

# Challenges Faced by Social Studies Teachers in Island Communities

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**Abstract.** This descriptive study examined the challenges encountered by Social Studies teachers assigned to island schools in the Division of Sagay City during the Academic Year 2017-2018. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of challenges experienced by teachers in terms of geographical, instructional, socio-economic, psychological, and weather-related factors and to ascertain whether significant differences existed in these challenges when respondents were grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. The study involved 44 Social Studies teachers selected through total population sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. To determine significant differences in the level of challenges across demographic variables, the independent Sample T-test was employed. To determine the level of challenges among the teachers, descriptives statistics were used. Results revealed that the respondents experienced a moderate level of challenges across all identified factors. Furthermore, the findings showed no statistically significant differences in the level of challenges when teachers were grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. This suggests that the challenges encountered by Social Studies teachers in island schools are generally common across demographic groups. Based on the findings, a seminar workshop was proposed to address the identified challenges through professional development and practical support mechanisms. The proposed intervention is intended to strengthen teachers' coping capacities, enhance instructional effectiveness, and promote resilience, thereby contributing to improved educational outcomes and the delivery of quality education in geographically isolated island school communities.

**Keywords:** Age; Challenges; Civil Status; Family Monthly Income; Island School; Sex; Social Studies; Teachers

## Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a critical driver of social and economic development. Globally, efforts to achieve quality education for all, as emphasized in the Education for All (EFA) agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscore the vital role of teachers in ensuring equitable learning opportunities. Teachers are key agents in delivering quality education, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas where access to educational resources remains limited. However, educators assigned to remote communities often encounter challenges such as transportation difficulties, inadequate facilities, limited instructional resources, and professional isolation. For instance, long and costly commutes have been identified as factors that discourage teachers from remaining in rural schools, contributing to teacher turnover and staffing shortages (Fordham Institute, 2014). Despite these difficulties, teachers and school leaders continue to work diligently to provide quality education to learners regardless of geographic location (Farmer, 2016).

Across Southeast Asia, human resource development is recognized as a cornerstone of national progress and competitiveness in a rapidly changing global environment. Nevertheless, educational disparities persist, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach communities. One significant challenge is the shortage of qualified teachers in these areas. In countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, multigrade teaching has become a common strategy to address teacher shortages, while Brunei provides incentives to encourage teachers to accept assignments in remote locations (Sadiman, 2013). These realities demonstrate the continuing need to understand and address the challenges faced by educators working in geographically isolated settings.

In the Philippines, ensuring equitable access to quality education remains a major concern, particularly for schools located in remote islands and mountainous communities. Although these schools are



integral components of the national education system, they often receive less attention than schools in urban centers. Geographic isolation can limit access to instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and essential educational services. Moreover, learners in these communities, including indigenous groups and children with special educational needs, frequently experience barriers that affect their educational outcomes (Luistro, 2014). Consequently, teachers assigned to island schools are expected to fulfill their professional responsibilities despite the unique and often demanding conditions of their work environment.

Among these educators are Social Studies teachers who play a crucial role in developing learners' understanding of culture, citizenship, history, geography, and social responsibility. In island communities, Social Studies teachers must deliver meaningful instruction while navigating challenges related to geographical isolation, limited learning resources, socio-economic constraints, psychological stress, and adverse weather conditions. Many teachers regularly travel across the sea to reach their schools, often facing risks that test their commitment to the profession. Despite these challenges, they continue to serve as catalysts for learning and community development.

While previous studies have examined the experiences of teachers in remote and rural areas, there remains limited research focusing specifically on the challenges encountered by Social Studies teachers assigned to island schools in the Division of Sagay City. This gap in the literature highlights the need for a localized investigation that will provide a deeper understanding of the realities faced by these educators. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the level of challenges experienced by Social Studies island school teachers in the Division of Sagay City in terms of geographical, instructional, socio-economic, psychological, and weather-related factors. The findings of the study will serve as the basis for developing a responsive seminar-workshop enhancement program aimed at supporting teachers and strengthening their capacity to address the challenges associated with teaching in island schools.

## Research Questions

This study primarily sought to find out the level of challenges encountered by Social Studies Island School Teachers in the Division of Sagay City. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of challenges among Social Studies island school teachers in the following areas: a) geographical; b) instructional; c) socio-economic; d) psychological; and e) weather condition when they are taken as a whole and when they are grouped according to age, civil status, sex, and family income?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of challenges among Social Studies island school teachers when they are grouped according to age, civil status, sex, and family income?

## Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study aimed to find out the level of challenges of the 44 Social Studies Island School teachers in the Division of Sagay City, for school year 2017-2018. Using a survey, this study was conducted from January to March 2018. The results of the study were utilized in designing a proposal a training module/workshop that is responsive to the challenges of island schoolteachers.

## Literature Review

### Geographic challenges

Geographic isolation remains a major challenge for teachers in rural and island schools. Research shows that remote assignments often involve transportation difficulties, limited housing options, restricted access to professional development, and fewer employment opportunities for family members (Fordham Institute, 2014). In addition, rural communities frequently face inadequate infrastructure, including poor roads, unreliable transportation, limited access to water, electricity, sanitation, and technology, which can hinder effective teaching and learning (Plessis, 2014). Teachers in isolated areas often travel by motorcycle, boat, or on foot to reach their schools, resulting in fatigue, delayed arrivals, and limited access to training opportunities (Pascual, 2011). Geographic remoteness may also contribute to teacher absenteeism and reduce the frequency of supervisory visits, leaving teachers with limited instructional support (Caberon, 2017). Although previous studies have explored the challenges faced by teachers in rural and remote communities, little research has focused specifically on the experiences of Social Studies teachers in island schools. Within the Division of Sagay City, there is limited understanding of how geographic isolation, transportation barriers, resource shortages, and community conditions influence Social Studies instruction. This gap highlights the need for the present study, which seeks to examine the lived experiences of Social Studies teachers in island schools and contribute to the development of responsive educational policies and support programs.



