

## *Job Satisfaction of Special Education Teachers of La Union, Philippines in the New Normal*

Jasmine P. Sibayan, University of the Cordilleras, Philippines  
Ramir S. Austria, University of the Cordilleras, Philippines

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### **Abstract**

The shift from traditional classrooms to the use of different learning modalities transformed the 21st century educational landscape during the new normal. Situating education at a different setting poses a challenge on the job satisfaction of teachers more so in special education where SPED teachers elaborate guidance and specialized skills are matched to the specific needs of learners with special needs. Hence, this study aimed to determine the job satisfaction level of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits and the challenges encountered. With this, a mixed method design was employed, a questionnaire on job satisfaction was adapted, and a focus group discussion through a saturation method on the challenges encountered was conducted. The results revealed that the over-all level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal is Very Highly Satisfied (4.63), specifically fringe benefits (4.73), relationship with co-workers (4.68), policy (4.66), administration (4.62), nature of work (4.56), and supervision (4.53). Challenges such as lack of trainings and parent-student collaboration were highlighted. In this regard, emphasis on the use of different new normal management strategies should be reemphasized and considered by the school heads in order to develop, improve, and maintain the maximum job satisfaction level of the SPED teachers in the new normal.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction Challenges, Special Education, SPED Teachers, New Normal

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## Introduction

Situating education at a different setting poses a challenge on the job satisfaction of teachers more so in special education where SPED teachers elaborate guidance and specialized skills are matched to the specific needs of learners with special needs. Hence, this study aimed to determine the level of job satisfaction and challenges encountered by SPED teachers in the new normal. This study can help curriculum developers understand the needs of the teachers and create plans and strategies that may help students with disabilities based on the job satisfaction specific needs and requirements. Moreover, this can help educators make necessary adjustments in their over-all work styles in order to meet the needs of the learners with special needs. With this, learners with special needs will benefit as well for their educational needs in the new normal environment would be addressed through the SPED teachers' preparation and adjustment of teaching approaches.

## Literature Review

COVID-19 Challenges Hit Special Ed Teachers especially Hard (Murez, 2022). Challenges such as high teacher turnover rate is one of the obstacles in the new normal education leading to a domino effect on student and institution's performance. In truth, Toropova (2019) raised the growing issue of increasing teacher turnover rates which led to subsequent shortage of qualified teachers. She also emphasized that teacher shortage can be highly merited to job satisfaction that contributes to the well-being of teachers and students. However, measures are taken by institutions to address concerns in in the job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal.

In the Philippines, in the Department of Education based on performance appraisal, SPED teachers' challenged satisfaction in the new normal surfaced as a problem. Helpline PH (2022) cited Carlos in the viral SMNI News Channel Presidential Debate, where she reiterated that the critical variable for effective learning to happen is to invest in the teachers. Romero and Bantigue (2017) in the result of their research entitled "Job Satisfaction Level of K To 12 Teachers Utilizing Multiple Statistical Tools" reiterated that the change in the Department of Education, school managers and teachers are challenged to maintain job performance under stressful conditions. Nonetheless, in the news and media press releases of the Department of Education Regional Office III said that Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: DepEd Region III assures learning for children with special needs continues; trains SPED teachers in Central Luzon (DepEd Region III, 2022). With this, there is a need to identify the SPED teachers' level of job satisfaction and challenges in the new normal.

In the context of this study, job satisfaction refers as an important aspect of a SPED teacher's life which occupies a lot of personal and professional time compared to any other activity with the pleasure felt after a need is fulfilled. It is determined through the SPED teachers' job satisfaction in the new normal along the following areas: nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits. Navarrete (2022) defined the six job satisfaction domains as follows: 1) nature of work covers the overall operation, description, and responsibility, 2) supervision covers guidance, support, and monitoring from school heads, supervisors, and other leaders of the division, 3) administration focuses on how the administrators handle and implement the rules, regulation, and policies, 4) relationship with co-workers involves the status of relationship of SPED teachers, 5) policy refers to the present policies the administration has, and 6) fringe benefits

attained through benefits, rewards, and other privileges from working as SPED teachers in the new normal.

### **Problem Statement**

This study aimed to determine the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along the following areas, nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits.

### **Method**

Mixed method convergent parallel design was used to systematically analyze and measure the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal.

