpose of my study before the formal interview. It is necessary for a researcher to understand the nature of the research and the reason to conduct the study so it would be easier to introduce and request permission to the respondents to conduct the study and involve them in the quest (Willis, 2007; Smith, 2016; Patton, 2015).

At the beginning stages of my research project, the first move I underwent was to develop and facilitate positive relationships among the key teachers who were my key participants, for I was seeking a positive assistance and approval for my study to be possible. I deemed that these relationships are the fundamental to the logistics of setting up my study. To acquire permission to have access to my potential participants, I sought a go signal from the Schools



Division Superintendent with a request letter. Since, I am a school principal and I have known of teachers experiencing crisis in the area with unstable peace and order, a gate keeper was no longer needed. My rapport and consistent communication with them created an ambience of understanding between me and the participants of my study.

After all the necessary requisites had been facilitated, it is essential that I had a personal appearance with the school authorities where my participants were assigned in order to formally state my identity and my purpose, at the same time to make personal commitment to protect the identities of the people involved with whom I have to interact. Confidentiality of information has to be maintained to ensure that particular individuals can never be linked to the data the schools have provided (Mack et al., 2005).

Further, participants were all oriented that the interview would be recorded and each of them would be given a copy of the interview. Then, I assured that the process was in a manner sensitive to individuals. Creswell (2008) emphasized that a case study involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case.

Eventually, the question and answer sessions thoroughly scrutinized the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the teachers assigned in the area with unstable peace and order situation. The numerous outlines and devices that I applied during the conduct of the interviews furnished my participants supplemental awareness and discernment about their participation in my study. Everything that transpired during the course of conversation was put into record through audio recording which would verify the precision of the data collected. The recorded audios were copied out word for word to confirm the reliability and integrity of the interview.

### **Data Analysis**

Having collected the data, the next step was to categorize the information. Data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of a qualitative project, and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature (Thorne, 2000). This study made use of the thematic analysis in analyzing the collected and gathered data. The objective was to identify any patterns representing concepts the participants represented during the data collection phase. Data were then organized into logical categories that summarized and brought meaning to the manuscript of notes. Specific codes were developed allowing me to categorize the responses into the above-mentioned construct, while identifying emergent themes.

Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing and reporting the pattern of themes with the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). Thematic analysis is flexible and what researchers do with the themes once they uncover them differ based on the intentions of the research and the process of analysis. Many researchers use thematic analysis as a way of getting close to their data and developing some deeper appreciation of the content (Boyatzis, 1998). This theory requires the researcher to look into a more involvement and interpretation of the case. Thematic analysis involves focusing on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data,

which is the theme. Mack et al. (2005) added that thematic analysis is considered as the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research. Following the concept of Boyatzis (1998), I followed the steps such as familiarizing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes and constructing the report.

To familiarize the data, I listened to the recorded interview of my participants and transcribed them so that it would be easier for me to code the data after. I read the data several times to familiarize the responses and to identify easily the common answers given by my participants. After which, I grouped the common answers and found out several themes, which I narrowed down into just few ones. To display the data in an orderly and organized way, data display was used. Data display is an organization of data showing them through matrices, charts, and graphs that enable the reader to draw out their ends (Boyatzis, 1998).

Furthermore, I employed the data reduction which means deleting the unnecessary data and modifying them into useful material for the study so that the readers can understand it. In this study, I sorted out, organized voluminous qualitative data for me to be able to merge and categorize the data easily.

### **Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research, ensuing from a variety of disciplines, paradigms, and epistemologies, embraces multiple standards of quality, known variously as validity, credibility, rigor, or trustworthiness (Morrow, 2005). Trustworthiness as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1989) includes credibility, transferability and conformability.

Qualitative research, trustworthiness has become an important concept because it allows researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative research. Hence, the concepts of generalizability, internal validity, reliability, and objectivity are reconsidered in qualitative terms. These alternative terms include transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability. In essence, trustworthiness can be thought of as the ways in which qualitative researchers ensure that transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability are evident in their research. Moving away from the quantitatively oriented terms allows qualitative researchers the freedom to describe their research in ways that highlight the overall (Given & Saumure, 2008).

To address credibility, I employed several steps as to: first, I developed an early familiarity with the background of the participants before the data collection. This was achieved through visiting the schools of my possible participants. Letters were sent to the head of the schools stating the purpose of the study. Second, I made the list of possible teachers who were greatly affected by the incidence in an unstable peace and order area. Only those who met the requirements were included in the list. Third, was to apply the triangulation method where observation, focus group discussions and individual interviews were utilized. Fourth was to apply the different techniques to ensure that the

participants would honestly give the information needed for the study. To achieve it, I developed a good rapport with my teacher participants so that accurate information was gathered. These methods were suggested by Shenton (2004) saying that these methods are useful to saturate data.

The credibility is involved in establishing that the results of the research are believable. This is a classic example of 'quality not quantity. It depends more on the richness of the information gathered, rather than the amount of data gathered. There are many techniques to gauge the accuracy of the findings, such as data triangulation, triangulation through multiple analysts and member checks. In reality, the participants/readers are the only ones who can reasonably judge the credibility of the results (Mike, 2011).

To address confirmability, I kept a record of what was transpired during the interview by having note takings and audio recorded discussion. This is to avoid personal biases, hypothesis and conclusions that would possibly lead misinterpretation of the data. I also conducted triangulation and peer debriefing to ensure that there are no biases and partiality in the presentation of the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) considered the key criterion for conformability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions.

To address dependability, I applied consistency in the collection and analysis of my data. I made sure that all the necessary information were recorded and included and I also applied the peer debriefing and triangulation of the gathered data.

Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. In order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same result. Thus, the research design may be viewed as a "prototype model". It is supported by Streubert (2000) that dependability is a criterion used to measure trustworthiness in qualitative research. Dependability is met through securing credibility of the findings. Also, Siegle (2006) and Guba & Lincoln (1982) explained that dependability must provide its audience with evidence that if it were replicated with the same or similar respondents in the same context, its finding would be repeated.