## Socio-economic challenges

Teachers assigned to rural and island communities often face socioeconomic and environmental challenges that affect both teaching and learning. Limited access to educational resources, professional development opportunities, and basic services may discourage teachers from accepting or remaining in remote assignments (Farmer, 2016). Similarly, poverty, long travel distances, and family livelihood demands contribute to student absenteeism and low school participation in rural areas (Chinowaita, 2015; Pascual, 2011). Despite these challenges, many teachers remain committed to supporting learners and improving educational outcomes in underserved communities. In island communities such as Brgy. Molocaboc, Sagay City, inadequate access to basic necessities further complicates educational delivery. One persistent challenge is the scarcity of potable water, which has forced residents to depend largely on rainwater collection for household consumption (Mejica, 2018). These circumstances illustrate how environmental and socioeconomic conditions shape the educational experiences of both teachers and learners in isolated areas. While previous studies have examined rural education challenges, limited attention has been given to the specific experiences of Social Studies teachers in island schools, particularly within the Division of Sagay City. This gap highlights the need to explore how geographic isolation, resource limitations, and community conditions influence their teaching practices and professional experiences.

## Psychological challenges

Teachers assigned to rural and island schools often experience social and professional isolation due to limited communication infrastructure, separation from family, and restricted access to support systems. Prolonged isolation may contribute to stress, loneliness, and reduced well-being, which can affect teachers' professional performance and job satisfaction (Sally, 2017). Additionally, the increasing demand for technology integration may create further challenges, particularly for teachers with limited access to training and technological resources. Studies also suggest that excessive workloads combined with inadequate motivational and institutional support can increase the risk of teacher burnout and reduce work effectiveness (Guajardo, 2013). Collectively, these findings indicate that social isolation, technological challenges, and workload pressures are interconnected issues that influence teachers' experiences in geographically isolated schools. However, existing research has largely focused on teachers in rural settings in general, with limited attention given to the specific experiences of Social Studies teachers in island schools within the Division of Sagay City. Addressing this gap can provide a deeper understanding of the unique challenges they face and inform the development of context-responsive support programs and educational policies.

## Weather condition challenges

The Philippines, an archipelagic country, is highly vulnerable to climate-related and environmental challenges that significantly affect island communities. Studies indicate that small islands are particularly exposed to extreme weather events, environmental degradation, and limited natural resources, making them more susceptible to natural disasters and socioeconomic difficulties (Chand, 2013; Mondragon, 2015). Geographic isolation further limits access to essential services, including transportation, healthcare, and education. These conditions create unique challenges for schools in island communities. Many islands can only be reached by small boats, making the delivery of educational resources and services difficult, especially during adverse weather conditions (Farmer, 2016). The combination of environmental vulnerability, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure can negatively affect both teaching and learning. Despite these concerns, existing studies primarily focus on island communities in general and provide limited insights into the specific experiences of Social Studies teachers in island schools within the Division of Sagay City. This gap underscores the need for further research to understand how geographic and environmental challenges influence their teaching practices and professional experiences.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The researcher utilized a descriptive research design which used the quantitative research method. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2012). On the other hand, descriptive method collects data to describe a particular situation or even characteristics of individuals or groups (Hale, 2017). The researcher dealt with the gathering of numerical data. Therefore, the quantitative research design was utilized in this study. Moreover, because the research sought to determine the level of challenges of the school teachers assigned in the islands, using the five areas: the geographical, instructional, socio-economic, psychological, and weather condition challenges, descriptive method was the most appropriate design to use.



## Sampling Design

This study will employ a total population sampling technique, a type of purposive sampling in which all members of the target population are included as respondents. The target population consists of all teachers residing and/or teaching on the islands of Sagay City. Total population sampling is appropriate because the number of teachers assigned in the islands located in the Division of Sagay City is manageable and accessible, allowing the researcher to gather data from every teacher within the community. This approach ensures complete representation of the population, minimizes sampling error, and provides a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' perspectives related to the study (Marpa, 2013).

## Research Locale

The study was conducted at the 5 island schools in the division of Sagay City. The schools are the Molocaboc Integrated School, Molocaboc II Elementary School, and Matabas Elementary School in Brgy. Molocaboc. Also, in the island of Suyac which is Suyac Elementary School. And in the island that is part of Brgy. Himogaan, the Buenaventura Elementary School. The respondents were teachers of the said schools, with a total enrollment of 44 teachers. The study profiled the teachers based on sex, age, civil status, and socioeconomic status, examined the challenges of social science island school teacher.

## Research Participants

The participants of the study were 44 Social Studies island schoolteachers from the Division of Sagay City, Negros Occidental. The study used total enumeration, meaning that all Social Studies island school teachers in the division were included as participants. Of the 44 teachers, 21 (47.72%) were from Molocaboc Integrated School, while Molocaboc II Elementary School, Matabas Elementary School, and Suyac Elementary School each had 6 teachers (13.64%), and Buenaventura Elementary School had 5 teachers (11.36%).

## Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to identify the extent of challenges experienced by the teachers on the island. The first part deals with the background information of the teachers. It seeks data for the participants' sex, age, civil status, and income. The second part was the assessment on the level of challenges in five areas: The Geographical Challenges, Instructional Materials Challenges, Socio-economic Challenges, Psychological challenges and Weather Condition Challenges. It has a scale from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with the corresponding descriptive rating one (1) means never, two (2) means rarely, three (3) for sometimes, four (4) means often and five (5) for very often. This means that all teachers in the islands of the Division of Sagay City were considered as actual respondents of the study. According to Thorndike and Hagen, as cited by Laguda (2011), validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure and produces results appropriate for its intended purpose. The researcher-developed questionnaire was subjected to content validation by three experts in the field of Social Science. The panel consisted of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, a District IV Supervisor of Sagay City, and a Principal I from the Division of Sagay City. Each validator evaluated the relevance, clarity, and adequacy of the questionnaire items using a Goods and Scates five-point rating scale. The ratings were averaged to obtain the validity index. The instrument obtained a weighted mean validity index of 4.04, which falls within the "Good" category based on the validation criteria employed. This result indicates that the questionnaire items were considered relevant and appropriate for measuring the constructs of the study; hence, the instrument was deemed valid. To establish reliability, the questionnaire was pilot tested among 20 Social Studies teachers from Himogaan Baybay Integrated School, a school located in a geographically isolated area accessible primarily by sea travel from Sagay City. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure used to assess the internal consistency of questionnaire items. After the pilot testing, the responses were encoded and analyzed. The computation compares the variance of each questionnaire item with the variance of the overall instrument. A higher alpha value indicates greater internal consistency among the items. The instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.875, which exceeds the generally accepted threshold of 0.70 for reliability. Based on commonly accepted standards, a coefficient of 0.875 indicates high reliability, suggesting that the questionnaire items consistently measure the intended constructs. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable for use in the study. According to George and Mallery (2018), Cronbach's alpha values are interpreted as follows: 0.90 and above = Excellent, 0.80-0.89 = Good, 0.70-0.79 = Acceptable, 0.60-0.69 = Questionable, 0.50-0.59 = Poor, and below 0.50 = Unacceptable. Since the obtained reliability coefficient was 0.875, the instrument demonstrated a good level of internal consistency.

## Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from the concerned school authorities to administer the questionnaire to the Social Studies island school teachers. With the assistance of the respective school heads, the questionnaires were distributed to and retrieved from the respondents. After retrieval, the researcher reviewed, organized, coded, and tabulated the completed questionnaires before subjecting the data to appropriate statistical analysis. For Problem 1, descriptive statistics, particularly the mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the level of challenges experienced by the teachers in terms of geographical, instructional, socio-economic, psychological, and weather condition challenges. For Problem 2, the independent-samples t-test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in the teachers' level of challenges when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. The statistical procedures were selected based on the nature of the research questions and the measurement of the variables. The data analyzed were subsequently reviewed and interpreted in accordance with the objectives of the study.

## Results and Discussions

**Research Question 1: What is the level of challenges among Social Studies island school teachers in the following areas: a) geographical; b) instructional; c) socio-economic; d) psychological; and e) weather condition when they are taken as a whole and when they are grouped according to age, civil status, sex, and family income?**

**Table 3.** Level of Challenges of Social Studies Island School Teachers in the area of Geographical Challenges, Instructional Challenges, Soci-economic Challenges, and Weather Condition Challenges

| Variables           | Geographical Challenges |      |      | Instructional Challenges |      |          | Socio-economic Challenges |      |      | Psychological Challenges |      |          | Weather Condition Challenges |      |          |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------|------|--------------------------|------|----------|---------------------------|------|------|--------------------------|------|----------|------------------------------|------|----------|
|                     | M                       | SD   | Int  | M                        | SD   | Int      | M                         | SD   | Int  | M                        | SD   | Int      | M                            | SD   | Int      |
| Age                 | 3.50                    | 0.66 | High | 3.15                     | 0.66 | Moderate | 3.58                      | 0.69 | High | 3.47                     | 0.75 | Moderate | 3.67                         | 0.52 | High     |
| Younger (n=28)      |                         |      |      |                          |      |          |                           |      |      |                          |      |          |                              |      |          |
| Older (n=16)        | 3.63                    | 0.57 | High | 3.13                     | 0.61 | Moderate | 3.80                      | 0.58 | High | 3.61                     | 0.48 | High     | 3.44                         | 0.55 | Moderate |
| Sex                 | 3.65                    | 0.60 | High | 3.10                     | 0.76 | Moderate | 3.85                      | 0.19 | High | 3.85                     | 0.60 | High     | 3.40                         | 0.43 | Moderate |
| Male (n=4)          |                         |      |      |                          |      |          |                           |      |      |                          |      |          |                              |      |          |
| Female (n=40)       | 3.54                    | 0.63 | High | 3.15                     | 0.64 | Moderate | 3.64                      | 0.68 | High | 3.49                     | 0.66 | Moderate | 3.61                         | 0.55 | High     |
| Civil Status        | 3.57                    | 0.64 | High | 3.27                     | 0.67 | Moderate | 3.75                      | 0.66 | High | 3.55                     | 0.79 | High     | 3.69                         | 0.51 | High     |
| Single (n=22)       |                         |      |      |                          |      |          |                           |      |      |                          |      |          |                              |      |          |
| Married (n=22)      | 3.52                    | 0.63 | High | 3.01                     | 0.59 | Moderate | 3.57                      | 0.65 | High | 3.49                     | 0.52 | Moderate | 3.48                         | 0.56 | Moderate |
| Family Income       | 3.53                    | 0.63 | High | 3.12                     | 0.63 | Moderate | 3.65                      | 0.67 | High | 3.49                     | 0.65 | Moderate | 3.59                         | 0.54 | High     |
| Low Income (n=42)   |                         |      |      |                          |      |          |                           |      |      |                          |      |          |                              |      |          |
| Middle Income (n=2) | 3.90                    | 0.71 | High | 2.80                     | 0.85 | Moderate | 3.90                      | 0.14 | High | 4.30                     | 0.42 | High     | 3.50                         | 0.71 | High     |
| As a Whole (n=44)   | 3.55                    | 0.63 | High | 3.14                     | 0.64 | Moderate | 3.66                      | 0.65 | High | 3.52                     | 0.66 | High     | 3.59                         | 0.54 | High     |