### **Materials**

A 61-item job satisfaction questionnaire was adapted from the research entitled by “Performance and Job Satisfaction of Proficient Junior High School Teachers in the SDO in the New Normal” by Navarrete (2021). It has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.97 which means that the items in the questionnaire have relatively high consistency. It is composed of questions along the six areas of job satisfaction competencies specifically, 20 questions on nature of work, 15 questions on supervision, seven questions on administration, nine questions on relationship with co-workers, five questions on policy, and five questions on fringe benefits. This questionnaire was distributed through the use of electronic (Google form) and printed format. The interview guide was made by the researchers and it was content validated by experts.

### **Samples**

Universal sampling was employed. With this, a total of (66) SPED teachers from 11 SPED schools were identified, specifically, (33) or 50% from the Schools Division Office - City of San Fernando and (33) or 50% from La Union Schools Division Office.

### **Site**

The 11 SPED schools identified from the Schools Division Office - City of San Fernando and La Union Schools Division Office were the public schools that provide special education program in the new normal both in elementary and secondary levels.

### **Procedures**

Before the data gathering collection, the researchers sought approval to administer the questionnaire, letters of permission to conduct the study and invitation to participate, and participant consent forms were given to the schools’ division superintendents, school heads, and teachers of the target institutions. These letters and forms contain details about the study that need to be known to the participants.

During the data gathering collection, there was a consent form distributed informing the participants that the study does not have known risks, costs, nor monetary compensation, and is voluntary. They were also informed that they were given anonymity and should the data

published or disseminated; their individual information will not be disclosed. Furthermore, they were informed that the data gathered from the participants will solely be used for the purpose of the study.

After the data gathering collection, numerical data collected from the rating scale and questionnaire were both statistically treated, analysed, and interpreted. The researchers also organized an individual and group interview with the participants of the study to further validate the results of the study and research on the challenges they encountered with their job satisfaction.

## Measurement

A 5-point Likert scale was used to allow the participants to express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the items provided in the questionnaire. The response of the participants ranges from not satisfied (1) to very highly satisfied (5).

On the other hand, the qualitative data gathered from the individual and group interview using inclusion criteria from the correspondence regarding the challenges encountered by SPED in the new normal in their job satisfaction were analyzed thematically using thematic analysis and triangulation of available data. Cool-warm analysis was used wherein during the cool analysis, the significant statements were taken verbatim from transcripts and through warm analysis, the significant statements further analyzed into codes and clustered into categories and finally themes.

## Data Analysis

Weighted mean was used to identify the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits.

Table 1 presents the 5-point scale that was used to categorize and interpret the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits.

**Table 1.** Level of Job Satisfaction

Statistical Range	Descriptor	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Very Highly Satisfied	The level of SPED teachers' job satisfaction is met in all areas.
3.41-4.20	Highly Satisfied	The level of SPED teachers' job satisfaction is met in the majority of the areas however some areas need improvement.
2.61-3.40	Moderately Satisfied	The level of SPED teachers' job satisfaction is met in at least half of the areas however teachers are prone to dissatisfaction when more factors or domains are not satisfied.
1.81-2.60	Poorly Satisfied	The level of SPED teachers' job satisfaction is met in only a few areas.
1.00-1.80	Not Satisfied	The level of SPED teachers' job satisfaction is not met, majority of these areas needs improvement since teachers are dissatisfied with their job.

## Validity and Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire adapted for the study has a Cronbach's reliability coefficient that is considered as highly consistent. The interview guide used for the challenges encountered were validated by the research panel members of the University of the Cordilleras. After the data gathering collection, the process of triangulation was also utilized to further analyze and verify the findings of the study. The researchers organized individual and group interview with the participants of the study using inclusion criteria.

## Results and Discussion

This portion of the study presents analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the data collected on the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits and the challenges they encountered.

Table 2 presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work.