To ensure transferability, I made sure that the research context was rich and thick in descriptions so that interested readers and researchers will be given enough references should they do transfer the data.

Transferability implies generalizability of the findings and results of the study to other settings, situations, populations, and circumstances. This is the quality we have been calling "external validity" or "generalizability" in our use of the term in intro to research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1982; 2000). Also, Crotty (2006) elucidated transferability in the naturalistic researcher maintains that no true generalization is really possible; all observations are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethics has become a cornerstone for conducting effective and meaningful research (Drew, 2007). The participants of my study were individuals who were under my protection, so that trust is imposed to us. To establish ethical considerations, I followed the ethical steps as suggested by Boyatziz (1998) such as respect for persons, beneficence, justice, consent and confidentiality.

To establish respect for persons, I asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent for me to be able to proceed to my study. The participants were also given an informed consent so that their willingness to get involved in the study was sought. Respect for persons is an obligation of the researcher not to exploit the weakness of the participants.

To establish beneficence, I asked their vacant time for the in-depth interview and their preferred place where they can freely express their thoughts about the study. Each of them was given the informed consent before the set date and time of the in-depth interview. Beneficence requires a commitment of minimizing the risks of the participants rather maximizing the profits that are due to them (Creswell, 2012).

To establish confidentiality, I ensured that the true identities of the participants were hidden. The video tapes, encoded transcripts, notes and other materials were destroyed after the data were analyzed. This step has been suggested by Van der Westhuizen (1997).

To establish justice, I made sure that the participants did not spend any amount for acknowledged their contribution to complete my study. The participants were provided snacks and accommodated properly. Participants of the qualitative research must be given due credits for all their contributions

## **4. Results**

This chapter presents the experiences of teachers in areas with unstable peace and order, their coping mechanisms and their insights. Their responses were taken from the In-depth interview and Focused Group Discussion that I conducted from the seven key informants and seven participants anchored on the three basic questions I raised:

- 1) What are the experiences of teachers in areas with unstable peace and order?
- 2) How do these teachers cope with the unstable peace and order situation in their area?
- 3) What are the insights teachers in areas with unstable peace and order?

This chapter is divided into three parts: Part 1 is the participants' data from which the qualitative data were collated. Part 2 is the analysis procedures and the steps in the categorization of the emergent themes from the result of the in-depth interview and FGD questions under each research problem and Part 3 is the summary of responses.

### **Participants In-Depth Interview**

The informants of the study who undergone In-depth interview varies in age; from the youngest of 23 years old, 32, 34 & 36 years old up to the eldest informant of both

**Table 1: Profile of Informants in In-Depth Interview**

Participants	Age	Type of Work	Salary per month	Years of Teaching	Age started working	No. of children in the Family	Work of Father	Work of Mother
S1	32	Teaching	18,549.00	5 mos.	32	0	Farmer	House-keeper
S2	23	Teaching	18,549.00	1 yr.	22	1	Farmer	House-keeper
S3	39	Teaching	4,000.00	14 yrs.	25	3	Farmer	House-keeper
S4	34	Teaching	18,549.00	2 mos.	34	5	Farmer	Teacher
S5	38	Teaching	18,549.00	3 yrs.	35	3	Farmer	Teacher
S6	36	Teaching	5,000.00	12 yrs.	25	0	Farmer	House-keeper
S7	38	Teaching	18,922.00	8 yrs.	31	0	Farmer	House-keeper

38 and 39 years old. Majority of the informant's working type are teaching under various salary payments ranging from 5,000.00 pesos for the least, and 18, 922.00 pesos at most.

Four of these informants are having less than five months to three years of teaching experience, while three of them are having teaching experience of eight, 12 and 14 years. It's rational to conform that the informants also vary as to what age did they started working, there's a time interval of at least one year and 12 to 15 years interval.

Three of the these informants had zero number of children in the family, another, three of them had one to three number of children, and the remaining one informant had five number of children in the family. At most, the seven informants had a father who works as a farmer, and five mothers who work as Housekeepers, the two mothers among the seven informants' works as a teacher.

### Focus Group Discussion

In the focus group discussion, there are seven various informants whose general working type is teaching. These informants ages from the youngest of 25 years old, 37 years old, 38 years old, 44 years old, 47 years old, 49 years old, and 57 years old for the eldest informant.

These informants had different teaching years experience in various institution, in fact, there are only two informants who had less than 10 (two and eight years) teaching years experience, majority of them had 14 to 31 years (14, 20, 21, 24, 31) of working experience. Along their lengthy service years in teaching, they vary in salary payments; at least two of them had salary of not less than 18, 000.00 pesos and majority had 20, 000.00 to 21, 00.00 (in not specific amount) pesos of salary per month.

The informants ages are from 23 years old to 29 years old, in fact three of these informants ages of 23 years old, and four of the ages from 24 to 29 years old. In their young age, three of the informants had four to six children in the family already, while four of them had only one to two numbers of children in the family.

Three of these informants had working mothers of housekeepers and the other four informants had mothers of one housewife, one farmer and one teacher. Majority of the father of these informants are working as farmers, and the other one is working at the DSWD.

### Categorization of Data

Having done the in-depth interviews and the focus group

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S4	34	Teaching	18,549.00	2 mos.	34	5	Farmer	Teacher
S5	38	Teaching	18,549.00	3 yrs.	35	3	Farmer	Teacher
S6	36	Teaching	5,000.00	12 yrs.	25	0	Farmer	House-keeper
S7	38	Teaching	18,922.00	8 yrs.	31	0	Farmer	House-keeper

discussion, data from the audio-tape recordings were directly transcribed and for those answers in vernacular were carefully translated into English. As suggested by Boyatzis (1998), I listened carefully to audio recordings to transform the data into texts and for me to easily code the data. As emphasized by Moustakas (1994) three steps were being taken during the data analysis which were data reduction, data display, drawing conclusion and verification. To delete unnecessary data from the transcription, data reduction was employed to convert those data into essential and logical material, simply understood by many Thematic analysis was done through pairing and separating data, a way of sorting and categorizing. Through data reduction, the lengthy and

large volumes of qualitative data gathered came out consolidated and manageable, easier to control and understood.