As shown in Table 3 on the next page, the level of challenges of the social studies island school teachers as a whole in Geographical Challenges is of high level, with a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 0.63. In the area of Instructional Challenges, they are challenged at a moderate level with a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 0.64. and the level of challenges of the social studies island school teachers in socio-economic challenges is of high level with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

**Geographical challenges.** In the area of Geographical Challenges, the level of challenges as a whole (M=3.55, SD=0.63) is high. When the island teachers grouped according to age, younger (M=3.50, SD=0.66) and older (M=3.63, SD=0.57) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Regarding sex, both male (M=3.65, SD=0.60) and female (M=3.54, SD=0.63) teachers experienced a high level of difficulty. Concerning civil status, single (M=3.57, SD=0.64) and married (M=3.52, SD=0.63) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Concerning family income, both low income (M=3.53, SD=0.63) and middle income (M=3.63, SD=0.57) teachers experienced a high level of difficulty.

This study showed that the Social Studies island school teachers were profoundly challenged by the geographical location of their station whether they were single or married, female or male, young or old, and



with middle or low income. Geographic isolation is the most common challenge for teachers. These include the transportation and mobility difficulties, most especially, if the teachers in the island will have immediate meetings or concerns in the mainland (Fordham Institute, 2014). The communication signal which also gives problems to the teachers and the medical services from the LGU's which hardly reach the Islanders. And the water system in the island is also a concern of the island teachers because if there's no rain, there's no water to use. If there's no water, they have to buy outside the island, and it will spend costs of money. And for teachers, every day they were "basically risking their lives" crossing a broad channel of open ocean for almost two hours in a small boat. It was their typical commute to go and help educate children (Kyle, 2015).

Many small islands in the Philippines have remained not only physically and geographically isolated over many years, but have been cast into isolation economically, politically, and socially by governments that have not given attention to their concerns (Mondragon, 2015). Existing inspection and support systems are recognized to be deficient to ensure quality. Transport problems and other logistical constraints mean that visits are infrequent, and these could affect the quality of education and the learning potential of the learners. The isolation of the island could also mean absenteeism among the social island school teachers (Mulkeen (2005).

**Instructional challenges.** In the area of instructional challenges, the level of challenges as a whole ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ) is moderate. When grouped according to age, younger ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) and older ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD=0.61$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Regarding sex, both male ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ) and female ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ) teachers experienced a reasonable level of difficulty. Concerning civil status, single ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) and married ( $M=3.01$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Concerning family income, low income ( $M=3.12$ ,  $SD=0.63$ ) teachers and middle income ( $M=2.80$ ,  $SD=0.28$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge.

The instructional challenges encountered by social studies island school teachers were at a moderate level. Far-flung schools face other challenges compared to urban schools (Luistro, 2014). The lack of classrooms, chairs, textbooks, references, and other learning materials are persistent concern every year (Sabangan, 2014). Likewise, it is necessary to determine how to make the best use of tools that are becoming available to enhance learnings because with technology-based, learning increasing. ICT (Information and Communication technology) utilization in teaching Social Studies makes teachers achieve pedagogical knowledge to be imparted to the learners. Nowadays, an ICT-based teacher can improve the quality of education. But being resourceful teachers, pictures about the lesson of the day could be printed already in the mainland and videos could be downloaded outside the island and bring the laptop for an alternative media instruction for social studies. Because being teachers, the notions of resourcefulness and commitment have played a significant part (Garcia, 2016).

Noted that rapid technological changes in the society render most often learned materials and information in the classroom obsolete if the teacher is not resourceful to embrace dynamic changes in the society or the community (Meziobi, 2012). The lack of qualified teachers in many rural schools is simply because teachers do not want to stay in rural areas due to social, professional and cultural isolation. Limited teaching aids and sources of materials for teachers to effectively discharge their duties is another challenge confronting the rural teachers (Plessis 2014).

**Socio-economic challenges.** In the area of Socio-economic challenges, the level of challenges as a whole ( $M=3.66$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) is high. When grouped according to age, younger ( $M=3.58$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ) and older ( $M=3.80$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Regarding sex, both male ( $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=0.19$ ) and female ( $M=3.64$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Concerning civil status, single ( $M=3.75$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) and married ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Regarding family income, both low income ( $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) and middle income ( $M=3.90$ ,  $SD=0.14$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge.