**Table 2.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
My students respect me as a teacher even when there are no face-to-face classes.	4.79	VHS
Teaching encourages me to be creative with this new normal.	4.70	VHS
I do have responsibility for my teaching in the new normal.	4.65	VHS
My work this new normal consists of routine activities.	4.65	VHS
Teaching in the new normal provides me the chance to develop new methods.	4.65	VHS
Teaching provides me a secured future even during this pandemic.	4.61	VHS
The freedom to make my own decision in dealing with my students and with the parents is practiced.	4.59	VHS
Working conditions in my school allow me to work productively on-site.	4.59	VHS
Changes in teaching brought by the new normal allow me to convert them into opportunities for growth and improvement.	4.58	VHS
Teaching provides me an opportunity to use a variety of skills in this new normal.	4.58	VHS
I feel inspired to perform my responsibility in this new normal.	4.55	VHS
Teaching provides me the opportunity to help my students learn through synchronous and asynchronous modalities.	4.55	VHS
Teaching this new normal encourages originality.	4.55	VHS
Physical surroundings in my school are pleasant.	4.53	VHS
Working conditions in my school under the skeletal-Work-force arrangement is comfortable.	4.52	VHS

Working conditions at home allow me to work productively under the work-from-home arrangement.	4.48	VHS
Working conditions in my school are comfortable.	4.44	VHS
I feel secure in my teaching job this new normal.	4.42	VHS
Teaching in the new normal provides me an opportunity for promotion.	4.39	VHS
Blended learning provides unlimited opportunities for advancement.	4.36	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	<b>4.56</b>	<b>VHS</b>
VHS – Very Highly Satisfied		

The results reveal that SPED teachers' scores had an average mean of very highly satisfied rating (4.56) which indicates that the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along nature of work is very highly satisfied. The items in tables 2 to 7 were arranged from highest to lowest to show emphasis. This implies that the SPED teachers in the new normal were fulfilled with regard to the overall work description, operation, and responsibility. This suggests that SPED teachers in the new normal gratified their job and that their well-being were positively affected that is why they were very pleased with the nature of work. This further implies that SPED teachers were VHS because they were fond of the benefits of their teaching job to their personal lives as SPED teachers in the new normal due to the work from home arrangement and usage online group chats for meetings.

The outcome of the study backs Rai et al. (2021) where they found that satisfaction with nature of work had a significant positive impact on the affective and normative commitment of the employees. This also corroborates the findings of Gu (2016), wherein he found that SPED teachers who loved their job had higher levels of job satisfaction. Further, when the work contributes positively to the well-being of teachers and students, high job satisfaction occurs, Toropova (2019). This supports the study of Yudhie Suchyadi (2018) stating that the higher the supervision of the principal, the higher the teacher job satisfaction.

On the other hand, the results oppose the findings of Reilly (2020) noting that there were problems in the work conditions among teachers worldwide and mentioned that being a facilitator of learning during the new normal forces both regular and SPED teachers to use their own money for school supplies and even prevent them from being able to afford children of their own. The article of Bautista (2020) furthered that teachers took loans to prepare classrooms and not just for emergencies. However, in the midst of the pandemic, the Department of Education (Ph) issued "Expanded Career Progression" or added plantilla positions from Teacher 1 to 7 for public school teachers. This was made in order to reiterate that the new normal requirements in the academe are reciprocated with such programs to ensure that teachers were consistently motivated in providing quality education to Filipino learners (DepEd, 2022).

Table 3 presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along supervision.

**Table 3.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along supervision

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
Praises good teaching.	4.62	VHS
Think of our safety.	4.62	VHS
Helps with improving instructions.	4.59	VHS
Gives me assistance when I need help.	4.56	VHS
Makes the materials available for me to do my best.	4.56	VHS
Makes me feel comfortable	4.56	VHS
Offers suggestions to improve teaching.	4.56	VHS
Is willing to listen to suggestions.	4.53	VHS
Builds and keeps relationships with all employees equally.	4.53	VHS
Explains what is expected of me.	4.52	VHS
Treats everyone equitably.	4.52	VHS
Gives recognition.	4.50	VHS
Backs me up.	4.47	VHS
Gives many meaningful instructions.	4.45	VHS
Tells me that I am a good teacher.	4.41	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>VHS</b>

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

Table 3 reveals that the job satisfaction level of SPED teachers in the new normal along supervision was very highly satisfied (4.53). It is evident that the domain supervision attained the highest possible general weighted mean and descriptive equivalent. This suggests that most of their specific expectations or requests were met. The result implies that the SPED teachers in the new normal were very content with their school heads, supervisors, and other leaders' standard monitoring, guidance, and support during the implementation of the new normal. This hints that the majority of are pleased with the roles being portrayed by the school heads, supervisors, and other leaders. 100% or a total of 9 SPED teachers in the new normal from the participating 9 SPED schools agreed during the individual and group interview by the researcher conducted via Zoom meeting that the SPED teachers' school heads, supervisors, and other school leaders acknowledged their efforts during the new normal.