The next step was data display which was done through graphic organizers such as matrix or table for the viewer to draw his conclusion. I read the data several times to familiarize the responses and to identify easily the common answers given by my participants. After which, I grouped the common answers and found out several themes, which I narrowed down into just few ones. To display the data in an orderly and organized way, data display was used. Data display is an organization of data showing them through



matrices, charts, and graphs that enable the reader to draw out their ends Boyatzis (1998).

Finally, drawing conclusion and verification were done by going back several more times and revisiting the data being analyzed to validate the formulated conclusions. Moreover, I related the data with my chosen theories and concepts. The data conversed through the emergence of conceptual categories and descriptive themes. These themes were crafted into which all of them were interconnected and became with sense (Van Maanen, 1983).

For the interpretation of the report, I carefully considered the important data to be included and information to be discarded. Sufficient description was being provided to permit the reader to comprehend the basis for interpretation so that the sufficient interpretations allow the reader to understand the description (Polkinghorne, 1995; 2007).

Finally, to verify that the data presented were true and correct, I went back to my participants for them to know the results and to attain full verification of the findings that I had done. Extended engagement with the participants so that a clear understanding on every detail of the phenomenon being studied is attained (Lincoln, 1995).

### **Research Question Number 1. What are the experiences of teachers in areas with unstable peace and order?**

The experiences of the teachers assigned in areas with unstable peace and order are accounted as follows grouped by main themes supported by the core ideas.

**Disruption of Classes.** One of the experiences disclosed by the teachers is disruption of classes since when threats came, the teachers have to dismiss their classes and parents also rushed to fix their children for home.

Mr. Win stressed:  
*"Told the pupils to dock if there is gun shooting. And if no more encounter, I dismissed the class immediately. Some pupils are fixed with their respective parents"* (CVPTAUPOSST\_6)

Mr. Eli mentioned that:  
*"I stopped my class and let my pupils listen to our surroundings, that's what I did to protect my pupils. I told them also that if there was a battle again I let them hide on a thick and strong foundation of the cement as a shield of the stray bullets"* (CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Mr. Jay cited:  
*"Sometimes we don't have classes because of the conflict"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_2)

Manang Beth expressed:  
*"It affected to my teaching. Some classes will be suspended. Sometimes it will be declared for one week"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

Mrs. Lyn articulated:  
*"Sometimes I let my pupils to go home earlier for some safety purposes"* (CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

**Direct Traumatic Encounters.** Direct traumatic experiences were also narrated by the teachers like having experienced actual bombing, actual witnessing of killings and ambush, being hostage by the rebel and the area was declared 'No man's land' due to the chaotic and threatened situation.

Mr. Jay uttered that:  
*"I experienced it thrice, the worst one is when the battle occurs when we travel to our home"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_2)

Manang Beth stated:  
*"Many times I experienced armed conflict either distant or in close proximity to. Sometimes, it happened early in the morning and lasted until afternoon. And the most terrible I experienced was when our area declared "No Man's land", where there was a child was then a victim of a gun shooting that made him disabled"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_3).

Mr. Win mentioned;  
*"Twenty-three. During the encounter of soldiers and NPA's, there was one killed"* (CVPTAUPOSST\_6)

Manang Beth stressed:  
*"I have the courage to protect my disposition. Because there was a time that the father and the son were killed mistakenly since they were identified as rebels"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

**Table 3: Themes and Core Ideas on the Experiences of Teachers In Areas with Unstable Peace and Order**

Main Themes	Core Ideas
Disruption of Classes	Classes get disturbed again and again
	Teaching gets affected when classes get suspended
	Had to go home early; let students go home
	Early class dismissal when there are threats or sightings of armed men
Direct Traumatic Encounters	We were having a class when gun fire suddenly erupted
	Witnessed a father and son killed for mistaken identity
	Experienced actual conflict many times
	Witnessed the ambush of Mayor
	Experienced actual bombing in the area
	Our barangay was bombed by helicopter-riding men
	I had been held hostage by the rebels
	I witnessed actual NPA-Govt. forces encounter many times; lives were lost
Psychological Distress	Our area was declared "no man's land" – a child got hit and disabled by gunshot
	I feel nervous and terrified; afraid; can't sleep well
	I feel uncomfortable; situation is so stressful
	I am hesitant to report to the area
Learners' Vulnerability	Life in the area is full of threats
	I am afraid to invest in the area
	Children were shouting and crying calling out their mothers
	Students are full of fears and worries
	The enthusiasm to learn gets diminished or totally vanished
	Students lose desire and interest to learn
	Very few students get to finish studies – some get married early, some are enticed to join the rebels or the army
	I learned a lot about handling situations of

Development of Character	armed conflict
	It made me stronger and tougher
	Situation taught me to be patient and flexible
	Conflict situation taught me to be brave and fearless;
	It taught me to be prepared for any eventuality; to be always ready
	I simply embraced the call of duty
	I became more friendly and humble
	I never abandon the children until they are all safe.
	Happy at the chance to make a difference in the life of pupils
	Fulfilled because I can see that the students need me
Opportunities for Support and Assistance	I have learned to love the place in spite of the danger
	I leave it all to God
	Relationship between parents and teachers in the area is good
	There is constant coordination with local barangay officials
Grievance	The school secured the school by putting up perimeter fence
	Given hardship allowance once a year
	I have not received any protection from government
	Lack of support from my school

Mr. Eli expressed:

*"There were 38 battles I had experienced when I started to teach in the year of 2002. And I was a Local School Board (LSB) that time. The worst thing I can't forget was when the time that I was hostage by the New Peoples Army (NPA). It was so hard for them to search and identify all the soldiers because the soldiers were wearing basketball attire instead of their uniforms that's why they hostage me and let me to point out a soldiers because they wanted to kill even one of them. Their purpose and plans for me were failed because I didn't tell them of where and who were the soldiers. All I did was to lie because I have no choice but to do it coz I don't want a war all I need was peace in our place during that time. It happened on September 24, 2009 during the feast of San Miguel, Laak, Kidawa"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7).