Social Studies island school teachers were highly challenged by socio-economic factors in the island regardless of age, sex, civil status, and income. The socio-economic background may also make teachers reluctant to be deployed to less-developed parts of the country (Fordham Institute, 2014). Challenges of the teachers in the island include the salary that is insufficient to meet their needs daily plus the requirements inside the classroom, there is no housing accommodation for teachers, so they have to look for the house and pay it monthly. Parallel to this, is the study of Guajardo (2013), that, essential amenities such as water and electricity are also necessary for teacher job satisfaction and motivation. Shortage of accommodation was a severe challenge for most rural educators, and some live in inhabitable sanctuaries. Where most of the teachers cannot live near the school, they are likely to spend a lot of time traveling, often to the detriment of their school work. Housing is particularly crucial for teachers, especially island teachers.

Public school is free, but families still cannot afford to send their children for a complicated network of reasons. Others are tired of going to school because their homes are situated far from the school. While some have nothing to eat and having no "baon" for lunch in school (Chinowaita, 2015), these are also the reasons why most of the teachers in the island shoulder the expenses of the students.

**Psychological challenges.** Table on page 11 shows that in the area of Psychological Challenges, the level of challenges as a whole ( $M=3.52$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) is high. When grouped according to age, younger ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge while older ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=0.48$ ) teachers experienced a high level of difficulty. Regarding sex, male ( $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge while female ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Concerning civil status, single ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=0.79$ ) teachers experienced a high level of difficulty while married ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Regarding family income, low income ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) teachers experienced moderate level of challenge while middle income ( $M=4.30$ ,  $SD=0.42$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge.

Concerning psychological challenges, the level of challenge of the social studies island school teachers as a whole was of high level with a mean of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 0.66. With this matter, teachers were highly challenged psychologically. Most of the teachers assigned to the island are coming from the mainland. The times that they should spend with their families and loved ones are traded to work. Most teachers in rural areas were isolated from families, friends and the world at large as they cannot communicate due to network challenges (Chinowaita, 2015). In terms of age, older island school teachers where their age fall above 32 were more challenged compared to the younger island school teachers who have an age below 32. Most of the old teachers are already married and have families left at home. For a week of staying in the island causes loneliness to the teachers and finding communication signal to contact the left family is difficult. Older teachers are less flexible and set their ways. They also have troubles when it comes to computers and technologies which makes them stressful. They are also burned out (Sally, 2017).

When it comes to sex, male social studies island school teachers were profoundly challenged psychologically compared to female teachers. This is because both male and female have the same goal of solving the problem; they will often go about finding a solution in a very different way to each other (Bradley, 2016). Each has a different idea on how to handle the challenge. Men rush to the finish line while women explore, communicating about various underlying concerns, and therein lies the struggle (Heitler, 2012). The coping style of a female is more efficient than male. This is contrary to the study that stated males exhibited greater tendency to detach themselves from the emotions of a situation and be emotionally inhibited while females achieved at significantly higher level than males. In addition, women reported more frequent use of social and emotional support to cope (Chinowaita, 2015).

When they were grouped according to civil status, single island teachers were profoundly challenged compared to married. Several factors affect the responses of the single and married island teachers to the challenges that they encounter in their work environment. This study refutes the study of Osmany and Khan (2003), which stated that married teachers were more stressful due to dual roles than unmarried teachers. But, this study is also in agreement with the result of the study of Heitler (2012). The study as mentioned earlier found out that married teachers have higher job satisfaction and can handle the challenges of work because of the experiences compared to single teachers.

With regards to the income, island teachers with low income experienced moderate challenge than to island teachers with middle income. Teachers with middle income are mostly teachers coming from the mainland. They carry great responsibilities corresponding large expenses. They usually attended seminars and pieces of training which are costly.

**Weather condition challenges.** In the area of weather condition challenges, the level of problems as a whole ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ) is high. When grouped according to age, younger ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge while older ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Regarding sex, male ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge while female ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Concerning civil status, single ( $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge while married ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=0.56$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Regarding family income, both low income ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ) and middle income ( $M=4.50$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge.

Social studies island school teachers were highly challenged by weather condition as a whole with the mean of 3.59 and with a standard deviation of 0.54. Small islands in the Philippines are most exposed to extreme climate and weather events, geophysical hazards, and are also vulnerable to human-induced dangers due to irresponsible extraction and the unregulated use of its insufficient natural resources (Mondragon, 2015). And this made the teachers assigned to the island highly challenged.

When they were grouped according to age, younger teachers were highly challenged than to the older one. Young teacher means young in service and still have to adjust to its working environment unlike to the teachers who are old in service. They are well-experienced about the weather condition in the island compared to the young and new. Regarding sex, male island teachers are moderately challenged than to female teachers who are highly challenged by the weather condition. Both women and men are affected by and vulnerable to climate change and certain weather condition, but women often bear more of the burden compared to men. This higher vulnerability is mostly not due to biological or physical differences but is formed by the social, institutional and legal context (Olsson, Lennart, et al., 2014). In civil status, single island school teachers are challenged with a high level than to married island teachers who challenged moderately. Single teachers are less experienced about the weather condition in the island compared to the married teachers. Concerning family income, both island school teachers with middle and low income experienced the challenge at a high level. Both experienced the difficulty of weather state on the island.