The result supports the importance of supplies in the success of the instruction as it was highlighted during the bond paper drive conducted all over the Philippines to sustain the different learning modules relevant to the use of self-learning modules (Rappler, 2020). The statement of one of the SPED teachers corroborates the findings of Mercieca et al. (2021) that SPED teachers created relevant decisions or judgments at precisely those moments where guidelines and procedures are unclear, and the criteria open to multiple interpretations. The result supports Formoso (2019) when the respondents in her research also reported that they were mostly challenged by their lack of knowledge and trainings on the proper conduct of SPED but opposed the shortage of material resources.

This corroborates Romero and Bantique (2017) when they cited Herzberg theory of motivation where their study unravelled the job satisfaction level the K to 12 teacher respondents including SPED teachers were satisfied with the actuations of their superior or manager. The result also agrees with the findings of the Department of Education (2020)

wherein Hernando-Malipot (2020) cited that DepEd addresses challenges in Special Education under “new normal”. It was stated that the former Education Secretary Leonor Briones wanted to give careful attention in finding ways to increase access for students with special needs in schools. Moreover, the Department of Education (Philippines), developed a Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) and assured that Special Education is included in the different learning modalities, to ensure that learning continuity is possible for learners with special education needs.

Table 4 presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along administration.

**Table 4.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along administration

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
Works for the good of all stakeholders this new normal.	4.70	VHS
Listens to the concerns and issues of the teaching personnel.	4.65	VHS
Provides materials in producing modules. (e.g., bond papers)	4.64	VHS
My school communicates its policies well.	4.61	VHS
Provides a convenient working environment this new normal.	4.61	VHS
Administrators treats all its employees fairly.	4.58	VHS
My school clearly defines the policies.	4.56	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	4.62	VHS

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

Table 4 reveals that the job satisfaction level of SPED teachers in the new normal administration was very highly satisfied (4.62). Specific to environment for teaching, clear policy, fairness, communication, and supplies during the implementation of the new normal. This claim was elaborated by a SPED teacher from one of the participating SPED schools when he mentioned that though some supplies were a bit delayed the supplies came as long as they waited patiently.

The result supports the cited research of Lujan (2020) where it stated that students with disabilities were entitled to an education just like all students that is why teachers need adequate supplies and curriculum to teach this population of students in a fair and equitable way. The result backs Briones (2022) as cited by DepEd (2022) when she suggested that 100% onsite reporting only for Alert-level 1 areas opened an opportunity to improve the implementation of the different learning modalities. This also supports the study of Glessner and Johnson (2020) in their findings that specific factors that promoted resiliency in teaching during a pandemic – special education teachers sought connections and relationships, they established routines and looked to administrators for guidance and support.

On the other hand, it was evident that though SPED teachers in the new normal benefited from the work from home arrangement in terms of safety it caused the opposite to the parents, challenges were experienced by the parents of children with special needs. The claim that parents were struggling in this process supports the revelations of Hill (2020) when she elaborated that parents were not teachers and no amount of love and care at home can turn the average parent into a special-education teacher overnight. The result backs that the SPED teachers’ sentiments regarding the parents’ insufficient ability to connect with SPED teachers were true in a sense that the parents were struggling with the adjustment too. In light of the

result, Department of Education provided kamustahans, trainings, and home-visitations through the SPED teachers to extend assistance among the parents.

The result supports the findings of Lingayo and Madriaga (2021) when their research presented that SPED teachers' most encountered challenge focused on the family support given to the children with special needs. The statement paralleled the study of Glessner and Johnson (2020) wherein they found that parents were stressed and worried about keeping their family healthy while providing income and that very few parents mentioned concerns on the learning of their children with special needs. This result corroborates with the claim of Maslow's Theory that basic needs must be fulfilled for a person to prioritize the next level of needs (Chand, n.d.).

However, despite the challenges, Department of Education's press release entitled "Deped to Maximize Use of SEF in Aid for Distance Learning" ensuring that learning opportunities be made available despite the situation for the acquisition of learning materials, mental health, and Psychosocial Services for SPED teachers in the new normal, learners with special education needs, and parents of learners with special education needs (DepEd, 2020). For instance, Division B regularly provides sign language and orientation on learning disability trainings among their parents.

