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Noxious Repercussions of Home Visitations for Teachers and Students in the Philippines

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Abstract

This position paper analyzes the mandatory home visitation program for teachers in the Philippines, which aims to strengthen relationships among schools, students, and their families. Though home visitation programs came with good intentions, such as lessening the number of dropouts, this paper argues that their effectiveness in practice is more hassle and may negatively affect both teachers and learners. Home visitations as a requirement impose additional responsibilities on teachers, which include teachers rendering extra hours of work, financial expenses, and privacy matters. Knowing that the teachers are the average earners in the Philippines, who often work beyond their official hours, it is impractical for them to do home visits. This paper also emphasizes the compromise for students' privacy – especially when their socio-economic statuses are exposed, and how such visits really influence their well-being and academic involvement. This position paper firmly stands to suggestions for the exploration of alternative strategies to achieve school-community linkages through technological advancements in communication - while considering the welfare of both the teachers and the students.

Keywords: Home Visitation, hazardous living situations (HLS)

Introduction

In the Philippines, part of the teachers' initiatives to connect students, parents, and other stakeholders is to conduct a home visitation program. In response to the Republic Act No. 9155, August 11, 2011, that dictates the act to govern basic education that mandates school levels to establish the school to form community linkages which also encourages the school to partake with the community, Department of Education (November 29,

2002) enforced the rules and regulations of the said republic act, it is to ensure working involvement among the school (both academic and non-academic personnel) and the non-school peoples (including the parents and the community associations), as an initiative to this, such programs that involve teachers to visit learners' homes aiming to address attendance issues, failures to grades, school problems, and academic progresses. Although the

goals of these initiatives are commendable, their real-world effects are complicated and could pose risks for both educators and learners.

Good costs do not always get good rewards. Mandating home visitations to teachers is too burdensome since they demand extra time, money, and emotional management. Moreover, such practices do not always realistically be met since they extend to the teachers' baggage of responsibilities professionally. Not to mention that these days, when people value privacy issues that may be violated when teachers do home visitation, it creates discomfort for the students, including their housemates and the teachers. Besides, not all homes are safe to visit, such as places that are isolated or remote and are considered to be hazardous living situations (HLS).

Requiring teachers to conduct home visitations has significant negative impacts on all people involved, and this practice should be re-assessed to ensure the well-being of the teachers and to set boundaries for the students personally.

The 21st century has led people to be fully aware and give importance to everyone's well-being—and, most importantly, to the field of education, where students are vulnerable and teachers are professionally disregarded. With the careful and analytical evaluation of this practice, other ways rather than home visitation can be opted for while still committing to school-community linkages that still protect the integrity of the teachers professionally.

Overloaded and Overworked Task for Teachers

DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2004, titled Rationalization of Teachers' Workload in Public Schools and Payment of Teaching Overload, recently re-stated the rationale for how teachers are mandated to work in a day. Accordingly, it is a must for a public school teachers to provide six (6) hours of actual teaching in the classroom and two (2) hours of ancillaries to teaching duties which may be done outside the school – totaling to at least 40 hours a week of work. However, studies show that two hours a day allocated for work incidental to teachers' typical instruction responsibilities is insufficient. Cerebro (2024, as cited by Dy-Zuluete, 2024) reported that Filipino teachers spend at least 400 hours of extra work yearly outside their official and painful working hours. In fact, even the government in the Philippines is seeking to address the issue. Senator Gatchalian (2022) regards the issue as workload congestion and needs to be addressed. It is believed that having a workload balance for teachers can help them deliver their main job well and that the quality of education is expected to improve.

This highlights that teachers work beyond the policy that the agency has mandated. Even though teachers are given some time to do ancillary tasks, allocating it for home visitations is definitely not enough. Though pieces of literature and studies report a need to address teachers' congestion to work, a definite solution to it is still yet to be expected. Since home visitation requires time, the allotted two hours for ancillary tasks is not enough – resulting in teachers overworking. Overworking may lead to many adverse effects: daily life management, health issues, and professional growth (Abdullah & Hassan, 2024).

