

Factors Influencing the Multi-Grade Instruction and Work Performance of the Multi-Grade Teachers in the Schools Division of Borongan City

Jessa Apar-Gesoyot¹, Virgilio P. Rapada, Jr²

¹Graduate School, Eastern Samar State University Main Campus, Borongan City, Eastern Samar, Philippines, 6800

²Professor I, Graduate School, Eastern Samar State University Main Campus, Borongan City, Eastern Samar, Philippines, 6800

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors influencing the multi-grade instruction and work performance of the multi-grade teachers in the Schools Division of Borongan City. Specifically, it aimed to determine the factors influencing multi-grade instruction in terms of the following indicators such as personal-related factors, school-related factors, learner-related factors, and community-related factors; determine the work performance of the multi-grade instruction and assess if there is a significant relationship between the factors influencing multi-grade instruction and the work performance of the multi-grade teachers. A descriptive and correlational research design was employed in this study. This study was conducted in the Schools Division of Borongan City. Specifically, this study catered to only forty-one (41) multi-grade teachers for the School Year 2023-2024, chosen through purposive sampling via total enumeration. The study utilized two sets of survey questionnaires as research instruments. In finding out the factors influencing multi-grade instruction, the researcher adapted the survey questionnaire from the study of Haramain (2018); while for the work performance of the multi-grade teachers, the researcher asked for the final rating of the teachers' IPCRF for three consecutive years. The study revealed that multi-grade teachers' instruction highly influenced personal-related factors. School-related factors, learners-related factors, and community-related factors showed a very high influence on teachers in multi-grade instruction based on the respondents' responses. The consistently high percentage of multi-grade teachers performed at the "very satisfactory" level across all three years.

Moreover, a small percentage of multi-grade teachers achieve an "outstanding" level of work performance. A relatively low percentage of multi-grade teachers are categorized as "satisfactory" each school year. Work performance for School Year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 revealed that personal and community-related factors revealed to be statistically significant and statistically insignificant for school and learner-related factors. Meanwhile, for the School Year 2022-2023, it shows that only community-related factors seemed to be statistically significant, while the rest of the factors, such as the personal, school, and learner-related factors, were statistically insignificant

Keywords: Multigrade instruction, Work performance, Descriptive and Correlation design

INTRODUCTION

Multi-grade teaching occurs when one teacher handles more than one grade level (Little, 2020). Pupil are also of different ages. In the Philippines, the Department of Education implemented the policies and guidelines in the organization and operation of Multi-grade classes (DepEd Order No. 96, s. 1997). Multi-grade education is one of the Department's strategies to provide access to quality education for all school-age children in remote communities where enrollment does not warrant the organization of Mono-grade classes. It is one way to address the problems and issues to make education accessible to all wherever they are,

despite distance and situations. The implementation of multi-grade education in the Philippines was strengthened by DO 81, s. 2009, as the government provided:

- Special hardship allowance
- Adequate training for multi-grade teachers
- Giving of resource package and other benefits

There are areas in the Philippines where total school enrolment is low or there is a lack of teachers, making it necessary to combine different grade levels. Hence, in remote places, multi-grade schools are present to make significant contributions to education for all. As of the Academic years 2018-2021, 12,225 of 37,697 public elementary schools were multi-grade (Villalino, 2022).

It is not easy for a Multi-grade teacher to experience that some pupils, especially those at the higher grade level, may not be listening while the teacher is discussing because they may already know the topic. The teacher will have difficulty designing and creating activities for a Multi-grade class. It requires more discipline, concentration, and focus to benefit from effective strategies. Besides, pupils' achievement may be inadequate if programs do not have the required resources and teachers are not adequately trained.

In the Philippines, the most common problems in multi-grade classrooms are preparation and planning of daily lessons, the inadequacy of instructional materials, classroom management supervision, familiarity of different schemes in teaching multi-grade classes, application of teaching methodology in real teaching-learning situations, lack of school facilities, schedule of activities, big class size, poor working conditions of teachers, inadequate pre and in-service training of teachers in specific skills related to multi-grade teaching, and concern about the academic achievement of children.