**Psychological Distress.** Having assigned in the areas with unstable situation, the teachers suffered psychological distress such as feeling nervous and terrified; fear to report to the area considering that life is at stake. Moreover, for them living in the area with unstable peace and order situation is stressful and uncomfortable.

Mrs. Joie mentioned that:

*"Of course I am afraid at first. I don't know how I feel if I encounter armed conflict, maybe I get nervous and stress"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_4)

Mrs. Lyn cited:

*"The unstable situation of a certain place makes me feel uncomfortable and stressful in every minute of my life"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

*"I had heard an arm firing five kilometers away from our place and sometimes unknown men carrying firearms*

*appeared in our place"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

Mr. Eli added:

*"When I was destined in the place where no peace already at all, I have fear in both heart and mind. What "If's" questions were on my mind. I was worried for myself and to all my pupils. I was afraid that what if one of my pupils will be killed unintentionally or even myself because of the stray bullet.*

*"It really affects my teaching career because my pupils were filled of fears and worries, their enthusiasms to learn was vanished because of the said happenings"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Mr. Win expressed:

*"Sometimes, early in the morning until afternoon. And after a week snipe again"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_6).

**Learner's Vulnerability.** The teachers also mentioned that even the learners are vulnerable to psychological disturbance such as having fear and worries; lose of desire to go to school which eventually unable them to finish schooling. Further, they cried with fear when they were caught by the threatened peace and order situation.

Mr. Eli articulated:

*"It was a time of our class when there was a battle again. All I did with my pupils in Grade 5 and 6 was to hide inside my classroom. I let them hide but there were pupils of mine because they were driven by fear that's why they wanted to go outside and went to their homes. My mind struggles and sunk with worries. I wanted to protect them all but I couldn't coz my pupils wanted to escape without thinking because of the fear they felt. All I thought was what if one of my pupils will be killed of the stray bullet and I, myself was to be blamed of the parents because that happened during our classes' hours"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Manang Beth mentioned:

*"Only few will finish. Some got early marriage. Some are tempted to join rebels. The community hopes for peace and improvement. They showed it with full cooperation"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

**Development of Character.** Some teachers who were already used to the situation shared that the conflicts have taught them to be prepared all the time. They become more friendly and humble to the people and felt happy that they were able to make a difference in the life of their students.

Manong Arnel mentioned:

*"Since I was given a regular permanent position only this July 2015 in the area where there is an armed conflict, at first I was hesitant to accept it but in my second thought, it was a challenge as a government employee so then, I am embracing the call of duty"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

Manang Beth uttered:

*"I am teaching in this area since year 2002. Despite the fact that this area is of armed conflict, I fell to love the area because of the innocent faces of learners. And it is in this place that I found my "Mr. Right"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

Mrs. Joie expressed:

*"The only thing that makes me stay in this area is my profession as a teacher. As a teacher, no matter how far and unsafe the place where you assigned, you have to sacrifice because that's a part of your life, and I believe that the government will do something to protect you"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_4)

Mr. Win stressed:

*"What makes me stayed here for a long time is because of my teaching career. This is my responsibility that is to educate them well"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_6)

Mrs. Lyn mentioned:

*"The welfare and safety of the pupils were the most important. It is my great responsibility to defend them, I have to stay with them during class hours"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

Mr. Jay added:

*"Yes. Because it is a big opportunity to teach in the area where such situation occur"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_2)

Mr. Eli expressed:

*"I was still glad in teaching that kind of area or a place where there was no adequate peace because from it, I learned a lot about adjustments during battles."*

*"The situation I experienced taught me to alter my attitude, to be brave and just be in serenity when that kind of situation will happen again. It taught me to become fearless and to plan well about the best ways of protecting myself as well as my pupils"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7).

### Opportunities for Support and Assistance

The threatened situation in the area where the teachers are assigned have given the teachers good opportunities and growth to establish strong collaboration between the school and the local officials and better relationship with the parents. They are also receiving hazard pay having assigned in the area with unstable peace and order situation.

Manong Arnel mentioned that:

*"Yes, Yes... I am still enjoying my assignment area, so far, the relationship between the teachers and parents are so good"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

**Grievance:** Although there were those who received assistance from the government, other teachers claimed that they have not received any protection from the government and there was lack of support from the school.

Manang Beth expressed that:

*"Because our place is so far-flung, there is no assistance given to us from the government. If there is operation of the soldiers, it is also the cause of encounter"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

### Question 2: How do the teachers cope with the unstable Peace and Order Situation in their area?

The teachers openly expressed their coping mechanisms in facing the challenges staying in the area with unstable peace

and order. The following themes and core ideas are as follows:

**Education and Training:** In order to cope with the challenge having assigned in the area with unstable peace and order situation, the school conducted disaster preparedness seminar oftentimes. They also formulated planned escape and attend briefing and seminars related to disaster management. Moreover, they always instruct and remind students not to go out and talk to strangers.

Manong Arnel expressed that:

*"Disaster preparedness. We conducted Disaster Preparedness frequently"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

Mr. Jay cited:

*"I told them what to do in case the conflict arises and we do have a drill on how to handle such situation. I guide them of what to do during the conflict. We do have DRR(Disaster Risk Reduction) workshops and seminars. I discuss them some details on what would happen when the conflict arises so that they will be aware"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_2).