Privacy Matters

In this century, when people are so concerned about their privacy, home visitation can pose privacy issues to students, especially with their family background. Though the students have disclosed their personal information in enrollment, it is not always agreed that

when necessary, any school employee can visit any home without their permission. Because of this, students may feel embarrassed when in cases that they have been exposed to how their home environments look like since it is a reflection of their socio-economic status. Since socio-economic status of one's person affects academic and behavioral functioning (Heberle & Carter, 2015), exposing it to people whom they do not want to tell may harbor humiliation and uneasiness. With this discomfort, since the teacher-student relationship is positively linked with students' academic performance and engagement (Lee, 2012), it is most likely that students may lose interest in their studies.

Though teachers doing home visitation indeed has a good purpose, not all its effects are positive. Students' privacy may be compromised since most of the realities in their lives are seen and reflected in their homes, making them so vulnerable, which may result in more disconnectedness towards the teachers and the school. Teachers have a vital role in supporting learners' mental health (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2014), and pushing through mandatory home visitation may negatively impact students' wellbeing.

Financial Burden

Most likely, teachers must pay all the extra and unprecedented expenses when doing home visitations. It is a practice for Filipino teachers to have unavoidable payments or purchase learning materials and need to make everything possible (DepEd Tambayan, 2020). When doing home visitations, transportation fares are needed, and teachers have no choice but to pay on their own. Not to mention the fact that teachers are among the degree holders who receive low income in the Philippines with a starting salary of Php27,000 a month (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2024), teachers paying for unnecessary things can make them financially less.

Anyone can argue about the good intentions of teachers home visiting some students, but not everyone knows the sacrifices teachers make financially doing their jobs. It is considered that public school teachers in the Philippines face a financial crisis that significantly affects their personal and professional lives (Plaza & Jamito, 2021), yet teachers sacrifice too much. Though it is true that not always the teachers do home visitation, that small penny they use for transportation may be used for their personal finances, making a big difference in their spending.

Some have concluded that learners' behavior improves by doing a home visitation (Sebullen et al., 2023; Rogers, 2023).

Though the improvement of learners seems to be observed after home visitations, it is yet to be conclusively proven that mandatory home visitations are the best way to improve their behavior. Communication through technology is one of the strategies teachers can use to communicate with parents (Graham-Clay, 2005).

Since we are now living in the 21st century, where technological advancements are made so instant and easy, maximizing the technology we know as of now can be an excellent alternative for everyone. Not only does it cost less, but it can be hassle-free, without the students considering showing their homes, especially when they are uncomfortable exposing them. In addition, teachers can feel more at ease since it is a lot safer because no physical contact can be made. Accidents may happen anytime, especially in places you are unfamiliar or unfamiliar with. By this, teachers can

still reach out to parents without compromising stressful overwork, privacy issues, and financial burdens.

Conclusion

Mandatory home visitation program vindicates critical revisits since they may impose superfluous demands on teachers' financial concerns and overworking matters. It may also be a privacy concern for the students and their families.

Reevaluating this mandate implies a better, easier, and safer way of reaching out to students. In addition, comprehensively reviewing this policy can foster a more transformative development considering the teachers' well-being and the students' call for privacy, as this position paper advocates.

Future researchers should study which practical alternatives to home visitation are most effective and efficient, considering an empathetic view of teachers' nature of the job and the student's privacy while establishing enhanced educational outcomes.

Bio-Note

Mark Anthony Reyes Aguion is a dedicated public senior high school teacher at Taal High School Bocaue, Bulacan in the Philippines. He holds a Bachelor of Secondary Education with a major in English and is currently a candidate for a Master of Arts in Education, specializing in English Language Education. Mark is particularly intrigued by the field of applied linguistics and is passionate about fostering strong communication skills in his students.

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