**Table 4.** Level of Challenges as a whole among Social Studies Island School Teachers

| Variable            | M    | SD   | Interpretation |
|---------------------|------|------|----------------|
| Age                 |      |      |                |
| Younger (n=28)      | 3.47 | 0.56 | Moderate       |
| Older (n=16)        | 3.50 | 0.36 | High           |
| Sex                 |      |      |                |
| Male (n=4)          | 3.49 | 0.27 | Moderate       |
| Female (n=40)       | 3.48 | 0.51 | Moderate       |
| Civil Status        |      |      |                |
| Single (n=22)       | 3.55 | 0.56 | High           |
| Married (n=22)      | 3.41 | 0.41 | Moderate       |
| Family Income       |      |      |                |
| Low Income (n=42)   | 3.47 | 0.50 | Moderate       |
| Middle Income (n=2) | 3.68 | 0.06 | High           |
| As a Whole (n=44)   | 3.48 | 0.49 | Moderate       |

As shown in Table 4 above, the level of the challenges of the social studies island school teachers in the division of Sagay City when taken as a whole was moderate level, with a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.49. Table 4 presents the level of challenges of social studies island school teachers. The level of challenges as a whole ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ) is moderate. When grouped according to age, younger ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.56$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge while older ( $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=0.36$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge. Regarding sex, both male ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=0.27$ ) and female ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Concerning civil status, single ( $M=3.55$ ,  $SD=0.56$ ) teachers experienced a high level of challenge while married ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=0.41$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge. Regarding income, both incomes ( $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.50$ ) teachers experienced a moderate level of challenge while middle income ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=0.06$ ) teachers experienced a high level of difficulty.

Even they were highly challenged in the areas of geographical, psychological, socio-economic, and weather condition and moderately challenged in instructional but as a whole the mean and the standard deviation fall in moderate level; therefore, they are challenged moderately. When they were grouped according to age, younger island school teachers are challenged in a moderate level than older teachers. However, the difference of the result between the two groups was not that far. The older group became more challenged than, the younger group because a younger group of teachers are enthusiastic and energetic, they can easily adapt to the environment. They were still filled with the excitement of teaching with lots of new ideas and ready to explore different teaching methods, understandable of any new career. They were moderately challenged because young teachers enjoy taking a risk since they are millennials. Millennial teachers are fond of looking for opportunities for growth, challenging work, and assignments and flexibility in work schedules (Williamson and Blackburn, 2017). They were less stressful than the aging group 32-above. On the other hand, older group of teachers were less flexible to the changes. With the digital world, most of the works of the teachers need ICT (Information and Communication Technology) which most of the teachers in the older group do not know how to manipulate. Their age is not ideal for long travel and risky mobility. The result was divergent to the study conducted by Miller (2013), states that, millennials aging 18 to 33 years old are exhibit more stress than older adults. Young people often tend to exhibit more stress than older adults. In terms of sex, as a whole, both male and female are challenged moderately. Both male and female experienced the challenges in the same way. Likewise, single group challenged more than married teachers. The two has its own way on how to handle the challenge. Therefore, the coping styles of married island school teachers are more effective than the single group. Lastly, teachers with low income were less challenged when compared to the group with middle income. The distribution of the expenses matters in this result. The responsibilities of island teachers with a middle salary are higher than teachers having low salary. Regardless of the challenges the island teachers

encountered, they were still kept on going in reaching out the island learners. They overcome the obstacle to guide young minds in the most primitive classrooms, with the barest educational materials and resources. They work in heart-wrenching conditions, for a pittance, galvanized only by passion for their profession and compassion for their wards. Teaching is not really a profession; it is really passion.

**Table 5.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies Island School Teachers in the area of Geographical Challenges

| Geographical Challenges  | Age           |               | T     | df | P     |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----|-------|
|                          | Younger       | Older         |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.50          | 3.63          | 0.633 | 42 | 0.530 |
|                          | (0.66)        | (0.57)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Sex           |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Male          | Female        |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.65          | 3.54          | 0.347 | 42 | 0.730 |
|                          | (0.60)        | (0.63)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Civil Status  |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Single        | Married       |       |    |       |
| Instructional Challenges | Family Income |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Low Income    | Middle Income |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.53          | 3.90          | 0.817 | 42 | 0.418 |
|                          | (0.63)        | (0.71)        |       |    |       |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in geographical challenges when they are group according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. There was no significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of geographical challenges when they are group according to age [ $t(42)=0.633$ ,  $p=0.530$ ], sex [ $t(42)=0.347$ ,  $p=0.730$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=0.286$ ,  $p=0.776$ ], and income [ $t(42)=0.817$ ,  $p=0.418$ ]. The geographical challenges experienced by the island teachers do not depend on their age level, civil status, sex, and family income. All were challenged by their situations. Geographic isolation is the most common challenge for teachers (Fordham Institute, 2014).

**Table 6.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies Island School Teachers in the area of Instructional Challenges

| Instructional Challenges | Age           |               | T     | df | P     |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----|-------|
|                          | Younger       | Older         |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.15          | 3.13          | 0.123 | 42 | 0.902 |
|                          | (0.66)        | (0.61)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Sex           |               | t     | df | P     |
|                          | Male          | Female        |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.10          | 3.15          | 0.133 | 42 | 0.895 |
|                          | (0.76)        | (0.64)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Civil Status  |               | t     | df | P     |
|                          | Single        | Married       |       |    |       |
| Geographical Challenges  | Family Income |               | t     | df | P     |
|                          | Low Income    | Middle Income |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.12          | 2.80          | 0.704 | 42 | 0.486 |
|                          | (0.63)        | (0.85)        |       |    |       |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in Instructional challenges when they are group according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. There was no significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of instructional challenges when they are group according to age [ $t(42)=0.123$ ,  $p=0.902$ ], sex [ $t(42)=0.133$ ,  $p=0.895$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=1.382$ ,  $p=0.174$ ], and income [ $t(42)=0.704$ ,  $p=0.486$ ].