Manang Beth mentioned:

*"In our school, we practiced "Armed Conflict Drill or Drill on disaster preparedness. We oriented pupils not to worry during gun shooting. I will then dismiss the class"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

*"As a teacher, it is my responsibility to take care of the pupils. I will let the pupils to dock during armed conflict. And later on will be dismissed immediately"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

Mr. Win expressed:

*"Remind pupils to secure to dock immediately during gun shootings"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_6)

Mr. Eli uttered:

*"I did my responsibility as a teacher for my pupils. I advised them about the things to do if there are wars. I told them to listen first the surroundings and if there is peace already that's the time that they will be able to go to school again"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

**Vigilance.** Being vigilant is one of the coping mechanisms adopted by the teachers. They told they have to stay alert and cautious and watchful all the time. One is dismissing students right away after hearing the 3<sup>rd</sup> shots.

Manang Beth mentioned that:

*"If there are 3 consecutive bangs that means a "warning". All of the residents should evacuate. Pupils will be dismissed immediately"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3).



**Table 4:** Themes and Core Ideas on How Teachers Cope with Unstable Peace and Order Situation in their Area

Main Themes	Core Ideas
Education and Training	Conducted disaster preparedness seminar frequently
	Conducting drills and orientations for armed conflict
	Planned escape; prepared a safe place to hide
	Conducted awareness lectures on Disaster Risk Reduction
	Attending briefings whenever it is called
	Gave students constant reminders (ducking at the sound of gunfire, etc)
	Instructing children not to talk to strangers
	Letting the pupils know the importance of keeping calm
Vigilance	Tried to stay alert and cautious
	Being watchful and observant always
	Dismissing the students immediately when we hear the warning (3 consecutive shots)
	Trying to be prepared always
Collaboration and Support Mechanism	Proper coordination with barangay officials
	Making recommendations (suggested the installation of a detachment in the place)
	Coordination with MDRRMO (Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office)
	Meetings with parents and their children
	Asking assistance from other stakeholders (colleagues, school officials)
	Help of barangay officials - to escort the children home when there is a threat
Grace Under Pressure	Stayed calm; faced my students courageously even if I'm terrified also
	Overcame fear by staying calm and collected
	Presence of mind; trying not to panic
Belief in Divine Intervention	Asked God to deliver the children and me from harm
	I comfort myself through prayers
	Strong faith in God

Manang Beth stated:

*"If there is armed conflict, stay calm, be alert"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)

Mrs. Lyn uttered:

*"I have to remain ease, calm and vigilant in every situation"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

Mr. Eli cited:

*"Be watchful and alert always, were the two words I used to surmount the fear we felt.*

*I prepared myself and my pupils that if there is a war; we have already a safety place to hide"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Manong Arnel added:

*"Always be prepared. Don't panic"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

**Collaboration and Support Mechanism:** One of the mechanisms that appease the situation of the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation is the support and collaboration among stakeholders. They were happy mentioning the collaboration between the school and the local officials and parents as well. By these, the school community will feel the safety that they need.

Mrs. Joie expressed that:

*"As of now, I'm always asking an advice from my colleagues"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_4)

Mrs. Lyn stressed:

*"The government has the support to engage a security patrol by the Philippine Army as the situation needed.*

*Proper coordination with the stakeholders, barangay officials and parents can help most to solve the problem"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)

Mr. Win stated:

*"Operation of the soldiers is needed so that NPA's could not enter into the premises"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_6)

Mr. Eli cited:

*"Putting placards with its content of not to include us during wars and battles and putting detachment were some of the ways for protection given by the government for the safety of both teachers and learners"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Mr. Win uttered:

*"Coordinate with the barangay Officials and parents and other stakeholders for the prevalent welfare of everyone"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_6).

Mr. Eli mentioned that:

*"As a teacher to get the solution of the problem we've encountered, I made a resolution about putting a detachment in the place where I lived and teach and forwarded it to the government to maintain the peace and harmony in our place"*(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)

Manong Arnel expressed:

*"Lectures and discussions on how to become safe in times of conflict. Coordination of MDRRMO (Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office)"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

**Grace Under Pressure:** Staying calm and be brave under the threatened situation was expressed by the teachers. They manifested presence of mind and show courage amidst a fearful situation.

Manong Arnel uttered:

*"I will remain calm even I'm not. I will face the pupils courageously"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

**Belief in divine Intervention:** One of the best coping mechanisms expressed by the teachers is their strong belief and faith to God. They prayed for comfort always for the community to be safe.

Manong Arnel stated that:

*"To be honest, I can't imagine myself what should I do when it happens. But I believe through the intervention of our Lord, everything will be fine"* (ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

Manong Arnel uttered:

*"Stay calm, keep safe always and don't forget to pray"*(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)

Mr. Jaycited:

*"Have a strong faith and just give your best when you were assigned in this kind of area" (ASPTAUPOSST\_2)*

### Question 3: What are the Insights of Teachers in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order?

**Bearing of Conflict to Community:** They shared that in the areas where unstable peace and order is observed, the progress and growth of the community is hampered since livelihood is affected.

Manang Beth expressed that:

*"It was so hard for me and to my whole family to carry on during the "No Man's Land" declaration. All of our animals were sold to. Our plants were damaged. Classes are suspended. There was a time that one of the target areas was the school where some soldiers were there. That was on Saturday. There were no learners. And we found 4 emptied bullets coming from the school"(ASPTAUPOSST\_3)*

Mr. Eli cited:

*"My vision about the situation of my pupils if there are battles, they have no ample of knowledge about wars, and then they will be ill and don't have energy to go to school. And for the community also, if there are wars the community will not progress, the population will decrease and the properties and livelihood will be left"(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)*

**Impact to Learners:** For the learners, the teachers found out that the students are the most affected ones. They have less opportunities to grow and eventually they become juvenile delinquents.