Table 5 gleaned on the next page presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along relationship with co-workers.

**Table 5.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along relationship with co-workers

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
I appreciate it when my colleagues provide me with suggestions or feedback about my teaching.	4.79	VHS
I appreciate the assistance of every co-worker in the school.	4.73	VHS
I have made lasting friendships among my colleagues.	4.73	VHS
I like the people whom I work with.	4.73	VHS
I can observe that my colleagues stimulate me to do better.	4.71	VHS
I get cooperation from the people I work with.	4.71	VHS
I can see that the teachers in my school are concerned about the well-being of fellow teachers.	4.62	VHS
I believe that my colleagues are highly critical to one another.	4.59	VHS
I am knowledgeable that my interests are like those of my colleagues.	4.55	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	<b>4.68</b>	<b>VHS</b>

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

Table 5 reveals that the job satisfaction level of SPED teachers in the new normal along relationship with co-workers is very highly satisfied (4.68). The result implies that the SPED teachers in the new normal were pleased with the status of relationship or bond of SPED teachers with their fellow SPED teachers and enjoyed their involvement because it positively affected their satisfaction towards work.

This corroborates the findings of Samuel (2020) when he showed in his research that elaborated enjoyment is critical for success among teachers. The result supports Anyon et al.

(2018) when he found “...supportive and genuine relationships are essential in creating a positive school climate, reducing problem behaviors, and lessening racial discipline gaps” (p. 222). This also backs the study of Glessner and Johnson (2020) findings where it demonstrated specific factors that promoted resiliency in teaching during a pandemic – special education teachers sought connections and relationships from peers for support.

On the other hand, the result on gaps made among SPED teachers even long the new normal opposed the findings of Samuel (2020) in his research that showed two to three years together to see greater teamwork in co-teaching partnerships, and a need to support teachers in relationship building to increase enjoyment of co-teaching. However, in the midst of pandemic SPED Schools in the Department of Education (Philippines) continuously promoted team building programs specific to SPED teachers according to the Education Program Supervisor in-charge of SPED (personal communication June 30, 2022).

Table 6 gleaned on the next page presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along policy.

**Table 6.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along policy

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
I carry out policies in support of the mission of the DepEd.	4.73	VHS
I have policies that uplift my morale to perform my best.	4.71	VHS
The policies promote my well-being and protection.	4.70	VHS
I implement legitimate policies of the school without any hesitation.	4.62	VHS
I am considered in the crafting of policies that affect me.	4.55	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	4.66	VHS

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

The result reveals that SPED teachers in the new normal has an average mean of very highly satisfied rating (4.56) along policy. The result of the job satisfaction survey along policy implies that the SPED teachers in the new normal were contented with regard to the mandate of policies they have at present which anchors the realization of the vision, mission, and goals of the school among the SPED teachers in the new normal.

The result suggests that SPED teachers in the new normal follow the policies in accordance to their will even though there was an increase of job demand accordingly. The result hints that the policies were crafted in accordance to the teaching needs of the SPED teachers in the new normal. This further infers that SPED teachers were very highly satisfied because the new normal policies were crafted to strengthen the delivery of instruction.

The outcome of the study supports Tria (2020) where he elucidated that children are vulnerable in public places such as school. That is why the need to strengthen policy in terms of the delivery of instruction should be present because this provides opportunities for online learning platforms. The results oppose the research findings of Mahmood et al. (2021) where they showed evidence that teachers’ satisfaction with teleworking has been reduced as a consequence of the job demand increase.

Table 7 presents the level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along fringe benefits.

**Table 7.** Level of job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal along fringe benefits

Items	Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
I receive performance and/or incentive bonuses.	4.85	VHS
I am provided additional benefits such as midyear and yearly bonuses.	4.83	VHS
I receive cash allowances.	4.67	VHS
I can avail leaves such as vacation and sick leaves.	4.65	VHS
I can avail for a loan anytime for emergency purposes.	4.64	VHS
<b>General weighted mean</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>VHS</b>

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

The table reveals that the job satisfaction level of SPED teachers in the new normal along fringe benefits was very highly satisfied (4.68). The result implies that the SPED teachers in the new normal were pleased with the extra benefits supplementing their salaries. The result hints that SPED teachers in the new normal enjoyed the fringe benefits which positively affected their satisfaction towards work that is why they stayed in their work. This suggests that the bonuses, additional benefits, cash allowances, vacation and sick leaves, as well as loan were easily accessed by the SPED teachers in the new normal.