Same with the geographical challenges, all teachers, may they young or old, married or single, male or female, with low or high income all were instructionally challenged. Far-flung schools face other challenges compared to urban schools (Luistro, 2014). The lack of classrooms, chairs, textbooks, references, and other learning materials are persistent concern every year (Sabangan, 2014).

**Table 7.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies

| Island School Teachers in the area of Socio-economic Challenges |               |               |       |    |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----|-------|
| Socio-economic Challenges                                       | Age           |               | T     | df | P     |
|                                                                 | Younger       | Older         |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | 3.58          | 3.80          | 1.086 | 42 | 0.284 |
|                                                                 | (0.69)        | (0.58)        |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | Sex           |               | T     | df | P     |
|                                                                 | Male          | Female        |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | 3.85          | 3.64          | 0.610 | 42 | 0.545 |
|                                                                 | (0.19)        | (0.68)        |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | Civil Status  |               | T     | df | P     |
|                                                                 | Single        | Married       |       |    |       |
| Socio-economic Challenges                                       | 3.75          | 3.57          | 0.876 | 42 | 0.386 |
|                                                                 | (0.66)        | (0.65)        |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | Family Income |               | T     | df | P     |
|                                                                 | Low Income    | Middle Income |       |    |       |
|                                                                 | 3.65          | 3.90          | 0.530 | 42 | 0.599 |
|                                                                 | (0.67)        | (0.14)        |       |    |       |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of Socio-economic challenges when they are group according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. There was no significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of socio-economic challenges when they are group according to age [ $t(42)=1.086$ ,  $p=0.284$ ], sex [ $t(42)=0.610$ ,  $p=0.545$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=0.876$ ,  $p=0.386$ ], and income [ $t(42)=0.530$ ,  $p=0.599$ ].

All island teachers were challenged in the area of socio-economic regardless of their age, sex, civil status, and family income. And this challenge could affect the performance of the teachers. Usually, teachers were the one shouldered the expenses of the students which can contribute to their challenges. Teachers are increasingly asked to perform a greater range of duties. If not adequately compensated, these sorts of demands on teachers can decrease their motivation (Guajardo, 2013).

**Table 8.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies Island School Teachers in the area of Psychological Challenges

| Psychological Challenges | Age           |               | T     | df | P     |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----|-------|
|                          | Younger       | Older         |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.47          | 3.61          | 0.678 | 42 | 0.502 |
|                          | (0.75)        | (0.48)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Sex           |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Male          | Female        |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.85          | 3.49          | 1.041 | 42 | 0.304 |
|                          | (0.60)        | (0.66)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Civil Status  |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Single        | Married       |       |    |       |
| Psychological Challenges | 3.55          | 3.49          | 0.316 | 42 | 0.753 |
|                          | (0.79)        | (0.52)        |       |    |       |
|                          | Family Income |               | T     | df | P     |
|                          | Low Income    | Middle Income |       |    |       |
|                          | 3.49          | 4.30          | 1.744 | 42 | 0.088 |
|                          | (0.65)        | (0.42)        |       |    |       |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of Psychological challenges when they are group according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. There was no significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of psychological challenges when they are group according to age [ $t(42)=0.678$ ,  $p=0.502$ ], sex [ $t(42)=1.041$ ,  $p=0.304$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=0.316$ ,  $p=0.753$ ], and income [ $t(42)=1.744$ ,  $p=0.088$ ].

Most teachers in rural areas were isolated from families, friends and the world at large as they cannot communicate due to network challenges (Chinowaita, 2015). Thus, even the teachers were single or married, male or female, young or old, and with high or low income. All were subjected to psychological challenges.

**Table 9.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies Island School Teachers in the area of Weather Condition Challenges

| Weather Condition Challenges | Age            |                | T     | df | P     |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----|-------|
|                              | Younger        | Older          |       |    |       |
|                              | 3.67<br>(0.52) | 3.44<br>(0.55) | 1.399 | 42 | 0.169 |
|                              | Sex            |                | T     | df | P     |
|                              | Male           | Female         |       |    |       |
|                              | 3.40<br>(0.43) | 3.61<br>(0.55) | 0.721 | 42 | 0.475 |
|                              | Civil Status   |                | T     | df | P     |
|                              | Single         | Married        |       |    |       |
|                              | 3.69<br>(0.51) | 3.48<br>(0.56) | 1.296 | 42 | 0.202 |
|                              | Family Income  |                | T     | df | P     |
|                              | Low Income     | Middle Income  |       |    |       |
|                              | 3.59<br>(0.54) | 3.50<br>(0.71) | 0.229 | 42 | 0.820 |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of Weather condition challenges when they were grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and family income. There was no significant difference found in the level of challenges among social studies island school teachers in the area of weather condition challenges when they were grouped according to age [ $t(42)=1.399$ ,  $p=0.169$ ], sex [ $t(42)=0.721$ ,  $p=0.475$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=1.296$ ,  $p=0.202$ ], and income [ $t(42)=0.229$ ,  $p=0.820$ ].

Natural hazards and unexpected natural phenomenon do not depend on the age, sex, civil status, and family income of the teachers. Especially, when small islands in the Philippines are most exposed to extreme climate and weather events, geophysical hazards, and are also vulnerable to human-induced dangers due to irresponsible extraction and the unregulated use of its insufficient natural resources (Mondragon, 2015).

### Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the level of challenges among Social Studies island school teachers when they are grouped according to age, civil status, sex, and family income?

**Table 10.** Significant Difference in the Challenges among Social Studies Island School Teachers when Grouped according to Age, Gender, Civil Status, and Income

| Challenges | Age           |               | T     | df | P     |
|------------|---------------|---------------|-------|----|-------|
|            | Younger       | Older         |       |    |       |
|            | 3.47<br>0.56  | 3.50<br>0.36  | 0.166 | 42 | 0.869 |
|            | Sex           |               | T     | df | P     |
|            | Male          | Female        |       |    |       |
|            | 3.49<br>0.27  | 3.48<br>0.51  | 0.027 | 42 | 0.979 |
|            | Civil Status  |               | t     | df | P     |
|            | Single        | Married       |       |    |       |
|            | 3.55<br>0.56  | 3.41<br>0.41  | 0.935 | 42 | 0.355 |
|            | Family Income |               | t     | df | P     |
|            | Low Income    | Middle Income |       |    |       |
|            | 3.47<br>0.50  | 3.68<br>0.06  | 0.576 | 42 | 0.567 |

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the challenges among Social Studies island school teachers when they are grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and income. Based from the result, there was no significant difference in the challenges among Social Studies island school teachers when they are grouped according to age [ $t(42)=0.166$ ,  $p=0.869$ ], sex [ $t(42)=0.027$ ,  $p=0.979$ ], civil status [ $t(42)=0.935$ ,  $p=0.355$ ], and income [ $t(42)=0.576$ ,  $p=0.567$ ].

The Table 10 result showed that there was no significant difference in the level of challenges of the social studies island school teachers when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and income. The variables do not affect the challenges of the social studies island school teachers. All were challenged by the geographic isolation of the island, erratic weather condition daily, instructional hitches, the socio-economic of the land and the psychological effects of being isolated. Generally, the result of this study revealed that the level of challenges of the social studies island school teachers, when taken as a whole and grouped according to

variables, was moderate and there was no significant difference among them. Therefore, the null hypothesis of this study was accepted.

## Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all ethical standards were observed throughout the conduct of the study. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the appropriate school heads to administer the survey among Social Studies teachers in island schools within the Division of Sagay City. Approval was also obtained from the relevant institutional ethics review committee before the conduct of the study. All participants were provided with an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the potential benefits, and their rights as research participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or adverse consequences. The researcher assured the participants that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes. To protect their privacy, no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the presentation of the results. All completed questionnaires and electronic data were securely stored in password-protected files and locked storage accessible only to the researcher and research adviser. The data will be retained for five years following the completion of the study and will thereafter be securely destroyed in accordance with accepted research ethics guidelines. Through these measures, the researcher ensured the protection of participants' rights, privacy, and welfare throughout the research process.

## Conclusion

The present study examined the level of challenges experienced by Social Studies island school teachers in relation to geographical, instructional, socio-economic, psychological, and weather-related factors, as well as differences according to age, sex, civil status, and income. The study led to the following conclusions: First, Social Studies island school teachers generally experienced a moderate level of challenges. Specifically, geographical, socio-economic, psychological, and weather-related challenges were rated as high, while instructional challenges were rated as moderate. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers in island schools encounter various difficulties that affect their professional practice. Second, the findings revealed that teachers experienced challenges across all domains regardless of their age, sex, civil status, and income. Although differences in mean scores were observed among groups, these variations were not substantial enough to indicate significant disparities in the overall level of challenges experienced by teachers. Third, the results suggest that geographical isolation, limited resources, socio-economic conditions, psychological demands, and weather-related concerns are common challenges faced by Social Studies island school teachers. These challenges are shared experiences among teachers working in island schools and are not confined to any particular demographic group. Fourth, the statistical analysis showed no significant difference in the overall level of challenges experienced by Social Studies island school teachers when grouped according to age, sex, civil status, and income. This indicates that the challenges encountered by island school teachers are relatively similar across demographic characteristics. Lastly, despite the moderate level of challenges they face, Social Studies island school teachers continue to demonstrate commitment and dedication to their profession. The findings suggest that their persistence in serving learners in geographically isolated areas reflects their strong sense of professional responsibility and commitment to providing quality education despite prevailing difficulties.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) develop and implement programs that directly address the geographical, socio-economic, psychological, and weather-related challenges experienced by Social Studies island school teachers. Since socio-economic challenges were among the highly rated concerns, the provision of incentives, financial assistance, or other forms of support may help improve teachers' working conditions, motivation, and overall well-being. Furthermore, given the high level of geographical and weather-related challenges identified in the study, DepEd, in partnership with local government units (LGUs), may conduct seminars and training on water safety, disaster preparedness, and emergency response to better equip teachers in managing risks associated with transportation and adverse weather conditions in island communities. Likewise, LGUs, barangay officials, and other stakeholders are encouraged to strengthen support programs and infrastructure that can help address the difficulties brought about by geographical isolation. Improving transportation, communication systems, and access to essential services may contribute to a more conducive teaching and learning environment. School administrators should also provide continuous professional development, mentoring opportunities, and wellness programs that support teachers in coping with instructional and psychological



demands. In addition, parents, PTA officers, and community members should continue to collaborate with schools by actively supporting educational programs and activities that promote student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Finally, future researchers may conduct similar studies in other geographically isolated schools or involving larger samples to further validate the findings and explore effective interventions that can mitigate the challenges encountered by island school teachers. These recommendations are intended to address the specific challenges identified in the study and strengthen support for teachers working in island communities.

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