In the present school profile of the Schools Division of Borongan City, challenges in the multi-grade program are inevitable. Most of these schools cater diverse learners. A critical factor in the success of multi-grade program is the teacher. Teachers in multi-grade school in remote communities have many challenges such as lack of facilities, different culture and practices, distance, and demographic aspects. The effectiveness of the school depends on the competence of the teachers. However, getting faculty support from the school is not easy if their level of working condition and work performance is low.

Managing multi-grade classes is difficult because there is more than one grade level in the classroom. Any novice teacher who is not trained to handle a multi-grade class in both his bachelor's degree and even as an appointed permanent teacher is usually confused about what she will do and how she will handle this type of class (multi-grade). These facts contribute to the working performance of the multi-grade teachers. Thus, the paper seeks to explore the factors that affect the multi-grade instruction and their work performance as MG teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive and correlational research design. Calderon (2019) defined descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretations of such data with or without or sometimes minimal aid of statistical methods. This descriptive study aims to accurately and systematically measure the different factors affecting multi-grade instruction in the Schools Division of Borongan City. Also, the study seeks to examine the work performance of multi-grade teachers. Moreover, it is correlational because it tries to reveal the significant relationship between the factors affecting multi-grade instruction and the work performance of multi-grade teachers. A correlation research design is used when a study focuses on the current situation and aims to discover a new reality, according to Creswell (2018). It is only valid when the data to be collected is about

the current state, offering the importance of evidence and concentrating on the most exciting items. A descriptive analysis will be used to analyze the collected numerical data in the sense of the research.

Respondents of the Study

The study's respondents were the 41 multi-grade teachers in the Schools Division of Borongan City selected through total enumeration. The researcher chose to examine the entire population with a particular set of characteristics; in this case, only the 41 multi-grade teachers in the Schools Division of Borongan City shall be considered respondents in the study.

The researcher established explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the study's sample aligns with research objectives and maintains integrity. These criteria help define who is eligible to participate in the research and who should be excluded. This study identified multi-grade teachers serving in classroom settings as the study's respondents. Inclusion criteria encompass teachers currently teaching in multi-grade classrooms, where teachers simultaneously teach learners from multiple grade levels within a single classroom setting. Additionally, multi-grade teachers with varying levels of experience, educational backgrounds, and geographical locations were considered to ensure a diverse representation of perspectives. Exclusion criteria were applied to teachers who were not actively engaged in teaching multi-grade classes during the study period. This includes teachers exclusively teaching single-grade classrooms or those not directly involved in multi-grade teaching practices. Furthermore, individuals lacking sufficient experience or expertise in multi-grade teaching, such as student teachers or teachers with limited exposure to this teaching approach, will be excluded from the respondent pool.

Data Analysis

The data from the data-gathering instruments were tallied, computed, and analyzed statistically. The results were interpreted using specific statistical tools.

For statement problem 1, the mean and percentages will be used to determine factors affecting the multi-grade instruction frequency count.

For statement problem 2, frequency count, mean, and percentages will be used to determine the work performance of the multi-grade teachers.

For statement problem 3, spearman rho r will be used to determine the relationship between the factors affecting the multi-grade teachers and their work performance.

All tests were performed at a 0.05 level of significance and a 95% confidence interval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented in Table 1.5 provide a comprehensive summary of the factors influencing multi-grade instruction, offering insights into the complex interplay between various elements within the educational ecosystem.

School-related factors emerge as the most influential, with a high mean score of 4.448. This underscores the critical importance of organizational structures, leadership, and school environment in facilitating effective multi-grade instruction. Educators and policymakers should prioritize initiatives to create supportive learning environments, implement relevant school systems, and provide adequate managerial support to optimize teaching and learning outcomes within multi-grade classrooms (Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2023).

Moreover, learner-related factors, with a mean score of 4.371, also significantly shape multi-grade instruction. Understanding students' characteristics, experiences, and attitudes is essential for tailoring instructional approaches and support systems to meet their diverse needs within multi-grade settings

(Fredricks et al., 2023). Educators can create inclusive and enriching learning environments that promote academic success and socio-emotional well-being by fostering positive student attitudes and engagement.