The result affirms DepEd (2022) in its announcement of the increase ceiling of provident from loans to assist personnel. The result backs Yavuz (2018) in his research finding that salary at SPED schools is a convenient variable in job satisfaction. This result corroborates Symonds (2022) in his article entitled “Fringe Benefits Examples to Boost Employee Satisfaction” wherein it presented that attractive benefits and compensation packages can be a great way to attract and retain top talent. This supports the research of Nisar and Siddiqui (2019) research where he elaborated that when a good number of leaves is provided by the employer, the employees tend to be more satisfied and committed towards their job.

Moreover, the result backs that SPED teachers’ finances affect job satisfaction, based on its relationship with head teacher leadership (Ali et al., 2021). This corroborates Maslow’s theory related to financial elements in explaining teacher’ job satisfaction. The theory states that finance is a necessity for a person to achieve satisfaction in work. However, the result negates Ordway (2020) when she said that bigger paychecks do not guarantee greater job satisfaction but later said that academic studies indicate that when teacher earnings rise, school districts and students can benefit in a range of way.

Table 8 presents the analysis of the data on the summary of level of job satisfaction along nature of work, supervision, administration, relationship with co-workers, policy, and fringe benefits.

Generally, the SPED teachers in the new normal were very highly satisfied (4.63). This hints that SPED teachers in the new normal received what they expected and that the challenges they encountered highlighted their satisfaction on fulfilling their respective responsibilities. The result supports the findings of Tsakiridou and Kolovou (2018) when they showed in their survey that the participants including SPED teachers are rather satisfied with their job. This result supports the Range of Affect Theory reiterated in reverse that when the actual situation received is not the exact expectation of the SPED teachers it can affect their satisfaction Morris (2021).

**Table 8.** Summary of level of job satisfaction

Items	General Weighted mean	Descriptive equivalent
Fringe Benefits	4.73	VHS
Relationship with co-workers	4.68	VHS
Policy	4.66	VHS
Administration	4.62	VHS
Nature of Work	4.56	VHS
Supervision	4.53	VHS
<b>Over-all weighted mean</b>	<b>4.63</b>	VHS

VHS – Very Highly Satisfied

Table 9 presents the challenges encountered in the job satisfaction of SPED teachers in the new normal.

**Table 9.** Challenges encountered in the job satisfaction

Theme	F	Sample Responses
Connectivity and Technological Difficulty	7	With the works <i>naman</i> , some of us experienced difficulty with signal in (..) with the reports being chairman, I have difficulty consolidating the reports because they were late because of the signal like that. May be as time goes by, <i>siguro</i> adjust-adjust <i>nalang</i> . ~KR1
Difficulty coping with the Changing Administrative Policies and Guidelines	7	Yes, Ma'am so, I experienced difficulty in coping with my work load because in our Division I was chosen to be one of the module writers so it demanded so much time and even night time until I finish with my own modules.~KR1
Insufficient Learning and Financial Resources	6	<i>Saakin</i> ma'am <i>maidadagdag ko nalang</i> ma'am you use your initiative <i>pakapalan iti rupa tayo puskulek</i> you need also to solicit other stakeholders <i>lalo yung mga kakilala natin natin sa buhay</i> .~KR7 (For me ma'am what I can add is to be initiative and be determined when solicitation is needed specially with the people we know.)
Difficulty in facilitating SPED Pedagogies	6	Difficulty on how we teach the learners, how we come up with new activities.~KR3
Unprepared Parents	5	And then <i>yung</i> modules <i>mismo</i> , learners and parents misunderstood or misinterpret the contents of modules. Some learners do not listen to their parents to answer to their modules. ~KR5

### ***Connectivity and technological difficulty***

Ranked first in the challenges encountered in job satisfaction is the connectivity and technological difficulty experienced by 7 out of 9 key respondents as seen on Table 9. This

pertains to challenges brought by the limitation in the different dimensions in job satisfaction because of the use of technology instead of the face-to-face setting.