**Vital Role of Teachers:** The teachers also felt their vital role in the area with unstable peace and order situation, for they can safeguard the safety of the students. They sacrificed to fulfill their mission as educators, and are happy that they become part of the success of their students

Mrs. Lyn mentioned that:

*"I am still happy in spite of all the experiences I had. It is because I know the fact that my pupils need me and I love them most. I have so many dreams to fulfill with them"(CVPTAUPOSST\_5)*

Manong Arnel uttered:

*"It made me a little bit stronger"(ASPTAUPOSST\_1)*

Mr. Eli expressed:

*"One thing I can advise to the parents of the pupils that they must not allow their children to go to school if there is a detected war. And for the teachers they must be alert and watchful always and continue to advise and teach the children about the best thing to do before and after the war or battle. And for the students be watchful also"(CVPTAUPOSST\_7)*

Mr. Win added:

*"Be keen always"(CVPTAUPOSST\_6)*

**Table 5: Themes and Core Ideas on Insights of Teachers in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order**

Main Themes	Core Ideas
Bearing of Conflict to Community	A community with no peace and order will never prosper.
	If there is war, the progress/growth of community is stunted.
	Armed conflict limits the chance of a good community livelihood.
Impact to Learners	Learners in communities with conflict have less opportunity to develop.
	It is a challenge to instill the idea of peace in the midst of war.
	If the unstable situation cannot be solved, children will become juvenile delinquents.
	The children are the real victims, not the adults.
Vital Role of Teachers	We have to safeguard and ensure the safety of the students.
	There is a need to be keen about the surroundings; to listen before deciding plan of action.
	No matter how far and unstable the area is, you have to sacrifice in the name of duty.
	The call of my profession made me stay in the area.
	I teach to live and live to teach.
	I would like to help the children fulfil their dreams.
	There is still opportunity for children if they are guided and supported well in their predicament.
Cognizance	The longer I taught, the more I wanted to stay.
	Accept the things that we can no longer do anything about.
	If we quit, we will never win.
	Troubles are just tests of life.
	Trouble will be over in God's perfect time.
	Accept it as part of the teaching profession.
Evasion	The conflict taught me courage and strength.
	Situation is critical but we are aware and ready to handle it .
	If there's a chance to be transferred, I will grab it.
	I cannot afford to endanger myself and my family by continually staying in that place.

**Cognizance.** Acceptance of the situation has lightened the feeling of the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation. They disclosed that their situation is just a trail of their bravery and God will never allow that war will not end. They also accepted the fact that teaching is a mission that even the place is threatened with unfavorable condition, they have to fulfill their obligation as teachers.

**Evasion.** When the teachers were asked if they have the plan to leave the place, they clearly answered that if there is a chance to be transferred, they will leave the place for they cannot afford also to put their family in danger.

## 5. Summary

The experiences, coping mechanisms and insights shared by the teachers who are assigned in the area with unstable situation are really a reflection of their lived life as they perform their responsibilities as teachers.

In the In-depth-Interview and Focused Group Discussion, the teachers expressed that they experienced disruption of classes, direct traumatic encounters, psychological distress, learner's vulnerability to the situation, development of

character, opportunities for support and assistance and grievance.

Among the coping mechanisms they stated were education and training for disaster preparation, vigilance, collaboration and support mechanism, grace under pressure and belief in Divine intervention. Finally, the teachers shared also their insights as to bearing the conflict to the community, the impact to the learner's situation, the vital role of the teachers, the cognizance to the situation of the area and the evasion if possible, from the area where they are assigned.

## 6. Discussion

This chapter presents the discussion of the results of the study as well as the conclusions and the implications for practice for future research which are anchored on the emerged themes of the investigation.

The purpose of this phenomenological was to present the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of teachers assigned in areas with unstable peace and order through an in-depth interview and focused group discussion, they shared their experiences, coping mechanisms and insights.

### Experiences of Teachers in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order

**Disruption of Classes:** Classes which were disrupted is one of the experiences disclosed by the teachers. When threats came, the teachers have to dismiss their classes and parents also rushed to fetch their children from school.

The result conforms to the statement of UNESCO (2013) that in face of repeated incidents and threats of attack, children are afraid to go to school, parents will be scared of sending them to school and teachers will be afraid to go to work. Schools will be closed to prevent attacks and governments may be reluctant to reopen schools because threats of attack may still be present.

**Direct Traumatic Encounters:** Personal and direct traumatic scenarios were also narrated by the teachers like having experience actual bombing, actual witnessing of killings and ambush, being hostage by the rebel and the area was declared 'No man's land' due to the chaotic and threatened situation.

The result concurs with the concept of Sheppard (2009) that attacks on education happen around the world, both inside and outside of situations of armed conflict. In many regions, armed groups primarily consider the schools, teachers, and students as their targets. Attacks on school infrastructure, teachers and students, the occupation of schools by the police and military; harassment and threats against teachers, parents, and students; and the recruitment of children from schools to become soldiers are observed common situations in the areas with unstable situation. As a result, disturbance on teachers and other educators has become a common and serious threat to education conflict which weaken teachers' morale due to the disintegration of administrative systems. They may be forced to work without pay and many are maltreated or the victims of aggression.

**Learner's Vulnerability:** The learners are the most vulnerable victims to psychological disturbance such as having fear and worries; lose of desire to go to school which eventually unable them to finish schooling. Further, they cried with fear when they were caught by the threatened peace and order situation.

The finding is in line with the idea of Jaffer (2013) that the present scenario, in some areas is that children and schools today are situated in the areas where there is armed conflict or insurgency. Schools are bombarded, classrooms are utilized as quarters, teachers are endangered and killed, and children are enticed to become soldiers, servants, and slaves. Eventually, there is an increasing fear among children to attend school, among teachers to teach classes, and among parents to send their children to school. Female students become vulnerable to sexual violence during conflict, and the teaching as well are affected by the conflict

**Development of Character:** With the lived experiences of the teachers were already used to the situation. Eventually, the conflict has taught them to be prepared all the time. They become more friendly and humble to the people and felt happy that they were able to make a difference in the life of their students.

The result has relevance to the idea of Mulkeen (2007) that in a chaotic situation, people will slowly develop a strong character that will eventually prepare them for any untoward event. This is not only true to personal conflict, but also in areas where peace and order situation is threatened by trouble.