Community-related factors, with a mean score of 4.289, highlight the importance of community-school partnerships in supporting multi-grade instruction. Engaging stakeholders and leveraging community resources can enhance the effectiveness of multi-grade teaching and enrich students' learning experiences (Epstein et al., 2020). Schools should actively involve local communities in educational decision-making processes and collaborate with them to address the unique needs of multi-grade learners.

On the contrary, personal-related factors receive a relatively lower mean score of 4.098, indicating a lesser influence on multi-grade instruction. While personal factors such as teachers' health, character, and job satisfaction are essential, they may have a less direct impact on instructional practices than other factors within the educational environment (Ladd, 2022). However, educators and policymakers should still prioritize supporting teachers' well-being and professional development to ensure their effectiveness in multi-grade instruction.

The grand mean score of 4.3015 for these four factors suggests a collective and synergistic influence on multi-grade instruction, with a qualitative interpretation of "very high." This underscores the interconnectedness of various elements within the educational ecosystem and highlights the importance of adopting a holistic approach to promoting effective multi-grade teaching and learning. Table 1 underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing multi-grade instruction and emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that address school-related, learner-related, community-related, and personal-related factors to optimize teaching and learning outcomes within multi-grade classrooms.

Table 1. Summary table on factors influencing multi-grade instruction

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Personal-related factor	4.098	High
School-related factor	4.448	Very High
Learner-related factor	4.371	Very High
Community-related factor	4.289	Very High
Average	4.3015	Very High

The data presented in Table 2 regarding the level of work performance of multi-grade teachers over three consecutive years offers valuable insights into the overall effectiveness and quality of teaching within multi-grade classrooms.

The consistently high percentage of multi-grade teachers performing at the "very satisfactory" level across all three school years underscores the dedication and commitment of these educators to their profession. This suggests that most multi-grade teachers are meeting or exceeding expectations regarding their instructional practices, classroom management, and overall job performance (Msimanga, 2019).

Moreover, the small percentage of multi-grade teachers achieving an "outstanding" level of work performance highlights the presence of exemplary educators who consistently go above and beyond in their roles. These outstanding performers are role models within their schools and communities, demonstrating best practices and significantly contributing to student learning and school improvement efforts (Novianti, 2022; Ballesteros & Ocampo, 2020).

However, the relatively low percentage of multi-grade teachers categorized as "satisfactory" in each school year is worth noting. While this may indicate areas where some educators may need additional support or professional development, it is essential to interpret this data within the context of the overall high performance observed among multi-grade teachers.

The consistent high performance of multi-grade teachers over the three years, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.91 for the overall work performance in the 2021-2022 school year, underscores the effectiveness of the support systems and professional development opportunities available to these educators. This suggests that investments in teacher training, mentorship programs, and ongoing support mechanisms are paying off in enhancing teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction within multi-grade settings (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021).

The data suggest a positive trend in the overall work performance of multi-grade teachers over the three years, with an increasing percentage of teachers achieving a "very satisfactory" or "outstanding" level of performance. This trend reflects the continuous growth and improvement among multi-grade educators and the effectiveness of efforts to support their professional development and job satisfaction (Motamedi & Khajouie, 2020).

Findings from Table 2 highlight the overall high performance of multi-grade teachers and the positive impact of support systems and professional development initiatives on teacher effectiveness within multi-grade classrooms. Moving forward, policymakers and education stakeholders should continue to prioritize investments in teacher training, mentorship, and support mechanisms to ensure the ongoing success of multi-grade education programs.

Table 2. Level of work performance among multi-grade teachers

Weighted Average	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
4.500 – 5.000	2	3.2	3	4.8	3	0.7	Outstanding
3.500 – 4.499	50	93.7	54	85.7	58	92.1	Very Satisfactory
2.500 – 3.499	11	17.5	6	9.5	2	3.2	Satisfactory
1.500 – 2.499	0	0	0	0	0	0	Unsatisfactory
Below 1.499	0	0	0	0	0	0	Poor
Gen Average	3.77		3.91		4.01		Very Satisfactory

The results presented in Table 3 depict the relationship between the factors influencing multi-grade instruction, such as personal-related factors, school-related factors, learner-related factors, and community-related factors, and the level of work performance of multi-grade teachers.