This hints that difficulty in internet connectivity and lack gadgets which were supposed to aid in the different learning modalities in the new normal that promote job satisfaction. This infers that SPED teachers in the new normal were challenged because there are certain limitations in using tech, the absence of internet connectivity and lack of technological items led to disruption of control and continuation of classes in the new normal. This hints that SPED teachers preferred to work at home because they had stronger internet connectivity despite having to do it with their own expense since that helped them provide uninterrupted learning experience to their learners. This suggests that SPED teachers looked for ways to provide gadgets since they lack learning resources such as the internet used as a way to connect to their SPED learners and used the internet as a bridge to the gap that the face-to-face restriction created.

According to KR1 who is from one of the schools in Division A several SPED teachers in the new normal had difficulty with signal in their school. She highlighted that as a chairman, the bad signal led to late submission of consolidated reports to which were labelled urgent. The same issue was raised in the school of KR4 and said that LSENs main hindrance was the lack of gadget and internet connectivity that marked the LSENs absent during *kamustahans*. KR2, KR5, KR6, KR8 and KR9 mentioned that connectivity and technological limitations manifested both in the SPED teachers since they relied to fast internet connection and great signal to perform their duties as SPED teachers and communicate with parents, they furthered that laptops were not provided by the school as well and LSENs since most of them did not have e-connectivity, manifested lack of tech that made them miss classes online. This is related to the third challenge which focuses on lack of financial and learning resources. The abovementioned adjustments showed that SPED teachers in the new normal did their best to rise above the challenge for the benefit of the LSENs.

The result corroborates the revelation that technology became a down fall for a veteran SPED Master Teacher however even made her a better teacher since she was able to cope with the changing times as discussed in Table 2 under job satisfaction. This is related to the discussion of the positive impact of tech to SPED teachers when done correctly by Winsterstein (2021) and Kormos (2018) (Please see Table 2). Further this justifies the challenge on technology which was dubbed as “added work for young SPED teachers” but help them relate with other teachers as seen on the previous discussion (Please see Table 5) nature of work had a very highly satisfied rating (Please see Table 2) since the SPED teachers were able to fulfill their duties at home despite the challenge brought by internet connectivity. This affirms the research entitled “Research Supervision in Distance Learning: Issues and Challenges” authored by Zaheer and Munir (2020) where they acknowledged that technology is one of the main issues faced by students, teachers, and supervisors that affected student–supervisor interaction, diversity, perceptions, virtual communities and academic collaboration in a non-face-to- face classroom.

## Conclusion

This portion of the study presents the conclusion drawn and recommendations proposed by the researchers. Looking through the level of job satisfaction and challenges showed that SPED teachers in the new normal can share their best practices to other SPED schools. In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn: The parallelism of the

SPED teachers' expectations and reality in the new normal resulted to their optimum contentment in all areas of their job contributing to their innate disposition of satisfaction. The challenges of the SPED teachers and other school stakeholders were caused by the essential abrupt changes during the new normal.

After a careful review of the conclusion, the following are recommended. SPED teachers in the new normal are recommended to sustain the level of job satisfaction in ways such as the continuation of faculty development programs or training for personal and professional development. Create a solid working open communication and collaboration, as well as sharing of best practices between and among the internal and external stakeholders to address those challenges. In addition, future researches are recommended to look into other variables aside from the new normal that causes the challenges encountered in job satisfaction.

Certainly, being able to reveal the over-all level of job satisfaction and challenges encountered of SPED teachers in the new normal along the six are vital in the 21st century learning as a reflection of our special education system's adaptability in the changing environment.

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## Resources

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- “COVID-19 Challenges Hit Special Ed Teachers especially Hard” by Jim Murez: <https://around.uoregon.edu/content/covid-19-challenges-hit-special-ed-teachers-especially-hard>
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- “Deped Issues Updated Alternative Work Arrangement, Ensures Welfare, Support to Personnel” by Department of Education: [https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/04/19/deped-issues-updated-alternative-work-arrangement-ensures-welfare-support-to-personnel/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=deped-issues-updated-alternative-work-arrangement-ensures-welfare-support-to-personnel](https://www.deped.gov.ph/2022/04/19/deped-issues-updated-alternative-work-arrangement-ensures-welfare-support-to-personnel/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=deped-issues-updated-alternative-work-arrangement-ensures-welfare-support-to-personnel)
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