**Opportunities for Support and Assistance:** Despite the threatened situation in the area where the teachers are assigned, they felt they were given good opportunities and growth to establish strong collaboration between the school and the local officials and better relationship with the parents. They are also receiving hazard pay having assigned in the area with unstable peace and order situation.

This is parallel to the provision stipulated in Republic Act No. 4670, which stressed the promotion and improvement of the social and economic status of public school teachers which include their living and working conditions, their terms of employment and career prospects so they can work favorably with the existing opportunities in all walks of life. Further, they also attract and retain in the teaching profession more people with the proper qualifications by providing recognitions to advance their education, qualifications and ability to deal with the responsibilities and functions accorded to them as professionals, particularly those who are living in the areas with armed conflict or unstable peace and order situation.

**Grievance:** Some of the teachers claimed that they did not receive assistance from the government, other teachers revealed also that they have not received any protection from the government and there was lack of support from the school.

The result is in conformity with the concept of GCPEA (2014) and Ryder (1996) that attacks on teachers and other



educators are a disturbingly common tactic of war and a serious threat to education. They stressed that conflict tends to undermine teachers' morale due to the collapse of administrative systems. Moreover, they may be forced to work without pay and many are persecuted or the victims of violence.

### **Coping Mechanisms of Teachers with the Unstable Peace and Order Situation in their Area**

**Education and Training:** One of the coping mechanisms adopted by the teachers assigned in the area with unstable peace and order situation was to expose the community to disaster preparedness seminar oftentimes. They also formulated planned escape and attend briefing and seminars related to disaster management. Moreover, they always instruct and remind students not to go out and talk to strangers.

The result is in conformity with the goal of Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2014) stressing that teachers play a vital role in enlightening and educating children for them to become desirable constituents of their respective communities. The state therefore should provide hard work and resources to keep teachers secure and in good condition so that they can also perform well their duties as teachers.

**Vigilance.** Alertness and vigilance are embraced by the teachers as part of their coping mechanisms adopted by the teachers. They told that they have to stay alert, cautious and watchful all the time.

The result agrees with the words of Orlando (2013) citing that teachers who are assigned in far flung areas and situation is unstable, they tend to value the prudence and alertness. They need to be watchful since they do not just mind their safety but of the learners as well.

### **Collaboration and Support Mechanism**

The collaboration among the stakeholders was observed by the teachers that mollify the situation of the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation is the support and collaboration among stakeholders. They were happy mentioning the collaboration between the school and the local officials and parents as well. By these, the school community will feel the safety that they need.

The result is in line with Republic Act No. 4670 which declared to promote and improve the social and economic status of public school teachers, their living and working conditions, their terms of employment and career prospects in order that they may compare favorably with existing opportunities in other walks of life, attract and retain in the teaching profession more people with the proper qualifications. It is being recognized that advance in education depends on the qualifications and ability of the teaching staff and that education is an essential factor in the economic growth of the nation as a productive investment of vital importance (Magna Carta for Public School Teachers, 1966).

Also, Republic Act 7610 Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992 of Section 22 prohibits the use of schools as military base for command posts, barracks, detachments, and supply depots is stressed in RA 1992. It also establishes that the delivery of basic social services such as education shall be kept unhampered. The act targets children, as it recognizes education as a necessary protective system, of which teachers are a critical part the school environment. A number of provincial and municipal entities issued similar ordinances subsequent to the banning of the use of schools for military purposes in the national legislation.

### **Belief in Divine Intervention**

Prayer is considered the best coping mechanisms expressed by the teachers and it is their strong belief and faith to God. They prayed for comfort and for the safety of the community of all times.

The result agrees with the statement of Zakharia and Bartlett (2014) that in a community where chaos and trouble are evident, strong belief in God is present. People have a tight hold that God will deliver them into safe and peaceful living.

### **Insights of Teachers in Areas with Unstable Peace and Order**

**Bearing of Conflict to Community:** Unstable growth of the economy and education in the areas where unstable peace and order is observed by the teachers. The progress and growth of the community is hampered since livelihood is affected.

The result conforms to the concept of Jaffer (2013) that less development is observed in areas where peace and order is stable. Investors are apprehensive to put up their business and people do not have freedom to do some activities in their place.

**Impact to Learners:** The unstable situation of the area leads to unfavorable impact most particularly to the learners. For the learners, the teachers found out that the students are the most affected ones. They have less opportunities to grow and eventually they become juvenile delinquents.

The result agrees on the concept of Sharma and Khadka (1996) that teachers and pupils alike are under immense psychological pressure to keep themselves safe between two forces. Scenes of bombs going off near their school, attack on school bus, burning of tires in the streets and dead bodies shown in TV channels on a regular basis – has tremendous psychological torture on pupils.

**Vital Role of Teachers:** The vital role in the area with unstable peace and order situation has been cherished by the teachers, for they can safeguard the safety of the students. They sacrificed to fulfill their mission as educators, and are happy that they become part of the success of their students

The result agrees with the words of Orlando (2013) that teaching is a hard work and noble profession which entails sacrifice to fulfill its mission to educate children. Great teachers are those who do their duties tirelessly to institute a

challenging, nurturing classroom environment for their students. Great teaching is about imposing values toward the students rather than imparting knowledge and skills through teaching the subject to the learners. Teachers are the inspiration to students, coupled with his passion for education for their children to grow as competent individuals. Whatever it takes, teachers are always on the line to care and protect the children at all times

**Cognizance:** The teachers disclosed that their situation is just a trial of their bravery and God will never allow that war will not end. Acceptance of the situation has lightened the feeling of the teachers assigned in the areas with unstable peace and order situation. They also accepted the fact that teaching is a mission that even the place is threatened with unfavorable condition. They have to fulfill their obligation as teachers.

The result is parallel to Republic Act No. 4670 or the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers. Teachers are indeed invaluable to our society. Their responsibility in molding the values and character of the young generation of the country cannot be overestimated. Aside from educating our children, teachers are likewise the most reliable and dedicated public servants.