As shown from the table below, work performance for School Year 2020-2021 revealed that personal and community-related factors were statistically significant with a p-value of 0.010 and 0.005, respectively; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and statistically insignificant for school and learner-related factors with p-value 0.206 and .168 way higher than the alpha level of 0.05, and it failed to reject the null hypothesis of the study.

The school Year 2021-2022 revealed again that personal and community-related factors seemed statistically significant with p-values of 0.024 and 0.003, respectively, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Statistically, it was insignificant for school and learner-related factors with p-values of 0.113 and 0.081, and it failed to reject the study's null hypothesis.

Meanwhile, only community-related factors seemed statistically significant for the School Year 2022-2023, with a p-value of 0.018. The hypothesis is assumed to be rejected. At the same time, the other factors, such as the personal, school, and learner-related factors, showed statistical insignificance with p-values of 0.096, 0.382, and 0.241, respectively. The null hypothesis is accepted for personal, school, and learner-related factors.

The consistent statistical significance of personal and community-related factors across all three school years underscores the critical influence of these factors on teacher work performance within multi-grade

classrooms. Personal factors such as teachers' health, well-being, job satisfaction, community support, and engagement are essential determinants of teacher motivation, morale, and job performance (Frost et al., 2020). Therefore, investing in initiatives to support teachers' well-being and foster positive community-school partnerships can significantly enhance teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction within multi-grade settings.

Table 3. Test on significant relationship between the factors influencing the multi-grade instruction and the work performance of multi-grade teachers

Factor	Work performance	r-value	p-value	decision	Interpretation
Personal	2020-2021	.321	.010	reject	significant
School		.162	.206	accept	not significant
Learner		.176	.168	accept	not significant
Community		.348	.005	reject	significant
Personal	2021-2022	.284	.024	reject	significant
School		.202	.113	accept	not significant
Learner		.221	.081	accept	not significant
Community		.365	.003	reject	significant
Personal	2022-2023	.212	.096	accept	not significant
School		.112	.382	accept	not significant
Learner		.150	.241	accept	not significant
Community		.296	.018	reject	significant

Moreover, the statistically insignificant relationship between school and learner-related factors and teacher work performance suggests that these factors may have a lesser direct impact on teacher effectiveness within multi-grade classrooms. However, it is crucial to interpret these findings cautiously and consider potential contextual factors that may influence the relationship between these variables. While school-related factors such as organizational structures and leadership may not directly correlate with teacher performance, they still play a crucial role in creating conducive learning environments and supporting effective teaching practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2023). Similarly, learner-related factors such as student characteristics and attitudes may indirectly influence teacher effectiveness through their impact on classroom dynamics and instructional approaches.

Overall, the findings from Table 3 underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing teacher work performance within multi-grade settings. By considering the interplay between personal, community, school, and learner-related factors, policymakers and education stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to support teacher effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes within multi-grade classrooms. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing personal and community-related factors in supporting teacher effectiveness within multi-grade settings. Moving forward, policymakers and education stakeholders should prioritize investments in initiatives to support teachers' well-being and foster positive community-school partnerships to enhance teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the findings derived from the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The study's findings illuminate the profound influence of personal-related factors on the instructional practices of multi-grade teachers. This underscores the significance of understanding and addressing individual characteristics, well-being, and circumstances in shaping effective teaching strategies within multi-grade educational contexts.

2. For the work performance of the multi-grade teachers it reveals a consistent trend of a high percentage of multi-grade teachers performing at a "very satisfactory" level across all three school years, alongside a notable scarcity of teachers achieving an "outstanding" level of work performance. Additionally, there is a comparatively low percentage of multi-grade teachers categorized as "satisfactory" in each school year.
3. Work performance over consecutive school years highlights the evolving significance of different factors. Analysis of the school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 identified both personal and community-related factors as statistically significant influencers of work performance, while the impact of school and learner-related factors varied in significance. However, in the subsequent school year, 2022-2023, only community-related factors remained statistically significant, with personal, school, and learner-related factors showing decreased significance.

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