**Evasion:** Evasion has been expressed by the teachers as their insights when the teachers were asked if they have the plan to leave the place, they clearly answered that if there is a chance to be transferred, they will leave the place for they cannot afford also to put their family in danger.

The result is parallel to the idea of Zakharia and Bartlett (2014) who stressed that teachers may be displaced and have high levels of mobility and absenteeism in response to the security situation and immediate needs of their families. Their own education or professional development may be disrupted, particularly in the context of protracted conflict, resulting low level of interest which will not motivate them anymore to stay in the place.

## 7. Implication for Educational Practice

The themes generated from this study include disruption of classes, direct traumatic encounters, psychological distress, learners' vulnerability and grievance connote that the teachers who are assigned in the areas with unstable situations are psychologically and emotionally disturbed. They feel the fear and traumatic experiences as they live in the area where they are assigned. This study provides insights to various groups for educational practice. The Department of Education may take cognizance danger that the teachers will face amidst the chaotic community by providing them basic protection, such as strong collaboration with the Local Government Units and Non-Government units as to the provision of strong defense to the area with unstable situation.

The Department of Social Work and Development may look into the programs for that would protect the children from harm. This shall help the students be at ease in the situation that they themselves cannot control Republic Act No. 9231 was passed, which amends R.A. No. 7610 by embodying the

state policy to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and conditions prejudicial to their development.

Development of character and opportunities for support and assistance as themes among others signify that in the unstable areas where teachers are assigned, they learned to manifest courage to support the community. This suggests that parents and teachers shall establish strong collaboration between and among various authorities for them to be able to connect right away their current needs and protection as they continue to live in the community with unstable peace and order situation.

Violence Against Women and Children (2004) declared that the state values the dignity of women and children and guarantees full respect for human rights. The state also recognizes the need to protect the family and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security. Towards this end, the state shall exert efforts to address violence committed against women and children in keeping with the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the constitution and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments of which the Philippines is a part. Similarly, GCPEA (2013) stated that the Philippine legislative bodies have enacted several laws and policies that protect either directly or indirectly education personnel from attack.

The themes education and training, vigilance, collaboration and support mechanism, grace under pressure and belief in divine intervention indicate that the teachers are able to survive in the areas with unstable situation because they keep within themselves the calmness, strength and belief that they can surpass the situation. This signifies aid of the peace and order council of the barangay or the municipality to strongly support the schools, particularly the teachers in their situation of protecting the students. This is parallel to the concept presented by the Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2014) that teachers play a vital role in enlightening and educating children for them to become desirable constituents of their respective communities. The state therefore should provide hard work and resources to keep teachers secure and in good condition so that they can also perform well their duties as teachers.

Finally, the themes expressed as to bearing of conflict to community, impact to learners, vital role of teachers, cognizance and evasion signify that the teachers show resilience in the place where they are assigned despite its instability in terms of peace and order. This suggests that the municipality may install a peace and order posts that may aid the teacher and school as a whole in protecting the stakeholders of the community. This is congruent to the statement stipulated under Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (1966) which stated that teachers play important roles in the society for their mission in molding the values and character of the young generation of the country cannot be overestimated. Aside from educating our children,

teachers are also considered as the most dependable and committed public servants for they are being constantly called upon by officials of the local and national governments to support and assist in various extra-curricular and civic activities which supplement the welfare of the community and the country. The most notable of which is when they perform their functions as members of the board of election Inspectors during election period and to collaborate as well the National Statistics Office in gathering data from households in all parts of the country, even those situated in remote areas.

## 8. Implication for Future Research

The study focused only on the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the seven participants for in-depth interview and seven participants for the Focused Group Discussion, which could not be generalized to all teachers in other locale with unstable peace and order situation. Therefore, future research may be done in other locale with another set of informants to find out also their peculiar experiences of their area of assignments.

Moreover, I also suggest that another phenomenological study be done but it would tackle on the stories of the learners who are studying the area with unstable peace and order situation, employing the same approach and methodology.

The Department of Education No. 44 recognizes the declaration of schools as Zones of Peace (2005). This implements the Republic Act No.7610 by declaring, "All concerned personnel in the central and field offices are mandated to make necessary action to make all schools a place where children can receive utmost security and peace. ...with immediate compliance directed." Although this policy does not specifically address teachers, protecting education personnel is a necessary step if schools are to be places of "utmost security and peace."

Presidential Executive Order Nos. 56 and 138 Adopting the Comprehensive Program Framework for Children in Armed Conflict, Strengthening the Council for the Welfare of Children and For Other Purposes of these orders and their subsequent memoranda establish the monitoring, reporting, and response system for grave child rights violations in situations of armed conflict as the monitoring arm within the children in armed conflict program framework led by the Council for the Welfare of Children. This mechanism includes collecting and verifying data on attacks on education personnel and schools.

Further research may be done also that would re-interview the informants to validate their insights and thoughts whether they have changed over a period of time. Finally, in order to hear also the voices of the parents of the learners in the area with unstable peace and order situation, a study may be done that would solicit the accounts of experiences of the parents.

## 9. Concluding Remarks

This phenomenological study has fulfilled my desire to conduct a study on the experiences of the teachers assigned

in the area with unstable peace and order situation, considering that for years now, I have been in the area and I, myself is a living witness of the sad stories and dreams of the teachers as they perform their noble profession as mentors of the children.

The stories they shared to me during the conduct of the in-depth interview and focused group discussion has made me feel the goodness of the heart of the teachers. Truly, teachers are unsung heroes, that amidst the harassment and chaotic situation, they continue to live in the area, not only to teach but to serve as second parent, comfort and protection of the children.

Moreover, the life of the teachers assigned in the area with unstable situation serves as a paragon of bravery and determination to survive, worth the value and inspiration of the higher authorities. Finally, their stories are mirrors of the dignified deed of the teachers, for they manifest love and commitment to what they have promised for in the teaching profession.

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